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Role of Pakistan Peoples' Party in the Political Development in Pakistan. An Appraisal of Asif Ali Zardari Period (2008-2013)

Abstract: *The denial of the institutionalization of political power by various civilian as well as martial law regimes has been a constant problem in Pakistan. Muhammad Ali Jinnah was the first person who could do so in an effective manner, but his eternal departure in the early phase of the history of Pakistan changed the entire course of the country, and the successor leadership had to pursue self-serving politics just to prolong their rule. The same is the case with the rule of General Pervaiz Musharraf (1999-2008), which converted the parliamentary system envisaged by the 1973 constitution of Pakistan into a quasi-presidential system just to prolong the military dictatorship. The subsequent rule of the Pakistan Peoples' Party (2008-2013) was a tough period for the political leadership since the preceding dictatorship had completely altered the socio-political landscape of the country; however, the political wisdom of Mr. Asif Ali Zardari helped the country to sail smoothly during the aftershocks of the martial law regime. In that perspective, the current study intends to analyze the political developments in Pakistan during the third rule of the Pakistan Peoples' Party over the country during the period 2008-2013.*

Key Words: Asif Ali Zardari, Pakistan Peoples' Party, Political Power, Institutionalization in Pakistan.

Introduction

After declaring a state of emergency on November 3, 2007, General Pervaiz Musharraf exhibited a great deal of reluctance for holding the general elections because he feared that the supreme court might invalidate his re-election to the presidency, but in spite of much hesitation, he ultimately fixed the forthcoming general elections to be held in January 2008; nevertheless, on account of Benazir's assassination in the mid of addressing a public meeting in Rawalpindi on December 27, 2007, the said elections were subsequently delayed till the month of February. Earlier, on 18 October, 2007, when Benazir arrived at Karachi from the self-exile of almost eight years, she was accorded a very warm welcome by the people; nevertheless, it is believed that her party had cashed a lot of public sympathy due to her sudden and tragic assassination on December 27, 2007; in fact, like 1988, the people, once again hoping for some sort of positive change, expected that her party would deliver to the public for which they had been waiting since quite a long. At least, the common man could not understand that though Musharraf had put off his uniform on 28th of November 2007 yet the army as a stakeholder had not given up the driving seat; hence the system could at best be termed as a quasi and fragile democracy in which the civil-military bureaucracy was on the distributing end. However, in the backdrop of the Lawyers' Movement starting from March 2007, there had been some remarkable shift in the power structure until November 2007, which had tilted the balance of power in favor of the judiciary. Jaffrelot noted:

"The convergence of political and military elites to form the Pakistani establishment partly explains the rise in power of the judiciary as the only alternative. In fact, in the movement against Musharraf in 2007, lawyers protested as much against the army's authoritarianism as its growing taste for bourgeois comforts [Jaffrelot, 2015:371].

In 2007, the lawyers assumed the role of the quintessential opposition force, coming out against both civilians and the military in the name of the rule of law. In that perspective, Jaffrelot further quoted a statement of Muneer Malik, the president of the Supreme Court Bar Association, who in 2007 stated that the Pakistan army was once renowned for its discipline along with its fighting skills as well as its unflinching fortitude in the face of adversity, but the institution became notorious because of its commercial avarice as well as its

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command in the art of making political deals. When its generals would spend their time in the corporate sector like the establishment of real estate projects, farming, construction, playing politics etc., it would be unsurprising that both national and international observers question their ability and willingness to fight... [[Jaffrelot, 2015:371](#)].

The confrontation between Musharraf and the judiciary was initiated by the former. It brought a substantial change in the role of the judiciary as an institution that in the preceding years had served as a subservient body viz.-a-viz. The establishment. Now, the judiciary had not only become vibrant, self-sustaining and preserving, it rather, like the Supreme Court of the United States of America, assumed the status of the Chief Custodian of the Constitution, emphasizing the fact that "the law is what the judges say"; which in a way 'judicialized' the entire system. According to Ian Talbot, some analysts believed that in the post-Musharraf era, the increasing arrogance of the reinvigorated supreme court was a potential danger to democracy. They went to the extent in their apprehensions that the said judicial activism could be instrumental for stimulating the army's action and the ouster of the Zardari government.

