

Why we don't need the NSC

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Pak. - Pol. & Govt.
Dawlat
28.2.04

In the year 2004, the nation shall, at long last, be blessed with a National Security Council. When one-and-a-half years ago, on August 21, 2002 General Pervez Musharraf promulgated the Legal Framework Order, 2002 which made 29 amendments in the 1973 Constitution the most far-reaching and controversial amendment related to the creation of a 13-member National Security Council (NSC).

Under a newly inserted (and now deleted) article No. 152(A) in the controversially amended Constitution, the President of Pakistan was made the chairman of the NSC, and its other twelve members were to be the prime minister, the chairman of the Senate, the speaker of the National Assembly, the leader of the opposition in the National Assembly, the chief ministers of the four provinces, the chairman of the joint chiefs of staff committee, and the chiefs of staff of the Pakistan army, Pakistan navy and Pakistan air force.

The NSC will serve as a forum for consultation on: (a) strategic matters pertaining to the sovereignty, integrity and security of the state; and

(b) matters relating to democracy, governance and inter-provincial harmony.

✗ The idea of NSC in Pakistan is, at least, two decades old. Ziaul Haq floated it in the early eighties but retracted shrewdly on account of the suspicions it widely aroused and the opposition it bitterly encountered. Zia died in 1988 but the idea lived. It remained dormant but was always close to the chest, the mind and the heart of the 'invisible government.' A decade later, in 1998, it was again put on public display with fanfare by the then chief of the army staff, General Jehangir Karamat. He had to resign but the idea still remained on the drawing board, waiting for the right hour. The right hour has seemingly struck.

The basic idea is said to have been borrowed from the Turkish constitution, and it would, therefore, be logical, for historical reasons, to start by quoting affairs, chief of general staff, commanders of the land, air and naval forces and general commander of the gendarmes. The Turkish NSC thus consisted of ten members, half being civilians and the other half from the armed forces. (Our NSC consists of thirteen members out of whom four are from the armed forces and nine are civilians).

Why did the Turks make this novel provision in their constitution in 1982? The question needs to be studied in its historical perspective which would show that there is lit-

who were now corps commanders in the Turkish army were also members of the Turkish national assembly. Unlike Mustafa Kemal, they did not give up their army commands.

However, a year later, on October 30, 1924, President Mustafa Kemal gave them a choice between being a corps commander or a member of the national assembly. Only three opted for the national assembly and resigned their army commands. The rest resigned from their assembly seats and returned to their careers in the army. It is specially to be noted here that Mustafa Kemal became the president of Turkey through elections, and once he became the president, he immediately left the army and shed his uniform, what to speak of retaining the powerful post of the chief of the staff of the army for a month or a year.

It is apparent that the Turkish army was sucked into a role in politics because circumstances forced its young and junior officers to become revolutionaries and lead a people's revolt against an internal despotic monarchy and wage a people's war, on land and sea, against formidable foreign foes who then comprised almost the entire Christian Europe. What is the history of the Pakistani army, and its role in the freedom movement?

Before August 14, 1947, the commissioned officers of the army of the undivided India were as much the well-paid and obedient servants of their British masters as the covenanted officers of the civil service of undivided India. Neither the civil service of Turkey nor that of the undivided India can claim a pride of place or performance in the national struggle against the foreign masters. In fact, if anything, the converse is true. The same applied to the army of undivided India. However, the same does not apply to the modern Turkish army. It was the people's

has thus fourteen permanent members (against thirteen members of our NSC) and one ad-hoc member, 2/3rd being civilians and 1/3rd from the armed forces.

How does the "Leader" emerge? What are his qualifications? What are his powers? Articles 107, 109 and 110 of the Iranian constitution answer these questions.

Under article 107, the power of appointment of the "Leader" vests with the experts, i.e., "Khabargain", elected by the people. These experts review and consult among themselves concerning all the "fuqaha". The strategic and now controversial role of the "Khabargain" is now the eye of the storm in the Iranian politics.

Under article 109, the "Leader" must possess the following qualifications:-

(a) scholarship required for performing the functions of "mufti" in different fields of "fiqh";

(b) piety and justice required for the leadership of the Islamic "ummah";

(c) right political and social perspicacity, prudence, courage, administrative faculties and capability for leadership.

Under article 110, some of the powers of the "Leader" are:-

(a) Supreme commander of the armed forces;

(b) appointment and dismissal of:-

(i) the chief of the joint staff of the armed forces;

(ii) the supreme commanders of the armed forces;

(iii) the supreme judicial authority;

(iv) the chief commander of the revolutionary guard; (v) the heads of the radio and the television.

(c) dismissal of the president of the republic, after the supreme court holds the president guilty of the violation of his constitutional duties, or after a vote of the Islamic Consultative Assembly testifying his incompetence;

(d) declaration of war and mobilization of armed forces.

To sum up, one draws the following lessons and conclusions from the above facts:

One, there is neither any historical parallelism between the Turkish and the Pakistani struggle for national independence nor between the evolution, the experience and the traditions of their armies. Pakistan got its independence through a political struggle, under an elder statesman who was an eminent lawyer. Turkey defended its independence through an armed struggle, under a young colonel.

Two, over the last decades extending up to the 21st century, the Turkish army has been retreating from the political arena where

The Turkish army, over the decades, has regressed from open and active involvement in the national politics to a low profile posture, whereas the Pakistan Army which, like the Indian Civil Service, was a completely apolitical and professional body, has advanced from a neutral posture and a low profile to open and active involvement in politics, without possessing