

CIVIL-MILITARY CONCORDANCE IN PAKISTAN

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Abstract

Civil-military concordance is based on the harmony of interests and values between three important stakeholders, i.e., the political elite, armed forces, and citizens. When these stakeholders develop a harmonious appreciation of their roles and contributions to the nation with a shared understanding of the constitution, a healthy symbiosis of interests and values is engendered, imparting states' desired stability. There are examples of developing countries like Ghana, where weak democratic institutions resulted in frequent military interventions. However, the phenomenon declined after armed forces and civilians fostered a concordance based upon mutual respect, wherein armed forces participated in the defence of the state and nation-building tasks. This paper, therefore, deals with the employment of armed forces on military and non-military tasks, facilitating much-needed concordance in civil-military relations for democratic consolidation and improvement of armed forces' performance on nation-building and crisis management. It discusses various civil-military concordance models and analyses the best-suited option for Pakistan. Rebecca Schiff's Concordance Theory, a departure from western models of Huntington, Lasswell, and Finer, contains some elements of Morris Janowitz's civil-military convergence theory and can be applied to Pakistan's case. It also highlights the application of four indicators of concordance, i.e., recruitment method, the social composition of officers' corps, military style, and political decision-making processes, to Pakistan, yielding important conclusions regarding improved civil-military relations.

Keywords: Concordance, Civil-military Relations, Political Culture, Nation-building.

Introduction

Civil-military relations in developing states feature a prominent role for armed forces engaged in development tasks besides defending national frontiers.¹ Scholars like Samuel P. Huntington have been advocating a model of civil-military relations based on 'objective control,' where armed forces cede professional autonomy while maintaining political neutrality.² In advanced industrial democratic states, there is a complete separation of roles and spheres of influence; civilian leadership makes policies, and armed forces execute them according to the defined principles.² However, armed forces in developing states

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(or anocracies) have been pressing into *deus ex machina*. In these states, the combination of civilian and military competencies has redounded ideally to the advantage of state and polity, with military and civilian components acting as ‘partners in policymaking.’³

Armed forces have been catalysts for development in different states for a long. Employment of armed forces on nation-building tasks, such as infrastructural development, peace and stabilization operations, counter-terrorism operations, relief work, handling of emergencies, and combating organized crime, has led towards better concordance between armed forces and society. Armed forces in countries like the US, China, Turkey, Egypt, Indonesia, Ghana, and South Korea have had a stellar record of providing security and economic support to their governments, strengthening the political system and governance. The growing role of armed forces, especially in developing political economies, is a veritable cause célèbre. Organizational strength, discipline, and technical skills like engineering, communications, logistics, and medical enable armed forces to play an essential role in complex emergencies and nation-building tasks. It is impracticable without harmony in civil-military relations, where armed forces, people, and government benefit equally from a symbiosis of the military’s organizational strength, political understanding of public representatives, and general support of masses. This harmony is termed concordance by scholars such as Rebecca Schiff. The Concordance Theory provides a wide-ranging theoretical framework to explain the balance in civil-military relations, begotten out of an understanding of the usefulness of three leading roles played by the people, the armed forces, and the government.

Concordance Theory and Civil-Military Relations

Concordance Theory, propounded by Rebecca Schiff, is a veritable denouement of civil-military relations featured with frictions, coups, and praetorian in equal measure. It showcases the healthful nature of balance in civil-military relations. Unlike Huntington’s theories that advocate the separation of civil and military spheres, Concordance Theory recommends integrating political institutions, armed forces, and citizenry in a harmonious and mutually beneficial relationship. A complete concordance between the political elite, armed forces, and people is achievable when civilian leadership encourages armed forces by optimally using their national development capabilities.⁴ Some scholars have cautioned against role-expansion of the military in civilian areas, especially in states with heightened external threats, fearing that a deified military might develop praetorian tendencies to the detriment of harmonious civil-military relations.⁵ According to these scholars, the military should be organizationally strong enough to do the bidding of a civilian government but should be equally weak to defy its directives.⁶

