

# THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE 2013 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN PAKISTAN

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Pakistan held parliamentary elections on 11 May 2013, representing nothing short of a substantial turning point in this crisis-ridden country's history: A democratically legitimate, civilian government took over following a full legislative period through largely free and fair elections for the first time since Pakistan's independence in 1947. Such a conventional, peaceful power shift under the rules of a parliamentary democracy is a completely new experience for Pakistan, one that brings with it great hope for the future. The significance of this singular event is made particularly clear in the historical context of this artificial, rump and crisis state.

## ARTIFICIAL AND RUMP STATE

Everything is illuminated by history. This holds true as well for the current conflicts and threats in and around Pakistan. A summary of this unexpected state's peculiarities is revealing: Pakistan is the world's first great secessionist state, arising from the first great act of decolonisation – British-ruled India's independence in 1947. Yet this secessionist state began under rather unfavourable conditions. It consisted of two regional portions separated by 1,500 kilometres of newly established India and was largely rejected by the populations of newly demarcated "West Pakistan" and "East Pakistan" (East Bengal, later Bangladesh).<sup>1</sup>



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1 | David Gilmartin, *Empire and Islam: Punjab and the Making of Pakistan*, London, 1988, 189-224.

The unpopular state began under authoritarian rule, initially by its founder, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, together with Muslim League politicians who had fled India with him. They referred to themselves as pilgrims (Muhajir), a sentimental reminder of Mohammed's followers when he migrated to Medina. Beginning in the 1950s, the Muhajir entered into a governance contract with the Punjabi elite – industry and business moguls, the military, Muslim League politicians and officials from the populous Pakistani province of Punjab. Today, however, a "Punjabistan" has developed out of the "Muhajiristan" part of Pakistan, which hides behind the primary Pakistani idea of providing a "home country for all Muslims of South Asia". From the start, 55 per cent of the population – or the overall majority – living in East Pakistan had been second-class citizens. In the eyes of the Muhajir (eight per cent) and the Punjabis (56 per cent of the West Pakistani population), they are not considered Bengali Muslims, but rather Muslim Bengalis – and are therefore religiously and politically unreliable. This has legitimised the

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dual Muhajir-Punjabi elite's refusal to adopt the constitution and has thus prevented general and confidential national elections. The West's civil servant and military elite fear the Bengali Awami League ("People's League") will win the election. The first Pakistani constitution was adopted in 1956. It granted the West and the East 150 seats each in the national parliament, and in doing so secured a political stalemate and elevated the western military and civil servants to become arbiters and king-makers. By 1958, the army was no longer content with this role. General Ayub Khan staged a coup and took power. The military was unable to do anything so long as the capital, Karachi, was situated on the coast of the Arabian Sea. They established a new capital, Islamabad ("Place of Islam"), on the northern edge of Punjab. This was where Pakistan was most vulnerable, where the army recruited 75 per cent of its soldiers and where the British had established the largest military base and most important railway junctions during the colonial period on geostrategic and organisational grounds.<sup>2</sup>

2 | Ayesha Jalal, *The State of Martial Rule: The Origins of Pakistan's Political Economy of Defence*, Lahore, 1999, 136-276; Ayesha Siddiqi, *Military Inc.: Inside Pakistan's Military Economy*, London, 2007, 214-216.

Fig. 1  
**Pakistan**



**In terms of its containment policy vis-à-vis the Soviet Union, the USA sought to supplement the existing NATO pact in Central, South and South-East Asia with a CENTO and SEATO pact.**

This political, ethnic and military realignment was promoted by the geostrategic constraints of the Cold War. In terms of its containment policy vis-à-vis the Soviet Union, the USA

sought to supplement the existing NATO pact in Central, South and South-East Asia with a CENTO and SEATO pact. The Korean War caused them to speed up their efforts. But independent India taxed the Truman and Eisenhower governments' patience. India's first Prime Minister and Minister of External Affairs, Jawaharlal Nehru, insisted upon a "middle way" between the two Cold War factions. Long before the 1958 military coup, Ayub Khan, then Minister of Defence, along with leading Punjabi members of the military and Muhajir civil servants, all dissatisfied with the Muslim League's corrupt government, recognised the opportunities for Pakistan's development, its strategic placement and its military arising from Nehru's refusal to join the western alliance. Pakistani and American interests converged. Military, technological, diplomatic and economic co-operation with the USA rescued the artificial state and paved the way to a functional alliance, which to this day remains intractable, largely unpredictable and becoming increasingly autonomous.

Through the military pact with Pakistan, the USA was able to close a gap in its containment policy. From then on, they consolidated, rehabilitated and reconstructed the often politically or economically bankrupt Pakistani state and experimented with a new strategy befitting the Cold War – the balance of power through "offshore balancing". They believed they could weaken or indoctrinate unruly India with a minimum of political and strategic risks. The strategic co-operation has been good for the military and good for Pakistan – according to the opinion of the Muhajir officials and Punjabi soldiers. Muslim League politicians came to be seen as corrupt and were de-legitimised – not least because the national general elections continued to be suspended. It is hardly any wonder that the same civil servants and soldiers and the USA, who had received prior notification, embraced Ayub Khan's military coup in 1958. At the beginning of the 1970s, the military began to withdraw from command after holding the first free and equal national general elections. This decision allowed the East Pakistani Awami League to win the election and, with

Indian military support during the Indo-Pakistani War of 1971, ultimately led to the secession of the eastern region and the creation of Bangladesh.

It is for this reason that the West Pakistani rump state finally faced bankruptcy. Eastern secession took the bulk of income from taxation with it. The military was discredited by its ignominious defeat by India. A significant number of the troops was captured by India as prisoners of war. Not least, Pakistan's legendary origins and sham existence disintegrated: that regardless of language and origin of its citizens it was a nation of equals and the home of all Muslims of South Asia. But every catastrophe provides opportunities. However, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Ayub Kahn's former Minister of Foreign Affairs, founder of a new political party, the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and now the clear winner of the elections in the West, took only limited advantage of these opportunities. In 1973, his PPP government adopted Pakistan's first genuinely democratic parliamentary constitution. Power lay in the hands of the prime minister, in this case Z. A. Bhutto. He attempted to bring the traumatised military under democratic control. Since then, the government has appointed a Chief of Army Staff (COAS). Bhutto decided to appoint the inconspicuous Zia ul-Haq. He opened up the bankrupt state to new financiers and export opportunities with the help of the Saudi royal family. But that carried its own political price. Bhutto made small political concessions to Sunni fundamentalists in exchange for Saudi Arabia supporting orthodoxy, madrasas and building mosques. This first stirring democratic interlude following the state's collapse lasted only five years. In 1977, Bhutto's Chief of Army Staff rose up against his commander-in-chief. Zia ul-Haq made every effort to have the populist prime minister sentenced to death by a military tribunal after a coup. Only when Bhutto was executed in 1979 did the military feel secure.<sup>3</sup>

### **MILITARY AND NUCLEAR STATE**

It was this renewed military dictatorship beginning in 1977 that ultimately created the framework which transformed the artificial state into a military and nuclear state. It was

3 | Jakob Rösel, *Pakistan: Kunststaat, Militärstaat und Krisenstaat*, Berlin, 2011, 3-31.