Discussion

In fact, in March 2007, the then Chief Justice of the Supreme Court Iftikhar Chaudhary had been much politicized after his suspension, which factor was further strengthened due to his ever-increasing popularity among the lawyers and the common public. During the lawyers' movement, his processions were accorded a very warm welcome by the people all over the country; his reinstatement in July 2007 and subsequent ouster in November 2007 elevated his stature to such a zenith which had never been achieved by any judge before him. He was finally reinstated by Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gillani in March 2009, nevertheless under pressure mounted by the army chief after Nawaz Sharif, along with his party workers, had joined the long march launched by the Lawyers' Movement. It shall be interesting to mention that as late as September 2018, Mr. Saad Rafiq, a prominent member and spokesman of PML-N, was reported to state: "we committed a serious mistake to join the Lawyers Movement while Zardari's reluctance regarding the judge's reinstatement was not out of place [See Saad Rafiq's statement in the Express-News, 10 September, 2018].

The judicial activism after March 2009 right through the Zardari government must be viewed with reference to the reluctance and hesitation showed by the PPP's government in reinstating the judges, which after creating much bad will was done albeit under the direction of the Chief of Army Staff General Ashfaq Pervez Kayani who brought the long march to an end at Gujranwala. As argued by Maurice Duverger, Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Choudhary had become personal and developed individual antagonism against Zardari (for his reluctance) and his party's government.

The 18th amendment inserted in the constitution in 2010 had changed the mode of appointment for the judges of the superior courts; hence the same was referred back to the parliament; however, for doing the needful, the parliament introduced the 19th amendment instead.

After the general election of 2008, Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) emerged as the two largest political parties in the national assembly; like 1988, the former having relatively more representation got the opportunity not only to form the government but was also enabled to get Asif Ali Zardari elected as the successor of General Musharraf who under the impeachment threat was forced to resign as President of Pakistan in August 2008. Ian Talbot observed that because of the hope that there would be sustained cooperation between the PPP and the PML (N) and the defeat of the pro-Musharraf lobby, the 2008 polls in Pakistan had generated the optimism that the country could break out of its cycle of poor governance, authoritarianism, regionalism as well as political turmoil being in vogue right after its independence. Their infighting in the 1990s had already undermined the prospects for democratic consolidation [[Talbot, 2015: 212](#)].

After defeating Musharraf's allies', i.e. the Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid-e-Azam (PML-Q), the return of PPP and the PML-N as the two leading parties was viewed as a sign of political development culminating into somewhat maturity and sustainability of the political system. Perhaps the fact that it was not an easy task which the major parties could accomplish on their own was overlooked by those who had become much excited that the Benazir's PPP had once again come to power hence would deliver what was long-awaited. Although Musharraf had left and a civilian president had replaced him, nevertheless, Musharraf's successors in the shape of senior partners composing the establishment would not afford the vacuum; hence the same was immediately filled. Even the governments installed after the general elections of 2013 and 2018 fall in the category of diluted, controlled and limited democracy.

Moreover, the political culture of issueless politics based on personal antagonism prevalent from the late 1980s through the 1990s continued to be in its full bloom in the 21st century till the 2008 elections were held. There is strong evidence that each of the leaders heading the two mainstream political parties, i.e. Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto, were instrumental in calling the army to intervene against his/her counterpart so that he/she might take a sigh of relief; in spite of the fact that the two leaders had signed a Charter of Democracy in 2006, but their friendly coalition could not last long. Nevertheless, the sojourn continued till they were able to mount enough pressure on Musharraf to quit the presidency. After Musharraf's departure, the Pakistan Peoples' Party managed to get its Chief namely Mr Asif Ali Zardari, elected as President; Zardari's arrival in the President House was more than enough to relieve the party from the fear of being ousted from power; nevertheless, bad governance, corruption and severe economic crisis like 1990s were quite serious challenges still to be faced. In fact, as a precondition for the PML-N's inclusion in the government as a coalition partner, the two parties had signed Bhurban [a place in the height of the Murree Hills] Agreement in March 2008, which had placed the reinstatement of the judges on the top priority as an integral part of the said agreement. But afterwards, when the reinstatement of the judges was delayed on the part of Zardari over one pretext or the other, the Muslim League departed from the coalition government led by Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani in August 2008.