While the Huntingtonian school of thought emphasized separating civilian and military spheres, the Janowitzian school of thought sought to bridge the civil-military gap by recommending changes in military organizational structure and training.⁷ Morris Janowitz suggests a civil-military interaction model wherein the military is involved in non-military responsibilities by restructuring itself under civilian control.⁸ The above is envisaged in a greater value convergence between civil and military components of a state, leading to improved civil-military relations. The history of Pakistan indicates a significant role of armed forces in national development and integration. According to Rebecca Schiff, the recruitment pattern of armed forces and the social composition of officers' corps play a vital role in civil-military harmony.⁹ In Pakistan, the progressively inclusive recruitment system has broadened the base of human resources and changed the British era's social composition of the army. The greater representation of smaller provinces and broad base of officers' recruitment has made armed forces a vital instrument of national integration in the face of fissiparous tendencies of ethnic sub-nationalism unleashed due to socio-economic deprivations in the country.

Lawrence Ziring has pointed out civil-military propensity in Pakistan to prefer national integration over other socio-political priorities.¹⁰ One of the crucial elements of stability in a post-colonial society with an underdeveloped political system, such as Pakistan,¹¹ was the existence of armed forces as a symbol of national unity, representing all classes and ethnicities in a geographically diverse country. The accent on *esprit de corps*, merit and non-parochial ethos inculcated in armed forces made it an integrative force in a newly independent nation where political parties had yet to grow strong roots in the masses. Therefore, the military in Pakistan, right from the beginning, started performing a significant role in the social, political, and economic development of the country. The civil-military relations in Pakistan have resembled the fourth category of civil-military relations. As per Samuel Huntington, these relations are seen in countries with a pro-military ideology where the military holds high political power and professionalism.¹² Contrarily, Peter Feaver and Rebecca Schiff suggest civilian ascendancy through the compliance of civilian leadership based on harmony generated through the military's participation in military and non-military tasks for the benefit of the state and citizens. It should not be through complete separateness (as propounded by Huntington,¹³ Lasswell,¹⁴ and Finer¹⁵) or synthesis of civilian and military competencies (as suggested by Morris Janowitz¹⁷).

In the early days, Pakistan faced an existential threat to its national security due to Indian perfidy, withholding its assets and denying water rights. Consequently, Pakistan strengthens its armed forces by prioritizing defence spending over other expenditures. Pakistan spent 71.30% of total government expenditure on defence in 1948-49 and had to keep its defence spending within

the range of 50-60% between 1958 to 1968-69.¹⁶ Thus, a modern military organization emerged over the foundation of a military structure of the colonial era. It compelled to act as Morris Janowitz's model of serving in civilian spheres for diverse nation-building tasks,¹⁷ unlike Huntington's notion of 'objective control,' which meant acquiring professional autonomy in return for non-interference in politics.¹⁸ According to Rebecca Schiff, Huntington's separation of civilian and military spheres fails to the cognizance of cultural and political differences between the US and other developing countries. It does not apply to countries with different socio-political and cultural environments.

The Objective Control Theory was relevant to the post-WWII US, where a dominant military had expanded its influence on non-military spheres. After the war, it had to be reined in for democratic control of armed forces in a society that had come to regard the military as a coercive power in the context of domestic politics.¹⁹ Schiff believes that a country may adopt any form of civil-military relations, including separate or integrated, depending upon local socio-political culture and historical traditions. She cites India as an example where political institutions have atrophied significantly, yet the military has not intervened due to indigenous culture and political practices.²⁰ Though Harold Lasswell believes that the military's development of skills for civilian tasks would increase the chances of its intervention in national politics,²¹ understanding the need to respect constitutional boundaries prevent such biases. According to Huntington and Finer, civil-military separation requires strong political institutions and 'objective control' predicated upon the US Army's tradition of professional insularity.²² The professional insularity in the US is possible because conditions like strong political institutions and democratic culture exist there. Democratic culture is the repository of attitudes, preferences, and values, shaping an environment where political actions occur.²³ While US democratic culture has started co-opting the military for non-military tasks with political ramifications, political culture in countries like Pakistan is different, which historically prefers integration of civilian and military spheres instead of separation proposed by the western culture.²⁴