Zia ul-Haq who introduced the Islamisation, ethnicisation and militarisation of the political system that persists to this day. In doing so he hoped he would be able to legitimise and consolidate his position of power. However, these processes have careened out of control and reinforce each other – even now. This transformation was heavily promoted by Zia’s willingness to confront the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 with a fundamentalist jihad controlled by the army and intelligence corps. In the process, Afghanistan, the Afghan-Pakistani border region and parts of the Pashtuns who dominated both sides ultimately became an enduring internal and external security issue.

Islamisation – the introduction of Sharia law, an intensification of blasphemy laws, religious concessions regarding economic practices (e.g. through Islamic banking) and a new Islamic social insurance contribution (*zakat*) – was intended to legitimise the military regime. In order to do this, Zia relied on the previously insignificant fundamentalist party Jamaat-e-Islami (Islamic Party, JI). Though this Islamic cadre organisation never became a party of the masses, from then on it did influence and radicalise the other religious reform organisations. First of all the JI gained access to the universities and state media. More importantly, the JI established ties with the armed forces and the ever-expanding intelligence corps, Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). A growing culture of intolerance developed. Militant Sunni fundamentalist organisations now took greater action against heretics and religious minorities. The Shiites in particular, probably 20 per cent of the population, have experienced increasingly bloody attacks on their mosques.<sup>4</sup>

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This Islamisation was partially connected with an ethnicisation – Zia’s and the intelligence corps’ willingness to play the “ethnic card”, beginning with the Sindhis. The regional electorate of the Bhutto family and the PPP in the southern Sindh province has always resented the Muhajir for effectively “taking over” Karachi after gaining independence. After Karachi lost its capital status to Islamabad, the Sindhi elite attempted to reclaim control over the

4 | Anita M. Weiss (ed.), *Islamic Reassertion in Pakistan: The Application of Islamic Laws in a Modern State*, Lahore/Karachi/Islamabad, 1987.

unique and large port and industrial city. Meanwhile, the Urdu-speaking Muhajir youth, the educational elite, had radicalised. They fought for unobstructed admission to the province's universities, campaigning against quotas and particularly against the upgraded status of the provincial language, Sindhi, promoted by the PPP. This conflict not only saw ethnic groups pitted against one another, but languages as well: Urdu, elevated to the national language by Jinnah, brought over from Delhi and northern India against the centuries-old literary language of Sindhi. Ultimately, with support from the intelligence corps, a militant Muhajir student organisation was formed. The Muhajir's first ethnic party, the Muhajir Qaumi Movement (MQM), emerged from this group in 1984. From then on, the PPP and the Sindhi majority have seen the autonomy movement in their own province politically blocked, discretely exploited by the military. After Zia's death in 1988, the MQM was permitted to play king-maker within the party democracy once again allowed by the military – until the next coup in 1999.<sup>5</sup>

Zia and his intelligence corps also contributed to increased ethnic and tribal conflicts in the border regions of Balochistan and Pashunistan. Balochistan was one of the expanded and consolidated princely states as determined by the colonial power – the tenuous, mediaeval Khanate of Kalat. The Khan and his more than three dozen tribes had no interest in Pakistan. The enormous, deserted region was added to the new state in 1948 by means of a military operation – since then, Balochistan has expanded to fill nearly half of the territory but only makes up five per cent of Pakistan's population. The less modern tribal elites dreamt of a "Great Balochistan". It would stretch from the South East of Iran and Hormuz to the Indus. Under Bhutto an uprising took place that was brutally crushed by Pakistan's military and the Shah of Iran's air force. Zia, the military and the intelligence corps now handled the region as if it was an occupied zone and pitted individual tribes and tribal federations against each other.<sup>6</sup>

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5 | Jakob Rösel, "Die Mohajir in Karachi, Pakistan", in: Katharina Inhetveen (ed.), *Flucht als Politik: Berichte von fünf Kontinenten*, Cologne, 2006, 125-162.

6 | Martin Axmann, *Back to the Future: The Khanate of Kalat and the Genesis of Baloch Nationalism 1915-1955*, Oxford/New York, 2008.

**The militarisation of Pakistan originated with the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. It provided the Zia regime, which had largely been discredited with regard to foreign affairs, with a second chance overnight.**

Yet the riskiest policy was that of ethnic reevaluation or division in the border regions with Afghanistan. This coincided with the Islamisation and militarisation of the Pakistani state. The militarisation originated with the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. For the Zia regime, which had largely been discredited regarding foreign affairs, this provided a second chance overnight. By declaring himself a defender of freedom, elevating Pakistan to a front-line state and organising an anti-Soviet jihad, Zia gained international esteem, unlimited economic and military aid and access to nuclear technology. The jihad and this external support accelerated Pakistan's fundamentalist, ethnic, political and military transformation. Zia, his intelligence corps and the JI, along with the Reagan government, the CIA and the "House of Saud" all agreed that the jihad could not be organised as a conventional popular uprising. Because of the invasion, Tajiks, Uzbeks and Turkmen predominantly fled west to Iran and mainly Pashtuns predominantly fled east to Pakistan. The kingdom of Kabul, later Afghanistan, arduously formed and fortified in the 19th century, had been founded by Pashtun tribes and primarily relied upon Pashtuns. The Pashtuns have lived on both sides of the newer North West border since British colonial rulers placed their border (the Durand Line) directly in the middle of the Pashtun territories for strategic purposes.<sup>7</sup>

Due to the flow of millions of refugees since 1980, more Pashtuns live in the Pakistani North-West Frontier Province (NWFP, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa since 2010) than in Afghanistan. All those involved in the situation wanted to guarantee that the anti-Soviet jihad came from Pakistan because under no circumstances could it be controlled by Ayatollah Khomeini's fundamentalist Shiite Iran. The insurgency had to be fundamentalist Sunni in order to counter Iran. In addition, members of the state-supported population – the Pashtuns – should dominate this jihad. Zia's now rehabilitated regime was able to secure sufficient support for this undertaking in order to advance not only the jihad but also the Islamisation and militarisation of his

7 | Stephen Rittenberg, "Continuities in Borderland Politics", in: Ainslie T. Embree (ed.), *Pakistan's Western Borderlands*, Karachi, 1979, 67-84.