The immediate cause of the Muslim League's withdrawal from the coalition between Nawaz and Zardari was based on the sharp differences regarding the revival of the supreme court all the same as it existed just before the dismissal of the judges under the proclaimed state of emergency by General Pervez Musharraf on November 3, 2007. The breakup of a friendly relationship between the two parties had serious repercussions not only on their mutual cooperation at the federal level but had a negative impact on the provincial politics of Punjab as well, where the PPP was a junior partner in the provincial government. President Zardari, who, under ever-increasing tension since a few months, was, seemingly at his wit's end, lost his nerves and made more than a serious mistake by imposing Governor's rule in Punjab in February 2009, which was neither in tune with the parliamentary ethics nor in conformity with the processes like institution and nation-building on the part of the elite sitting at the distributing end. However, after the restoration of the judiciary, the governor's rule was lifted as well in March 2009, which returned Shahbaz Sharif as the Chief Minister of the province. It was seen as a sign of normalizing the relationship between the federal and provincial government, but in the meanwhile, Shahbaz's meeting with General Kayani was taken as an attempt to take sides with the army for the Zardari's ouster from power.

History was repeating itself as, during the 1990s, Benazir and Nawaz Sharif had invariably called the army to intervene against each other. A well-known writer on Pakistan, Stephen Philip Cohen, has described the army's role in Pakistani politics, saying that:

"While the role of the armed forces is settled in most former colonial states, political-military tensions remain at the core of Pakistani politics. In the final analysis, Pakistan's politicians must pass a competency test administered and graded by Pakistan's army, not its voters [\[Cohen, 2005\]](#)."

The democratization process in Pakistan has always been affected because of the powerless and weak institutions for which, on the one hand, the politicians were responsible because they always opted for zero-sum game style of politics while on the other hand, the periodic intervention by the armed forces time and again caused the reversal of the said process. Moreover, it goes without saying that charity begins at home; the political leaders did not prefer to institutionalize the structure of their respective political parties, then how come they would prefer that the state power should be institutionalized. No wonder that the leaders of the political parties which won a majority of seats in the National and provincial assemblies are still busy bargaining and give and take for forming their governments at the federal and provincial level instead of acknowledging that this is the prerogative of the National and Provincial assemblies to elect their respective leader of the house as provided under the constitution. Like Bhutto in the 1970s, Benazir and Nawaz in the 1990s continued to control the parliamentary process in the province(s) in which they had the majority hence establishing the fact that the flow of the power and authority was invariably from upward to downward. Moreover, the elected members also preferred patronage instead of effectively exercising their inherent power of legislation. It is ironic that invariably, the political party having enough majority required for amending the constitution at some given time preferred to get the amendment bill passed by the assembly on a few minutes' notice without going through the mandatory procedure essential for the same [\[Khan, A.B., 2011:66\]](#).

As far as the exercise of the article 58-2(b) was concerned, with Zardari as the President and Yousuf Raza Gilani [25 March 2008-19 June April 2012] afterwards Raja Pervez Ashraf [22 June 2012-16 March

2013) as Prime Ministers, the PPP's government during 2008-2013, had the least apprehensions; nevertheless, after the 18th amendment to the constitution of 1973 was incorporated in 2010, it *ab initio* became impossible. But misfortunes come in battalions; the PPP government, including the president, remained under enormous pressure created by the judicial activism under Iftikhar Chaudhry, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, with the impression that the government was not inclined to the reinstatement of the judges, including himself hence the same was thanks to the lawyers' movement supported by Nawaz Sharif and the intervention from the army chief. The chief justice made it a point that he should not spare any opportunity to build up pressure on the government. Some scholars believed that the said judicial activism was seen as a potential danger for democracy which nevertheless was already qualified; moreover, a series of litigation on the subject of public interest provided the Supreme Court substantial appreciation and popularity. Another point of difference between the government and the court was the passage of the 18th amendment to the constitution, which had altered the appointment procedure for judges of the higher judiciary; hence the amendment bill was referred back to the parliament for its review. In response, the National Assembly passed the 19th amendment bill to do the needful; nevertheless, it did not provide any relief to the inter-institutional clash, which was the outcome of the Supreme Court's determination to protect its autonomy and jurisdiction along with its commendable confidence related to the post-Musharraf period. The very hot and the most burning issue was the Supreme Court's concern regarding National Reconciliation Ordinance (NRO), which had provided indemnity to about 8,000 people, including the then sitting President Asif Ali Zardari against whom several cases were registered, regarding corruption and other matters related to the period from 1st January 1986 to 12 October 1999. It is germane to mention here that in October 2007, Benazir Bhutto's return to Pakistan was materialized under the provision of the same order issued by Musharraf on October 5, 2007. After the restoration of Iftikhar Chaudhary, the supreme court, in July 2009, took very serious notice of the said ordinance requiring the government to get the said ordinance along with 36 other approved by the parliament till 28th November 2009, positively; however the opposition parties including the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) which later on (January 2011) broken away from the PPP-led coalition government also refused to endorse the indemnity ordinance with the result that the Supreme Court on 16th of December, 2009, annulled the said NRO and directed the government that the corruption cases against the president be revived in the Swiss courts. Although the PPP government publically announced that it would honor and implement the court's decision, nevertheless, it started using delaying tactics which created more tension between the institutions. Moreover, an increase was witnessed in the poor governance level, which had been there since 2008.