Concordance Theory and Its Applicability to Civil-Military Relations Models

Concordance Theory supports harmony, accommodation, and shared values among political elites, military, and citizens.²⁵ In preference to institutional separateness, civilian and military components of a state can operate in a cooperative relationship, where the military is respected for its nation-building tasks. Instead of civil-military dissonance, a concordance can be created by the military's voluntary respect for constitutional boundaries and politicians' voluntary restraint of creeping in the military's domain, with a beneficiary population revering the military for its nation-building role. It is

promoted through a merit-oriented broad-based composition of military leadership, inclusive decision-making procedure by political leadership, a fair military recruitment process, and military leadership style, e.g., colonial, revolutionary, citizen soldierly, or a balance of the three.²⁶ Using deductive causation methodology, empirical evidence from case studies based upon four concordance indicators, i.e., military style, social composition of military leadership, civilian decision-making processes, and military recruitment pattern, can lead to generalizations about the military's propensity to intervene in politics. The greatest weakness of separation and agency theories was the civil-military dichotomy, i.e., us against them. It was never suitable for cultures where the military was a stabilizing and development agent.²⁷

a. India. In India, a long-held civil-military concordance is coming under strain due to the politicization of military leadership by Bhartiya Janata Party's (BJP) political leadership.²⁸ Despite weak political institutions and social polarization, the concordance had prevented military coups. The political leadership of Nehru and his idea of political inclusivism combined with a clear delineation of civil-military spheres created stakes between citizenry, political leadership, and military that prevented military intervention in politics.²⁹ Broad-based recruitment and increased middle-class officers' corps have resulted in a greater connection with the masses. The above, combined with well-structured civilian administrative institutions, such as the Defence Committee of Cabinet and Parliamentary committees, is resulted in a smooth civil-military interaction.³⁰ Indian Army is frequently employed on internal security duties and disaster relief operations to aid civil power. It has been valued by the political elite but criticized by some scholars who regarded armed forces' involvement in non-military tasks as deleterious for political institutions.³¹ The use of armed forces for political purposes, such as making election speeches after the Pulwama incident and communalizing armed forces, is sliding India slowly towards civil-military discordance.³²

b. Ghana. Another developing country, Ghana, offers a helpful case study to understand the concordance between armed forces and civilians. The Ghana Armed Forces (GAF) have slowly transitioned from an erstwhile praetorian instrument to a development agent.³³ Through a regional balance in military recruitment and better training and resource allocation, GAF have developed into a prestigious national institution. The international peacekeeping role has invested GAF with prestige at national and international levels.³⁴ In turn, the political leadership has learned to deal with defence matters relevant to GAF with much circumspection, especially budgetary aspects. All major decisions on defence and military matters are taken through a constitutional body called the Armed Forces Council (AFC) with the full participation of civilian institutions, such as Parliament, Auditor General, Accountant General, and Justice

Department.³⁵ GAF have emerged as one of the country's most trusted institutions due to their performance on defence and development tasks. People revere GAF because of its extensive employment and sterling performance on disaster relief, internal security, and international peacekeeping roles. The military's revered image encourages political leadership and civil society to allow an expanded role for GAF without fear of military domination of national politics.