own state. Zia forced the Reagan administration to delegate financial assistance and arms for the jihad to his military and intelligence corps for the purpose of secrecy. The USA was systematically refused insight into arms and funds distribution. It had meanwhile become clear that the Zia regime was not only providing the mujahideen with funds and arms according to his preferences, but was also providing these to their own military, particularly with regards to their own atomic research. In the process, American and Saudi Arabian support not only advanced fundamentalist Sunni jihad, but it also financed Pakistan's Islamisation, military expansion and nuclear research. The Pakistani military regime illegally purchased nuclear technology from the West and the logic of the Cold War compelled the Reagan administration and the CIA to systematically overlook these schemes or, if necessary, to deny them. By the time Zia died in 1988, Pakistan was already in possession of nuclear weapons, albeit unofficially.<sup>8</sup> At the same time, Zia achieved what Ayub Khan initiated: He had elevated all three branches of the military to Pakistan's most important economic factor – the nearly inscrutable network of military business ("milbus") had transformed Pakistan's military apparatus into a large corporation.<sup>9</sup>

**American and Saudi Arabian support not only advanced fundamentalist Sunni jihad, but it also financed Pakistan's Islamisation.**

## **CHAOS AND CRISIS STATE**

The withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan, and combined with the death of Zia ul-Haq in 1988, triggered a shock in the military and in loyalty to the regime. It was conceivable that after a re-democratisation, strategic indifference and demands would take the place of American financial assistance and support. Meanwhile, the USA looked towards Moscow and Gorbachev's policies of Glasnost and Perestroika. A pseudo-democratic manipulation of the constitution by Zia helped the unguided military out of the crisis. Zia had reinstated the constitution in 1985 in order to assuage the USA, while simultaneously adding an 8<sup>th</sup> amendment (Art. 58-2b) that radically redefined

8 | Adrian Levy and Catherine Scott-Clark, *Deception: Pakistan, the United States and the Global Nuclear Weapons Conspiracy*, London, 2007, 51-116.

9 | Ayesha Siddiqi, n. 2.

the constitution. Because of this article, decisive power no longer lay in the hands of the prime minister but instead in the hands of the president. He could dismiss the prime minister, the government, provincial governors and constitutional court judges without giving any reason and could install an interim government for the purpose of holding new elections. Naturally Zia ul-Haq himself, Army Chief and incumbent Chief Martial Law Administrator, became president in 1985. When Zia died in 1988, the military endorsed Ghulam Ishaq Khan for the office of the presidency, a man they trusted, a Zia loyalist and a high-ranking civil servant. The army was then able to withdraw from open political involvement for more than ten years and allowed a second phase of superficial two-party democracy. From 1988 to 1999, power alternated between the hands of the PPP, under the leadership of Benazir Bhutto, daughter of executed former prime minister and president,

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Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, and the Muslim League's successor organisation, the Pakistan Muslim League, Nawaz (PML-N), under the leadership of the industrial magnate Nawaz Sharif, of Punjab. However, each of these governments was removed from office by the president before the end of their terms. New elections followed each of the interim governments. In doing so, the MQM, once supported by the military, ended up deciding most of the governance. Meanwhile, any control had slipped out of this youth and Muhajir party's hands. Since 1988, they have transformed Karachi into a battlefield. They led a shadow war with gang warfare against their urban ethnic opponents – Pashtuns, Sindhis and Punjabis – and they brought the port and economic life of this essential Pakistani metropolis to a standstill. The military ultimately interfered, dividing and weakening this erstwhile youth organisation turned gang with the help of death squads and an MQM split.<sup>10</sup>

But the end of the democratic decade was drawing near. The winner of the 1997 election, the self-confident head of the victorious PML-N, Nawaz Sharif, now had a two-thirds majority at his disposal in parliament. He then struck down the 8<sup>th</sup> constitutional amendment – and added a 13<sup>th</sup> amendment. Now that dictatorial authority had been

10 | Ann Frotscher, *Banden- und Bürgerkrieg in Karachi*, Baden-Baden, 2005.

removed from the office of the president, the military lost the opportunity to indirectly monitor the government through a president of its trust. It was now only a matter of time before the military openly regained power. History repeated itself, first as a tragedy, then as a farce. Z. A. Bhutto had appointed the unsuspecting Zia ul-Haq as Chief of Army Staff in the 1970s and now Nawaz Sharif promoted the jovial Pervez Musharraf to the post. However, Musharraf immediately began plotting an armed assault on Indian Kashmir, known as the Kargil War, behind the prime minister's back. After Sharif's attempt to remove the unfaithful Musharraf from his post, the military led a coup in 1999. At the very least, Nawaz Sharif retained his head. He was exiled to Saudi Arabia; Sharif's rival, Benazir Bhutto, fled to London. Pervez Musharraf now appointed himself "Chief Executive of Pakistan" and, under American pressure just as with Zia, strove to re-democratise his regime. But this was only possible with the reinstatement of those very presidential powers Nawaz Sharif had already abolished. Thus Musharraf implemented an equivalent constitutional amendment and appointed himself president.

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After 11 September 2001, Pakistan was once again abruptly placed at the centre of American geostrategy after years of indifference. The day after the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, the U.S. government made it unmistakably clear to Musharraf that he must make a decision: "You are either 100 per cent with us or against us [...] There is no grey area."<sup>11</sup> The impending fall of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, the likely manhunt for escaped Taliban and Al-Qaeda warriors and the USA's possible long-term involvement in the neighbouring state of Afghanistan – all of this must have posed enormous difficulties for the so far sedate, self-styled "Father of Pakistan". These political and ideological conflicts and costs could not compensate for the upcoming renewed financial assistance. Though they repeatedly saved the state from financial bankruptcy, the long-term American intervention triggered resistance and conflict that undermined the stability and functioning of the state and society. Most notably the North West, which

11 | Quoted from: Owen Bennett Jones, *Pakistan: Eye of the Storm*, New Haven/London, 2002, 2.

had always been an unchecked and uncontrollable border region, developed to become the epicentre of a fundamental insurgency and terrorism that reached nearly all of the state's regions, levels and institutions. The first victim of this situation between a rock and a hard place, between American intervention and broad and not only fundamentalist reaction was Pervez Musharraf himself. Six years after Pakistan's second reevaluation to become a front-line state against Afghanistan, the weakened president and Chief of Army Staff could no longer hold on. He gambled away the military's support and was forced to retire from his army post in 2007. Without the support of the military, he was not able to weather Pakistan's enduring crisis as president for very long. Barely one year later in September 2008, Musharraf was replaced by a civilian politician through democratic elections: the widower of the murdered Benazir Bhutto, the notoriously corrupt "Mister 10 Per Cent", Asif Ali Zardari.<sup>12</sup>

And so for now the third and final phase of the superficial democratisation has begun. There is very little that is new. A power struggle has continued since 2008 between

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the governing coalition of the PPP and the publicly despised President Zardari and the PML-N, still dominated by Nawaz Sharif. The parallelogram of forces was completed with the weakening of Musharraf's active chief constitutional judge, Iftikhar Chaudhry, and the military, who have so far been bidding their time – represented since 2007 by the new incumbent Chief of Army Staff, Ashfaq Parvez Kayani. This power struggle within the confines of Islamabad however appears increasingly irrelevant compared to the conflicts, terrorist attacks and organisations that have meanwhile been emanating from the border regions, affecting the entire country at all levels of society.