Civil-Military Relations (2008-2013)

Furthermore, during the period under discussion, the civil-military relations were not ideal either. In the month of May 2011, the U.S Force's operation against Usama Bin Ladin in Abbottabad was a substantial set back after 1971, which generated quite a serious and hot debate about the performance level of the Pakistan army. It was considered about the 1971 incident, i.e. the fall of Dhaka, that it might be instrumental in decreasing the military's influence and power in the civilian sector. Many analysts and observers had quite a loud thinking about the 1971 debacle that the event had demoralized the institution, thus decreasing its role in the affairs of the state to a considerable level. Stephen Philip Cohen, an authority on the Pakistan army, has explained the nature of the civil-military relationship in Pakistan; he has described different modes through which the civilians may assume power with the blessing or consent of the armed forces. He observes that as a first step, the army's historical dominance of Pakistan and its central role in the Pakistan Establishment must be severely weakened before any politician could hope to come to real power on his or her own; alternatively, the army must possess or exhibit excessive confidence in a civilian leader, or party so that it could allow them to come to power. He adds that the former condition occurred only in the case of Z.A. Bhutto as well as to some extent in Benazir's first term [\[Cohen, 2005:159\]](#).

If we critically examine Cohen's equation, it has been maintained after the 2018 general elections by many that Imran Khan's emergence as the new civilian ruler fell in the second category mentioned by Cohen in the above statement. He adds that even after coming into power, the civilian ruler must conform to the competence level determined by the armed forces; hence it is more than difficult for the civilians to work "without fear of the army's encroachment or a blatant army takeover" [\[Cohen, 2005:159\]](#).

Similarly, when in 2007 Musharraf agreed to Benazir Bhutto's return to Pakistan, he had several meetings with her (the first one on July 27) in the United Arab Emirates along with leading Arab figures, foreign diplomats and the chief of the ISI, General Kayani. Her return was approved by Musharraf because to

secure his Presidential career; he needed the support of some streamline politician. Musharraf, under obligation, not only conceded to her demand and gave up his uniform because she was not ready to serve as Prime Minister under the army general; he also provided her with the indemnity in connection with the cases for which she was forced into exile. He issued a National Reconciliation Ordinance, which granted indemnity to "any person including an absconding accused who is found to be falsely involved for political reasons or through political victimization in any case initiated between 1st day of January 1986 to 12th day of October 1999 [Jaffrelot, 2015:357]. Some analysts believed that the said ordinance was issued with the objective of "promoting national reconciliation, fostering mutual trust and confidence amongst holders of public office and removing the vestiges of political vendetta and victimization, and to make the election process more transparent [Jaffrelot, 2015:357]. Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz went to the extent of claiming that the said ordinance would also be instrumental for bringing down the corruption level in the society.