c. The United States. The role of militaries, even in advanced industrial and democratic nations like the US, has been scrutinized for civil-military concordance by scholars like Richard Kohn and Risa Brooks in recent times. They have noted a deficit of value convergence between civilians and the US military. The Huntingtonian separation of the military from civilian affairs and politics in the US elicits scepticism by Risa Brooks, who recommends greater military involvement in national affairs to understand the difficulties of civilian leadership while planning country's wars other than non-military tasks.³⁶ The US military has enhanced its global influence in foreign policy and defence. It is ubiquitous in policy debates concerning the US military's overseas commitments to pursue political objectives.⁴³ Since many foreign and domestic tasks assigned to armed forces straddle military and political domains, military leadership in the national policy-making process (institutionalized) serves the national cause much better than operating in silos. The military needs to be involved in civilian planning processes to understand better the political limitations of civilian leadership in a conflict milieu, increasingly blurring boundaries between military missions and operations other than war.³⁷ Attempts to politicize the military, such as exhortations by Congressmen to 18th US Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff General Martin to criticize Obama for his weak policies vis a vis ISIS, were clear signs of politicians' attempts to drag the military in politics.³⁸ Instead of playing partisan politics, a standardized system of military involvement in civilian planning processes through nation-building tasks can improve civil-military concordance.

US military leadership has started displaying greater political partisanship while civil society is getting more concerned about military leadership's politicization. US military is getting more politicized, as per Risa Brooks, due to the Trump era's encouragement of military leaders to support politically partisan policies openly.³⁹ The civil-military concordance earlier strengthened through former US army officers in the Senate and House of Representatives is wane.⁴⁰ There is a need to bridge the expertise gap in military affairs between civilian and military leadership through formal education and exposure to develop concordance. Besides the above, the resource gap between Pentagon and other state departments also needs to be reduced to balance civil-military relations.⁴¹ Richard Kohn has criticized US military leadership for its defiance of US Presidents over Kosovo bombings on Serb positions, gay rights issue, and

Afghanistan conflict, displaying a lack of policy concordance between civilian and military components of the state.⁴² He also warns about the perils of over politicization of military leadership, including defiance of Truman during the Korean War, revulsion to technological reforms under Eisenhower, opposition to McNamara reforms, resistance to Bill Clinton policy of 'don't ask; don't tell,' and defiance of Obama's Afghan policy.⁴³ Therefore, the concordance between military and civilians is adversely impacted despite fair and broad-based recruitment and merit-oriented promotions due to politicians' current penchant for politicizing the military.

Some valuable lessons are culled out of the above case studies of India, Ghana, and the US:

- The first lesson is increasing the relevance of the concordance model of civil-military relations instead of the separation model of objective control in countries with peculiar socio-political culture and threat environments.
- The second lesson is the increasing importance of armed forces employment on operations other than war, including disaster relief, internal security, and development tasks for a concordance between civil society, political elite, and military.
- The third lesson is strong civilian institutions for policy direction led by leadership adept in military affairs. Bridging the expertise gap between civilian and military leadership is necessary.
- The fourth lesson that emanates from the discourse is the need for value convergence and cultural unity between civilians and the military.
- The broad-based and merit-oriented recruitment in armed forces as a binding glue to connect armed forces with society emerges as the fifth lesson that leads to a civil-military concordance so vital for smooth civil-military relations.
- The sixth and most important lesson is that when civil and military components operate within constitutional boundaries, the military has a non-political nation-building role.⁴⁴

Pakistan's case study offers another proper referent to showcase the efficacy of the Concordance Theory.

Applicability of Concordance Theory to Pakistan

Military in Pakistan has acted as an agent of socio-political and economic change due to its organizational strength, discipline, and technical competencies.⁴⁵ Since its inception as an independent state, Pakistan's highly threatened geopolitical environment has forced the military to take centre stage in national security and nation-building tasks. The military, due to its response

capacity in natural calamities, infrastructure development capacity in a challenging environment, and security expertise, has always been relied upon by civilian governments as an instrument of last resort for several non-military tasks, such as counter-terrorism, disaster relief, crime control, conduct of elections, census duties, and infrastructure development tasks. A traditional reverence of population has always shaped public opinion for the military as guardians of national frontiers. Military sacrifices in wars with an implacable foe on eastern borders and counter-terrorism operations have always resonated well with the people who idolized the military and welcomed its participation in nation-building tasks.