The anti-Soviet jihad has left Pakistan with weapons, drugs and fundamentalism problems. In the border regions, among the Pashtun population and especially in the enormous refugee cities cropping up, these problems and their inherent new behavioural ideals, violent economies and

12 | Ian Talbot, *Pakistan: A Modern History*, London, 2009, 287-439.

criminal organisations took root in a particular way. Pashtun networks and migrants distributed weapons, drugs and Islamic ideals to and in all the large cities, especially Karachi. From the beginning, the Muhajir insurgency here has been more like an ethnic civil war against Pashtun slums, mafias, transportation businesses, drug and arms traffickers for control of the city and the port. The invasion and rule of the Taliban in Afghanistan initiated by the military and the Bhutto government in 1994 and supported by Saudi Arabia and the USA has increased the problems at the border. The Taliban movement is in no way solely comprised of radicalised Afghan-Pashtun refugees. Thousands of Pakistani young people living in the border region, mainly Pashtuns, are affiliated with the movement.<sup>13</sup>

This impenetrable, enormous and traditionally anarchic zone has ultimately become a problem. Geostrategic ambitions alongside knowledge of their military weaknesses suggested that the British in the North West region should set up a particular arrangement. The border was shifted far to the West across the Indus at the mountain ridge. It thus drifted into the territory of the Pashtun mountain tribes, which no empire had ever stably conquered in 2,000 years. And the British Empire had no wish to do so. Instead it created a concentrated military area between the Indus and the artificial "Durand Line" along with an extraterritorial buffer – the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa since 2010), making Peshawar its capital and from there it controlled the Khyber Pass and the crucial Indus crossing at Attock. Beyond the Indus plain, in the mountains, autonomous tribal areas were established. Since 1947 they have been known as the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). They were expanded further northwards through the Provincially Administered Tribal Areas (PATA). The two dozen mountain and warrior tribes in this autonomous zone governed themselves along the lines of self-regulated anarchy. The chiefs received pensions, weapons for their militias, trade rights, grazing rights and access to the bazaars in the Indus Valley. However, to counter attacks and uprisings they are threatened with an embargo on

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13 | Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Islam, Oil and the New Great Game in Central Asia*, London/New York, 2002.

“water and salt”, starvation and costly punitive expeditions at the end in which every field and settlement will be burned down.<sup>14</sup>

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The Afghanistan War destroyed this 80-year-old balance and protection arrangement. Refugee cities developed in the FATA. The Pakistani military, ISI and JI used them to organise the jihad. A new “Internationale” of fundamentalism has emerged; mujahideen from several Arabian countries have arrived. Heroin factories here also help the insurgents finance their jihad via Karachi. The tribal chiefs now had to stand their ground on both sides against drugs and arms handlers, transnational terrorist organisations like Al-Qaeda and soon against the Taliban. The FATA has become more internationalised, with emerging internet cafés, arms factories, state-of-the-art housing covered by clay walls and with helipads. All of this took place in an inaccessible mountain region the size of Switzerland with a population of more than four million. It was only natural that the toppled Taliban and their international clientèle would flee to this protected area at the end of 2001. They were able to first intimidate and kill the old chiefs undisturbed, then undercut the tribal gatherings, finally taking over power either directly or indirectly.<sup>15</sup>

The Taliban have reorganised themselves. Given the complexity of the alliances, interests and identities at play, the distinction cultivated by the Pakistani military between the “Pakistani” and “Afghan” Taliban is merely a conceptual gimmick. It serves only to cover up a problem that has become more urgent for the military and the civilian government since 2008: The fall of the Pakistani-promoted Taliban regime and the continuing American warfare both in Afghanistan as well as on the border have led to challenges for the government and the military – domestic, religious and strategic problems. Musharraf, the military and the PPP government are considered by many conservatives and religious authorities to be traitors to their country and to Islam. This has heightened fundamentalism

14 | Ainslie T. Embree, “Pakistan’s Imperial Legacy”, in: Ainslie T. Embree (ed.), *Pakistan’s Western Borderlands*, Karachi, 1979, 24-40.

15 | Imtiaz Gul, *The Most Dangerous Place: Pakistan’s Lawless Frontier*, London, 2010, 11-146.

and has increasingly been used to justify attacks not only on religious minorities and the USA, but also on the military and the intelligence corps, the last functioning guarantors of the crisis-ridden state and nuclear power. But the strategic dimension is crucial: A "Greater Afghanistan", a "Pashtunistan" reaching to the Indus would be the end of Pakistan's artificial and military state. The following applied and continues to apply for the government, the military and the Punjabi elite: Pakistan is secure so long as the Pashtuns are represented at the highest levels of the military and the state and so long as pro-Pakistan Pashtuns rule in Kabul. Co-optation secures the loyalty of the crucial Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. Only pro-Pakistan leadership in Kabul can ensure cross-border Pashtun fraternisation for the purpose of a "Greater Afghanistan/Pashtunistan" does not happen and that Pakistan's arch-enemy, India, receives no strategic or economic access to Afghanistan. Pakistan's military insists upon "strategic depth" in Central Asia against India.

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Of course the policy on Afghanistan remains exclusively under the army's control. Long before Barack Obama took office in 2008, the military had already considered Afghanistan's situation after the withdrawal of U.S. troops and after western-supported Afghan President Hamid Karzai's term of office ended. The Pakistani military has always argued that the "Afghan Taliban" will have to participate in the future government in Kabul. These party supporters must be protected, yet this is not opined to be the case for the "Pakistani Taliban". As long as their violence was directed at Christians, Hindus, Shiites and heretics this was feasible. But now that they have begun attacking the Sufi majority's holy shrines and the fundamentalists in the northern part of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa wish to establish a theocratic Sharia state, the military can no longer simply stand by. The military apparatus has been under threat and their existence has been jeopardised at least since intelligence corps offices and military installations (with their nuclear weapons) themselves have been attacked.<sup>16</sup>

16 | Matthew J. Nelson, "Pakistan in 2009: Tackling the Taliban", in: *Asian Survey* 2010, Vol. 50, No. 1, 112-126; Christine C. Fair, "Pakistan in 2010: Flooding, Governmental Inefficiency, and Continued Insurgency", in: *Asian Survey* 2011, Vol. 51, No. 1, 97-110.