Moreover, the said phenomena are not confined to the period, i.e. the 1990s and 2000s; it is rather entrenched in quite a distant past. The political and constitutional history of Pakistan reveals that the politicians have always preferred to pray for military support against their opponents; Air Marshal Asghar Khan wrote a letter to General Zia in 1977 to take over the government and rescue the country from Bhutto's rule which in 1967 was regarded as the savior of the nation by none else but the Air Marshal himself. Another interesting example to be mentioned here that according to Professor Ghaffur Ahamad (a prominent leader of the Jamaat-e-Islami), in 1977, the PNA leadership and Bhutto were about to sign an agreement when Begum Nasim Wali Khan and Sher Baz Mazari called Mufti Mahood Ahmad the Chief of the Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Islam out of meeting room asking him not to sign the agreement because it was promised that if the Martial Law was imposed, the fresh elections would be held within 90 days which provided Zia with the justification to take over. Jaffrelot quotes Ayesha Siddiqi as: "the very fact that the prominent politicians continue to use the military power as a political balance of power, and refuse to negotiate their power or power interests through democratic means, allows the armed forces to play a dominant role [Jaffrelot, 2015:362].

Samuel .P. Huntington argues that the role of the army in any political system very much depends upon the conditions and environment present in the society at some given time. He observes that: "society changes, so does the role of the military. In the world of oligarchy, the soldier is radical; in the middle-class world, he is a participant and arbiter; as the mass society looms on the horizon, he becomes the conservative guardian of the existing order [Huntington, 1968: *passim*].

However, in our view, the history of Pakistan presents quite a different picture because, here, the role of the army is not conditioned with any sort of social change; it is rather associated with the fluctuating strategic interests of the superpowers, i.e. the United States in particular; for instance in 1953, the U.S administration under Eisenhower, for its pursuit of the Korean War as well as the cold war viz.-à-viz. The erstwhile U.S.S.R encouraged the establishment of an executive dominated system with quite explicit support and role of the army. It can be very well viewed that during the mid and late 1950s, Pakistan had joined various military and strategic alliances, sponsored by the U.S and her European friends, such as South East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) (1954) and Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) (1955). As the last resort, Ayub Khan, the then Commander in Chief of the Pakistan army, imposed the first Martial Law in October 1957. As Christophe Jaffrelot describes: "but agitation itself never explains the fall of dictators each time external events also play a role, such as the war of 1965 in the case of Ayub Khan, the loss of East Bengal under the Yahya Khan, the plane crash in the case of Zia and the intensity of anti-American sentiment following the second war in Afghanistan which contributed to bringing an end to Musharraf's rule, as will be seen further on-not to mention the direct impact of American policy after 2007 when Washington became suspicious of Musharraf [Jaffrelot, 2015:359].

Jaffrelot seems quite right to analyze the incomings and outgoings of the military regimes; it has been confirmed by the subsequent events that the countrywide violent agitation of 1977 was not only supported by General Zia, the then C.O.A.S., rather it was engineered and manipulated by him with the blessings of the U.S administration, as a preemptive step to combat the well-anticipated invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet Forces in 1979. In the same year, Zia, in total disregard of internal and external appeals, hanged Bhutto, who was ever acknowledged as a popular leader after Jinnah's death in 1948. It would not be less interesting to mention that Musharraf's entry into the political arena in 1999 was supported by the U.S in anticipation of the Afghan war eventually occurring in the early years of the 21st century. Moreover, the invariably tragic downfall of the military dictators, i.e. Ayub's in 1969, Yahya's in 1971, Zia's in 1988 and Musharraf's in 2008 were not without the U.S approval and sanction behind it. It is germane to mention here that while president Dwight .D. Eisenhower condemned any kind of army's role in the U.S politics, the American administration

invariably and for all times has always supported the army's intervention in Pakistan's politics. Mr Eisenhower had stressed that the conjunction of an immense military establishment and a large arms industry was in the American experience by then. The total influence - economic, political, even spiritual - was felt in every city, every Statehouse, every office of the federal government. They recognized the imperative need for that development. Yet, they must not fail to comprehend its grave implications. Their toil, resources and livelihood were involved; so was the very structure of their society. In the councils of government, they must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power existed and would persist. They must never let the weight of that combination endanger their liberties or democratic processes. They should take nothing for granted ([Orum, 1978: 124](#); for full text also visit https://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp_textbook.cfm?smtID=3&psid=1230)

However, it cannot be stated that during this period, there was no social or political change because it was at this juncture that the two mainstream political parties opted for political dislodge for the resolution of their conflicts irrespective of the success and failure of such attempts. Zardari was known for his policy of reconciliation not only with his political opponents but also with the military leadership.