Pakistan experienced civil-military discordance during its initial years owing to civil-military friction due to weak political institutions and the early departure of the Father of the Nation. People suffered vagaries of political and economic instability stoically as the prestige index of politicians plummeted compared to the military that had burnished its credentials due to its untainted reputation and sacrifices in military conflicts against India. The fear of India and the military's prestige combined with politicians' failure to strengthen democratic institutions through democratic practices resulted in military coups that harmed civil-military concordance. However, the military's efficient and dedicated performance in nation-building tasks always supports concordance, where citizens view military discipline, efficiency, and cohesion as ideal traits worth emulation by the political and bureaucratic elite of the country. An effusive celebration greeted the country's first military coup on the streets due to their belief in the military's dedication and efficiency. The international response was equally positive.⁴⁶ Some critics ascribe the discordance between the political elite, armed forces, and people as the main reason for military coups.⁴⁷

Indicators of Concordance Theory

An evaluation of the four indicators of Concordance Theory applied to Pakistan would be necessary to understand the state of concordance in civil-military relations. The first indicator of Concordance Theory, the social composition of officers' class, shows diversification compared to the past. With an increased number of Sindhi, Balochi, and former tribal-area officers, the recruitment process has become broad-based and inclusive, as validated by a study of district-level recruitment quoted by Christine Fair.⁴⁸ The second indicator, political decision-making processes, has shown improvement through democratic continuity and consolidation, though there is still room for improvement. The diminishing of fear of Indian aggression after attaining nuclear deterrence amongst the population and the rise of independent media are two main factors that have instilled greater confidence in civilians.⁴⁹ The third indicator, recruitment base, shows significant development in broadening

the recruitment base. The fourth indicator, military-style, is also changing with old military traditions of insularity, being replaced by a sensitivity for local values and nationalistic orientation in armed forces.⁵⁰ The armed forces' willingness to undertake several challenging nation-building tasks, such as infrastructure development in Balochistan, former tribal areas, and Gilgit-Baltistan, attests to its keenness to contribute to human security and development in keeping with the government's current focus on national security matrix.⁵¹ The above indicates visible improvement in concordance of civil-military relations in Pakistan.

Concordance through Employment of Armed Forces in Nation-Building

Armed forces in Pakistan have been actively participating in nation-building tasks since independence. As an organized and disciplined institution having a diversified capacity portfolio spanning a wide gamut of competencies like law enforcement, disaster relief, infrastructure construction, and logistics, armed forces have been regularly co-opted in nation-building tasks by the government. The Karakorum Highway has been a crowning achievement for the Army Corps of Engineers. Sino-Pakistan cooperation began in right earnest after the 1965 war when a US-wary Pakistan started looking eastwards to address its strategic vulnerability of overreliance on western economic and military aid. Since the Chinese were also seeking to break out of international isolation, symbiosis of these interests resulted in a proposal to construct a 'Friendship Highway' linking both countries.⁵²

The technical delegates of Pakistan and China met at Kashgar in January 1966 and worked out modalities of the project. After five days of deliberations, both sides agreed to build a road linking China's Xinjiang Province with Pakistan. The road link was to be established in two years, and the Chinese were to provide logistic support to Pakistani builders while working on their part of the road in their territory. A joint survey team fixed the junction point of Friendship Highway at a 4700 meters high point on the Karakorum watershed between the two countries in June 1966. The project was ultimately completed after twelve years of herculean effort. The eighth wonder of the world, a 616-kilometers long highway connecting Thakot to Khunjerab, was finally inaugurated in June 1978, taking a toll of 11 officers, 25 junior commissioned officers, 531 soldiers, and 246 civilian labourers.⁵³ The successful completion of the Karakorum Highway project cemented a beneficial relationship between the government, citizens, and armed forces with people realizing the positive role of a national instrument (the military) towards improving human security. These positive feelings significantly improved the concordance between civilians and armed forces. Armed forces in far-flung northern areas improved

communications to hitherto isolated areas that broke geographic isolation of underdeveloped regions.