The Pakistani military is now once again engaged, if hesitantly, in the southern part of the FATA, knowing well they can no longer fully depend on the loyalty of all of their Pashtun soldiers. Above all the military has depended on U.S. drone attacks – against which it has subsequently protested in order to save face. For more than eleven years, U.S. intervention has landed the Pakistani military and intelligence corps in an intractable moral and practical dilemma. Due to strategic anticipation of the future, they

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do not wish to take action against terrorism directed against Kabul and the USA, but they have hesitated too long concerning terrorism directed at Pakistan. Defensive action is only taken when Pakistan itself has been attacked. But these attacks indicate that the perpetrators – the Taliban or related organisations – receive information from the inside, from soldiers, police informants or intelligence corps factions. The complex of violence stems from the border and reaches across the entire country and to India, Kashmir, Mumbai and Delhi. The organisations responsible for the assassinations and terror attacks have been propagating themselves, continually reforming and, above all, in many cases they have freed themselves from the erstwhile control of the army, the intelligence corps or the JI.

The Afghanistan conflict is not all that began 30 years ago; it was accompanied by the introduction of Sunni fundamentalism. At the same time, Zia began the Islamisation, ethnicisation and militarisation of the artificial state of Pakistan. The consequences of these developments culminated on the eve of the historic 2013 parliamentary election: Islamisation has uncontrollably and broadly led to radicalisation in the form of fundamentalisation and selectively Talibanisation. Fundamentalist terrorism is not only directed at minorities, but increasingly at majority faiths – at pilgrimage shrines and holy sites. The ethnicisation of politics has proved to be permanent in the case of the Sindh and Karachi. In the metropolitan area of Karachi with its 20 million inhabitants, nearly ten per cent of the national population, a war of ethnic, criminal cartels and political “machines” has arisen since the suppression of the Muhajir uprising: Muhajir versus Pashtuns versus Sindhis. The entire conflict has been moulded by ethnic party



schemes and objective alliances between the MQM, the PPP and the PML-N. In Balochistan, fear of losing power, of resource conflicts with Islamabad over the distribution of natural gas revenues, fear of rival tribes and calls for secession have led to a shadow war. It has been carried out through abductions, bombings and death squads and has destabilised a geostrategic zone the size of Great Britain. Militarisation remains: Under Zia ul-Haq it accelerated as a complete phenomenon, economically, socially and politically. The militarisation has manifested itself in a military industrial complex; it appears to be a globally present parallel society and alternative world; it openly influences nearly every foreign policy decision-making process and, more concealed, many domestic ones.

**Ethnicisation and Islamisation have culminated in a new kind of terrorism. The violence once fuelled and tolerated by the military is now directed toward society and the state.**

A new phase has certainly been reached through the transition from a military state to a crisis state; ethnicisation and Islamisation have culminated in a kind of terrorism that weakened and divided the previous military and intelligence regime and that is continually involved in new conflicts. The violence once fuelled and tolerated by the military is now directed toward society and the state.

## **FRAMEWORK OF THE 2013 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS**

Given Pakistan's historical troubles and current conflict situation as outlined above, it is remarkable that in 2013, for the first time the basic criterion for a democratically composed society was finally realised: the normal, peaceful change of power through free elections. It was the first time a civilian government survived an entire legislative period and faced the Pakistani electorate at the end of its term.

It had already become apparent in the run-up to the election that the era of Pervez Musharraf in Pakistan was finally over. In a spectacular move, the former military ruler returned from exile in Dubai in March 2013. He had already founded his own party in 2010, the All Pakistan Muslim League (APML), and intended to run in the upcoming parliamentary elections himself. It was for this purpose that Musharraf applied for candidacy in no fewer than four constituencies. However, all four petitions were rejected

by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP). This rejection was supported by the vast majority of the Pakistani population; according to a representative poll by Gallup Pakistan, nearly two-thirds of those polled approved of the ECP's decision.<sup>17</sup> The former president had very little residual support from the population. And even worse, Musharraf was formally charged for offences committed during his time in office and was placed under house arrest. His party ultimately won only 54,617 votes in the election, receiving only a single seat in parliament. Musharraf's personal future seems to lie more in a Pakistani courtroom than in national politics.

Other actors fought for power, notably the government coalition's ruling party, the PPP, and the largest opposition party, the PML-N. The PPP could not rely on President Asif Ali Zardari's charisma because, though he hails from their own party, he is extremely unpopular;<sup>18</sup> rather, they presented the fresh face of his son, 24-year-old party leader Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, who intended to inherit the political legacies of his executed grandfather, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, and his assassinated mother, Benazir Bhutto. Since the 18<sup>th</sup> constitutional amendment in 2010, the PML-N was once again able to position their unchallenged party leader, Nawaz Sharif, as a candidate for prime minister. Through this constitutional amendment, which above all increased the rights of the provinces and therefore fostered decentralisation, and which all in all moved Pakistan's previously semi-presidential political system closer to a declared parliamentary system, the two-term limit for prime ministers was abolished.<sup>19</sup> Thus Sharif could now run for re-election

17 | *Opinion Poll: Rejection of Pervez Musharraf's Electoral Papers*, Gilani Research Foundation/Gallup Pakistan, press release, Islamabad, 2 May 2013. 2,641 men and women were polled in every Pakistani province. The exact question was: "Former President Pervez Musharraf submitted papers from four constituencies to contest elections. Recently, the Election Commission of Pakistan rejected papers from all four constituencies. Do you support or oppose this decision of ECP?" Answers: "Support" 64 per cent, "Oppose" 27 per cent, "Don't Know/No Response" nine per cent.

18 | According to a poll, 83 per cent of Pakistanis hold a negative opinion of their president. Riaz Hassan, "Pakistan Elections 2013: Some Countdown Reflections", *ISAS Brief*, No. 278, 10 May 2013, 1.

19 | Philipp Kauppert, "Niederlage für die Regierung, Sieg für die Demokratie: Zu den Parlamentswahlen in Pakistan", *Perspektive FES Pakistan*, May 2013, Islamabad/Berlin, 2013, 7.

after his two disreputable and fairly unsuccessful terms from 1990 to 1993 and 1997 to 1999.