Although Zardari had entered the presidency with a lot of preoccupations hence it was always questioned that would he be able to fulfil his promise to surrender the presidential powers to dissolve the National and Provincial Assemblies, the power to appoint Chiefs of armed forces, governors and Chief Election Commissioner at his discretion? Moreover, his possibly successful attempts towards saving the country from acute and chronic economic crises and bailing it out from out scale militancy became quite a popular topic for hot debates, whereas deviation from Musharraf's subservient foreign policy on the part of Zardari also became a big question mark.

It was noted by a known political and constitutional expert:

"The answers to these questions are difficult and complex and need the leadership of the highest order what kind of leadership will be able to give to this embattled nation; only time will tell. With his past record in perspective, there is little room for optimism. The message he gave by inviting an American stooge like President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan to his oath-taking ceremony on 9 September 2008 does not augur well for an independent foreign policy in the foreseeable future ([Khan, 2009:542](#)).

Moreover, he addressed some other important issues such as the provincial autonomy, non-centralization of powers through reducing the federal subjects, abolishing the concurrent list and renaming the northwestern frontier province in accordance with the desire of the people, which had awaited proper attention and consideration since quite a long time. Whatever the outcome, it goes without saying that Zardari had contributed towards some sort of political and constitutional development of the country by introducing the 18th amendment.

Leaving alone military dictators like Zia and Musharraf, Zardari among his counterparts under the parliamentary form of government with or without the provision of 58(2)(b) had enjoyed the status of the most powerful president because, like Fazal Ilahi, Faruq Legari and Rafiq Tarar, he was not a protégé of the political party in power; he was rather the chief of the Pakistan People's Party and Benazir's privileged widower hence remained in the driving seat right from August 2008 to March 2013 when his party completed its five years term. In fact, the PPP's regime and the five years tenure were rather named after Zardari and not the Pakistan People's Party because he was the person who took all important decisions on his own. It is worth mentioning that under his command, the party was able to survive in house change when Yousuf Raza Gilani was disqualified by the Supreme Court, and the PPP was obliged to elect another leader of the house, notwithstanding being short of simple majority without the support of some others. He had to manage political bargaining with not only his political opponents but also with various stakeholders constituting what is called establishment. He also survived MQM's departure from his party's coalition government by filling the vacuum with the inclusion of PML-Q in the cabinet, which on the one hand supported the party government at Islamabad, while on the other hand, the same could be used as a counterforce of Muslim League (N) is the largest and the most important province of the country, i.e. Punjab. Although, he, according to his commitment with the people, had introduced the 18th amendment, which had reversed the 17th amendment inserted by General Musharraf and had not only taken away the power excised by the president under 58(2)(b) but also had granted substantial powers to the provinces. However, he neither made any attempt to institutionalize the state power in accordance with the cannons of the parliamentary form of government nor tried to organize

the political party; Ian Talbot has rightfully described that as compared to his late wife Zardari had made the party more 'managerial' and 'conservative' [\[Talbot, 2015:214\]](#).

Conclusion

The rule of the Pakistan Peoples' Party (2008-2013) with Mr. Asif Ali Zardari as the president of Pakistan was an example setting period in the history of Pakistan because both before and after the insertion of the 18th amendment, he could command his parliamentary group the way he desired. In a way, it had become a quasi-presidential form of government, albeit with the difference that unlike the U.S system, Zardari was not only a part of the lawmaking process but also the leader of the majority party who could control the whole proceedings right from policymaking to law implementation process. History was repeating itself because, during the PPP's first regime, i.e. 1971-1977, Z.A. Bhutto also violated the parliamentary and federal principles when he allowed Ghulam Mustafa Khar and Mumtaz Bhutto to exercise the real powers whether they were the provincial governors or the chief ministers; moreover, he also violated the federal principles when he himself took the decisions about the provincial affairs particularly that of Punjab and Sind in that way. Mr. Zardari played his cards quite wisely during his stay in the President House. After the sudden demise of Miss Benazir Bhutto in December 2007, Pakistan Peoples' Party could easily fall like a house of cards, but the politics of reconciliation envisaged by Mr Zardari bore fruit and Pakistan Peoples' Party smoothly completed its term in power.

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