Another aspect to cover is civil-military cooperation during the catastrophic earthquake of October 2005. It presents a textbook example of civil-military cooperation in a humanitarian emergency, collaboration with national and international disaster relief and rehabilitation organizations. A 7.6 Richter scaled earthquake jolted the country's northern region, including Punjab, KP, and Azad Kashmir. The major cities, such as Balakot, Muzaffarabad, Bagh, and Rawalakot, were the worst affected areas,⁵⁴ thus facing a colossal humanitarian crisis. It was the time when those whose job was to counter violence (army) and those whose job was to bring about relief (humanitarian emergency relief organizations) gelled together in epic relief and rescue efforts, showcasing civil-military cooperation in a humanitarian emergency.

The military elements in earthquake-affected areas provided stability in terms of law and order, protection of relief workers, and guidance and coordination for all NGOs and INGOs working in the disaster zone. Civilian relief organizations and volunteers, usually wary of the military, came to rely on it as a sheet anchor for their relief work. The achievements of this civil-military synergy are evident by the statistics (providing temporary shelters to 385,000 families, 951,790 tents, 6,361,090 blankets/quilts, 256,376 tons ration, 3053.76 tons medicines, 65 field hospitals, 86 field/mobile medical teams, and 30,33455 sorties).⁵⁶ According to a post-earthquake study carried out by Andrew Wilder, "Pakistan earthquake rescue and relief efforts are considered to have been one of the largest and most integrated civilian and military humanitarian operations ever much more so than other recent responses to natural disasters, including 2004-Indian Ocean tsunami and Hurricane Katrina."⁵⁷ Most INGOs were full of praise for the army's protective umbrella and facilitation during the relief operations.⁵⁸

Each successful nation-building task has contributed to a better understanding of each other's planning processes, promoting a rare concordance of values and interests between the two. The 2005-earthquake was an event that fostered the best possible concordance between the government, armed forces, and people. The civilian institutions worked in an organized manner with armed forces that promoted a better understanding. According to former Federal Minister Ahsan Iqbal, "the civil-military interactions should be made more institutionalized by making their meeting points more formal and reflective of civilian control."⁵⁹ Senator Mushahid Hussain also echoes the same idea, albeit adding a caution about armed forces' role expansion in civilian affairs, which needs to be balanced.⁶⁰ The civilian leadership's faith in the military's ability to perform efficiently on non-military tasks is evident from former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's decision to introduce military courts to

counter terrorism, which Supreme Court turned down.⁶¹ According to Professor Saeed Shafqat, the western model of civil-military relations propounded by Huntington and Lasswell recommending separation of civil-military responsibilities in neat silos is inapplicable to Pakistan due to a flawed approach disregarding external and regional environment.⁶² For Pakistan, Morris Janowitz's model is more suitable where armed forces perform civilian tasks due to their superior organizational skill, discipline, and technical competence.⁶⁸

Conclusion

This paper points out the need for harmonious civil-military relations to serve constitutional requirements and a mutually beneficial relationship of trust and affection between armed forces, the political elite, and citizens. The concordance is equally applicable to developing and advanced industrial nations, including global powers like the US, where it seeks to curb excesses of institutional friction due to overweening ambitions of government entities and individuals. Countries like Pakistan, whose chequered civil-military relations history featuring authoritarian rule and weak democracy, need a concordance or a mutually beneficial relationship between the people, the government, and the military based on trust and respect of each other's constitutional boundaries. The armed forces' increasing employment on nation-building tasks in Pakistan within the constitutional remit is also in sync with the new national security vision that places economic and human security front and centre. Since our national security policy securitizes economy and human security, it is only natural that the most organized and disciplined state institutions (i.e., armed forces) play their due part in warding off threats to elements of national security. The four indicators of concordance, broad social base, merit-oriented recruitment, the military's transformation to a nationalist entity, and inclusive decision-making processes of civilian leadership display a smooth journey of civil-military relations towards the attainment of civil-military concordance recommended by scholars like Rebecca Schiff. To attain the ideal, however, state's civil and military components need to respect each other's constitutional boundaries besides continually striving to enhance their respective understanding of each other through education, training, joint projects, and development of institutions that strengthen collegial decision-making.

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