The particular importance of both of these Pakistani people's parties, the PPP and PML-N, can be partially explained by the distinctive features of the electoral system. Based on the Westminster model of earlier British colonial rule, elections in Pakistan run on a simple majority voting system in single-member constituencies. Direct mandates exist in accordance with the first-past-the-post principle, in which it makes no difference whether a candidate leads in their constituency by one vote or ten thousand. Such an electoral system favours large parties and occasionally leads to drastic distortion effects and, at least in theory, reliably leads to a two-party system. The first-past-the-post system thus provides an advantage for the PPP and PML-N and systematically weakens smaller parties. In addition, of the 342 parliamentary seats, only 272 are awarded in free elections. The remaining 70 seats are distributed as a mandated quota for women (60 seats) and representatives of religious minorities (ten seats) in accordance with the electoral results of every party with a share of more than five per cent of the vote, which only serves to further marginalise smaller parties. Once established, it can often be very difficult to break down the established dominance of a two-party system.

It had already become apparent in the run-up to the 2013 elections that a third party could succeed in seriously calling the leadership role of the PPP/PML-N into question. Opinion polls revealed that the Pakistan

**The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, led by the enigmatic Imran Khan, had a definite chance of perhaps becoming the strongest faction and possibly even securing the prime ministership.**

Tehreek-e-Insaf (Pakistan Movement for Justice, PTI), led by the enigmatic Imran Khan, had a definite chance of perhaps becoming the strongest faction and possibly even securing the prime ministership. Imran Khan is a national hero in Pakistan. As team captain he led the Pakistani national cricket team to their first and so far only world cup title in 1992. This link between celebrity culture and politics is in no way unusual in South Asia and Imran Khan succeeded in profiting from his immense popularity as a sportsman. With his promise of a "new Pakistan" he made himself a symbol of a new urban middle class that has had enough of the establishment politics and the political

parties of industrial magnates, large landowners and feudal lords in Punjab and Sindh, perceived to be hopelessly corrupt. Imran Khan's outsider status became an advantage.<sup>20</sup> At the same time, Khan, who comes from the Niazi tribe, promised the Pashtuns a new approach to solving the issues of violence and terrorism in the North West and criticised American drone strikes in the mainstream media. But after a serious fall during the election campaign that left him severely injured, Imran Khan was forced to follow the polls from his bedside.

**The Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan have so far had little interest in political involvement. They have withdrawn an offer to engage in a dialogue and have instead attempted to undermine the parliamentary elections through attacks.**

Both Nawaz Sharif and Imran Khan announced early on in their campaigns that, should they win, they would undertake peace negotiations with the Pakistani Taliban. However, extremists affiliated with the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (Taliban Movement of Pakistan, TTP) have so far had little interest in such political involvement. They have withdrawn their February 2013 offer to engage in a dialogue with the government and, through attacks, have instead attempted to undermine the parliamentary elections, which they have declared to be "un-Islamic". The comparatively secular parties in particular have been targeted; the TTP has expressly warned the Pakistani people about participating in PPP, Awami National Party (ANP) and Muttahida Qaumi Movement (United National Movement, MQM<sup>21</sup>) rallies.<sup>22</sup> Due to security concerns the PPP withdrew almost entirely from the public campaign and mainly communicated through video messages from its young party leader. But the ANP, mainly active in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and the MQM in Karachi were affected most. Bombings were carried out at their campaign offices and a number of their volunteers were killed.<sup>23</sup> Parliamentary candidate Sadiq Zaman Khattak (ANP) was shot in Karachi on 2 May 2013, which led to a temporary voting suspension in his constituency

20 | Shahid Javed Burki, "Pakistan Goes to Polls: Imran Khan's Tumble and the Youth Surge", *ISAS Brief*, No. 277, 8 May 2013, 1-4.

21 | Until 1997 Mohajir Qaumi Movement (Muhajir People's Movement).

22 | Ronny Heine, "Pakistan hat gewählt – und für einen politischen Wechsel gestimmt", *KAS-Länderbericht*, 13 May 2013, Islamabad, 2013, 1-2, [http://kas.de/wf/doc/kas\\_34357-1522-1-30.pdf](http://kas.de/wf/doc/kas_34357-1522-1-30.pdf) (accessed 23 Jul 2013).

23 | Kauppert, n. 19, 6.

(NA-254, Karachi XVI) and necessitated a total of three by-elections.<sup>24</sup> The precarious security situation in the run-up to the elections forced the military to run through various intervention scenarios as a part of an “integrated security arrangement” in the event of an outright escalation of violence.<sup>25</sup> In addition, explicit threats against polling places caused hopes of a high voter turnout to fade away.<sup>26</sup> However, both fears proved not to be true; the military was not forced to intervene and voters were undeterred. At 55.02 per cent, voter turnout even reached a new record high. Though the Election Commission’s official figures lay below those made in the initial euphoric estimates of a voter turnout of over 60 per cent, they still present clear evidence that once again significant progress has been made in democratising Pakistan.



A PML-N billboard: The party received 125 of the 272 seats, significant gains compared to 2008. | Source: Omer Wazir, flickr (CC BY-SA).

24 | Kristof W. Duwaerts, “Die Wahlen in Pakistan – ein Rückblick”, HSS Politischer Sonderbericht Pakistan, 15 May 2013, Islamabad/Munich, 2013, 2-3.

25 | Bibhu Prasad Routray, “Poll Position: Securing Pakistan’s Elections”, in: *Jane’s Intelligence Review*, 05/2013, 38-43.

26 | According to a representative poll by Gallup Pakistan, fear of riots and violence was the main reason non-voters in Pakistan would abstain from voting. In answer to the question, “If there is no chance of you going to vote, what are your reasons?”, 29 per cent of respondents replied with, “Threat of riots”. *Opinion Poll: Election Day*, Gilani Research Foundation/ Gallup Pakistan, press release, Islamabad, 7 May 2013.

In 2013, a total of more than 84 million people registered to vote. Of those, over 46 million eventually did cast their vote. Voter participation increased not only at the national level, but in every province as well. However, this must be qualified: Voter participation refers solely to voters registered prior to the election and by no means to every eligible voter. In the province of Sindh and in Balochistan fewer people registered to vote than in the last national parliamentary election five years ago. In addition, compared to 2008, fewer people actually went to the polls in Balochistan. Despite significantly higher participation by women, a significant gender imbalance remains: Registered voters still tend to be men rather than women. In the FATA twice as many men registered to vote than did women.<sup>27</sup> Reports have come from both the FATA and the provinces of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan that women have partly systematically been prevented from exercising their voting rights, for example by not being allowed entrance to polling stations.<sup>28</sup>

Table 1

**Voter Registration and Participation,  
2008 and 2013 by Comparison<sup>29</sup>**

	Registered	Voters	Turnout (in %)	Registered	Voters	Turnout (in %)
	2008			2013		
Punjab	44,500,257	21,442,088	48	48,890,007	28,760,265	60
Sindh	19,506,473	8,612,336	44	17,862,681	9,782,599	54
Khyber Pakht.	10,661,212	3,576,523	34	12,268,406	5,476,001	45
Balochistan	4,365,274	1,367,001	31	3,173,819	1,300,628	43
FATA	1,280,365	397,593	31	1,386,228	508,013	36
Islamabad	482,801	241,531	50	626,383	389,976	62
total	80,796,382	35,637,072	44	84,207,524	46,217,482	55

27 | Cf. Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), <http://ecp.gov.pk/VoterStats.aspx> (accessed 23 Jul 2013).

28 | Kauppert, n. 19, 4.

29 | Cf. ECP, n. 27.

## ELECTION RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The elections were a triumph for the PML-N and Nawaz Sharif. According to the official results released by the Election Commission of Pakistan on 22 May 2013, the PML-N received 125 of the 272 seats put to the vote and in doing so made significant gains compared to 2008. In contrast, the PPP suffered huge losses and received only 31 seats, enough to remain the second-largest party. While the better part of the PML-N's seats came from Nawaz Sharif's native region, Punjab, the PML-N was also the only party to have been able to win at least one seat in all four provinces, in the tribal areas and in the capital of Islamabad. In Punjab, the PML-N was rewarded for its comparatively stable balance under the regional government of the party leader's younger brother, Shahbaz Sharif, during the past five years. The noticeable improvements in Punjab's infrastructure particularly garnered support for Nawaz Sharif.<sup>30</sup>



Supporters of the PTI: Imran Khan's party was not fully able to achieve its self-prescribed goals. | Source: Musti Mohsin, flickr (CC BY-ND).

The PPP was penalised for their collapse at the national level and was demoted to the level of a regional party in Sindh.<sup>31</sup> During the preceding legislative period, the PPP government did not succeed in effectively addressing Pakistan's four most urgent domestic issues (power outages, inflation, corruption and insurgent movements in the North West and in Balochistan). This demanding task now falls to designated Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif.<sup>32</sup> However, despite the future government leader's overwhelming mandate, he faces a complicated situation: The PPP remains the majority party in the Senate, the second house of the Pakistani parliament, and is expected to block the PML-N government's legislative agenda at least until 2015.<sup>33</sup> In addition, following the accompanying regional elections, widely differing coalitions will govern in the four provinces, which threatens to make reaching national consensus considerably more difficult.<sup>34</sup>

Imran Khan's PTI, which entered the election with high expectations, was not fully able to achieve its self-prescribed goals. Although it gained 28 seats after boycotting the election five years ago and has now achieved undisputed success, it continues to trail the unpopular PPP. In particular, Imran Khan himself has had to bid farewell to any notion of becoming the prime minister. The Muhajir party, MQM, has come in as the fourth-largest party with 18 seats, 16 of which are from their traditional stronghold of Karachi. In 2013, as in previous elections, the Islamic parties JI and Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazal under the leadership of Fazal ur-Rahman (Assembly of Islamic Clergy, JUI-F) do not play a significant role at the national level with their 13 combined representatives. The JI boycotted the last elections, and the JIU-F was only able to make small gains in electoral popularity. In contrast, the secular ANP has suffered considerable losses, weakened not least by the large-scale violent attacks in the campaign, now holding only one seat.

31 | Christian Wagner, "Schwieriges Pakistan", *SWP Aktuell*, No. 30, May 2013, 2.

32 | Iftekhhar Ahmed Chowdhury, "The Reincarnation of Nawaz Sharif: Pakistan's Deepening Democracy", *ISAS Brief*, No. 279, 13 May 2013, 2.

33 | Duwaerts, n. 24, 3 et seq.

34 | Wagner, n. 31, 1.



Table 2

**National Assembly Election Results by Province<sup>35</sup>**

<b>Party</b>	<b>Seats</b>	<b>PJB</b>	<b>SIN</b>	<b>KPK</b>	<b>BLS</b>	<b>FATA</b>	<b>ISB</b>
Pakistan Muslim League, Nawaz (PML-N)	125	117	1	4	1	1	1
Pakistan People's Party (PPP)	31	2	29	0	0	0	0
Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)	28	8	1	17	0	1	1
Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM)	18	0	18	0	0	0	0
Jamiat-e Ulama-ye Islam, Fazal (JUI-F)	10	0	0	6	3	1	0
Pakistan Muslim League, Funct. (PML-F)	5	0	5	0	0	0	0
Jamaat-e Islami (JI)	3	0	0	3	0	0	0
Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PMAP)	3	0	0	0	3	0	0
National People's Party (NPP)	2	0	2	0	0	0	0
Pakistan Muslim League, Qaid (PML-Q)	2	2	0	0	0	0	0
Awami National Party (ANP)	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
Balochistan National Party (BNP)	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
Qaumi Watan Party (QWP)	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
Pakistan Muslim League, Zia (PML-Z)	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
National Party (NP)	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
Awami Muslim League Pakistan (AMLPP)	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Awami Jamhuri Ittehad Pakistan (AJIP)	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
All Pakistan Muslim League (APML)	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
Independents	28	16	1	1	4	6	0
altogether	263	147	57	35	13	9	2
By-election	3	1	1	0	0	1	0
Recount	5	0	3	0	0	2	0
total	272	148	61	35	14	12	2

35 | Cf. ECP (As of 22 May 2013). PJB = Punjab, SIN = Sindh, KPK = Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, BLS = Balochistan, FATA = Federally Administered Tribal Areas, ISB = Islamabad (Federal Capital).

Table 3  
**Votes, Percentages, Seats, Candidates<sup>36</sup>**

Party	Votes	Share (in %)	Seats	Candidates
PML-N	14,794,188	32.98	125	220
PTI	7,563,504	16.86	28	232
PPP	6,822,958	15.21	31	226
MQM	2,422,656	5.40	18	205
JUI-F	1,454,907	3.24	10	131
PML-Q	1,405,493	3.13	2	53
PML-F	1,007,761	2.25	5	28
JI	949,394	2.12	3	166
ANP	450,561	1.00	1	58
MDM <sup>37</sup>	359,589	0.80	0	87
PMAP	211,989	0.47	3	30
AMLP	93,051	0.21	1	16
BNP	64,070	0.14	1	12
NP	61,171	0.14	1	10
Other	1,424,527	3.18	6	642
altogether	39,085,819	87.13	235	2,116
Independents	5,773,494	12.87	28	2,361
total	44,859,313 <sup>38</sup>	100.00	263 <sup>39</sup>	4,477

Within the framework of a classic first-past-the-post system, both a party's total number of votes and national percentage of votes play only a secondary role. Nonetheless, in this respect the PML-N quite obviously emerged with an

36 | Cf. ebd.; Azam Khan, "Voting Positions: PTI Won More Popular Votes Than PPP", *The Express Tribune*, May 2012, 2013.

37 | Party alliance "Muttahida Deeni Mahaz" (union of various religious parties).

38 | Only counting valid votes and those already counted. Total number of votes cast: 46,217,482.

39 | Not counting recounts, nullifications and special elections.

outright victory. It is also noteworthy that the PTI was able to outperform the PPP in terms of the number of votes. Following these three parties, a much more considerable gap in the number of votes exists than in the number of seats. No other party comes remotely close to the three largest parties' mobilisation potential.

## **CLASSIFICATION OF THE 2013 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS**

How can the election results be integrated into the analysis of the three overarching trends of Islamisation, ethnicisation and militarisation? Pakistan's Islamisation has proceeded despite this democratic progress. The elections have severely weakened secular and comparatively liberal parties, such as the PPP and the ANP. However, this has not resulted in the political dominance of radical Islamic parties. Nonetheless, conservative and decidedly religious parties, such as the PML-N and the PTI, have won the day. It must therefore be assumed that Nawaz Sharif will promptly make good on his promise to undertake peace negotiations with the Pakistani Taliban. Now, together with the especially influential province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the long-time Islamic sympathiser Imran Khan (not without reason known as "Taliban Khan" or "mullah without a beard"<sup>40</sup>), the balance of power overall has considerably shifted in favour of religious and Islamic parties.

The election results also demonstrate the effects of the ethnicisation and regionalisation of Pakistani politics. No party, not even the PML-N, can count on a truly national following. Instead, clearly differentiated regional strongholds have developed, as demonstrated by the election results in the provinces: The PML-N is dominant in Punjab, as expected, and has won a formidable majority in both the national and regional elections. Overall the PPP has had considerable losses, though it was able to maintain its central power base in the rural regions of the Sindh province with relatively few problems despite its miserable election results. The cities in Sindh, especially Karachi, remain under the control of the Muhajir and their party, the MQM. Both parties, the

**Overall the PPP has had considerable losses, though it was able to maintain its central power base in the rural regions of the Sindh province with relatively few problems despite its miserable election results.**

PPP and the MQM, have formed a government coalition in Sindh following the provincial elections. However, in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the Pashtun Imran Khan's PTI has won the most seats by far in both the national elections and the provincial parliamentary elections, though it is unclear whether a PTI coalition will truly take control of the government at the provincial level. The situation in Balochistan is less clear-cut. Alongside a divided outcome in the national elections, the Pashtun party, the Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (Pashtun National People's Party, PMAP), narrowly won the most seats it has ever had in the regional parliament.<sup>41</sup> Overall this demonstrates a trend towards regionalisation in the Pakistani party system.<sup>42</sup> Also fitting is that more voters voted for candidates in the National Assembly elections who explicitly hailed from their own "community" than in 2008.<sup>43</sup>

While Islamisation and ethnicisation still remain determining factors in Pakistani politics, militarisation has somewhat declined and democratisation has emerged to a greater extent. In the run-up to the elections, the military embraced free elections more openly than ever before.<sup>44</sup> Together with the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), the army helped to ensure a largely trouble-free parliamentary election process and prevented the uncontrollable escalation of violence. The co-operation with the ECP in particular has been interpreted as a promising sign.<sup>45</sup> In contrast to his predecessors, Chief of Army Staff Ashfaq

**The military's popularity in Pakistan is currently at an all-time low. In addition, all the Generals' attention has been called to changing the army leadership later in 2013.**

Parvez Kayani publicly and symbolically cast his vote wearing his dress uniform and in doing so outwardly demonstrated the military leadership's support of the elections.<sup>46</sup> Hopefully, this commitment to democratisation will last. However, it should be borne in mind that

the military's popularity in Pakistan is currently at an all-time low and support among the Pakistani population is far from what it has been in the past. In addition, all the Generals' attention has been called to changing the

41 | Kauppert, n. 19, 2 et seq.

42 | Wagner, n. 31, 1 et seq.

43 | Gilani Research Foundation/Gallup Pakistan, *Opinion Poll: Elections*, Pressemitteilung, Islamabad, 13 May 2013.

44 | Kauppert, n. 19, 1.

45 | Routray, n. 25, 40 et seq.

46 | Chowdhury, n. 32, 3.

army leadership later in 2013, along with modifying the current military doctrine in order to bring the focus away from Pakistan's rivalry with India and towards a concentration on the "internal enemy". As a result, a coup is rather unlikely to occur in the near future, even though Nawaz Sharif has won as the candidate with by far the worst relationship with the military, having already once been ousted from office. However, despite all appearances, should the army once again decide to seize power, it would likely first await the (foreseeable?) collapse of the civilian government in order to take up the not unfamiliar role of the "rescuer".<sup>47</sup>

### **OUTLOOK: CONFLICT CONTAINMENT OR PROSPECTS OF PEACE?**

Crises also provide opportunities. 2013 and 2014 represent both a turning point and an opportunity for internal and external de-escalation for Pakistan. Following this year's parliamentary elections, the presidential elections must also be held by the electoral college. In addition, Chief of Army Staff Kayani's term is ending, and Chief Justice Iftikhar Chaudhry is set to retire. Next year, the withdrawal of the American and allied military from Afghanistan will become a reality. Both may contribute to conflict containment. For the first time in Pakistan's history, a civilian government has survived its entire legislative period. With the recognisably strong election outcome behind them, the ruling PML-N may now be able to make up a stable government benefiting from a strong level of confidence against the intrigue of the ISI and a military in the midst of an upheaval. This could remove the desire of all the participants to promote ethnic emotions, interests and organisations in Karachi or Balochistan and Islamic terrorism in the nation as a whole. The allied withdrawal from Afghanistan may contribute to such restraint so long as Afghanistan and Pakistan agree on a partnership to control the border areas, the Pakistani Taliban and other terrorist networks. In the opinion of a number of observers in the region, a power sharing configuration with the Taliban in Kabul could be inevitable. Such a scenario remains entirely unsettled and the precise

**With the recognisably strong election outcome behind them, the ruling PML-N may now be able to make up a stable government. This could remove the desire of all the participants to promote ethnic emotions.**

47 | Routray, n. 25, 43.

make-up of such a government in Afghanistan is very difficult to predict. With or without the participation of the Taliban, the new government in any case would have to assure Pakistan that fundamentalist terrorism across the border is no longer supported within their own borders, and furthermore would have to reach a consensus with regard to Pakistan's non-negotiable foreign policy priorities. Such a "partner" in Kabul may alleviate the Pakistani military's greatest fears of a power vacuum or a "Great Pashtunistan". Within the context of this recent domestic stability, Islamic terrorism in Pakistan could also be curbed, regardless of possible developments in Afghanistan.

The already noticeable mass protest against a Pakistani theocracy could then gain ground compared to anti-Americanism and to an appraisal of fundamentalism. Such conflict containment would contribute to internal and external peace with minorities and neighbouring states.