

**THE COMMONWEALTH REACTION TOWARDS THE  
SUSPENSION OF DEMOCRACY IN PAKISTAN AND FIJI**

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## **CERTIFICATE**

It is certified that the dissertation entitled **“THE COMMONWEALTH REACTION TOWARDS THE SUSPENSION OF DEMOCRACY IN PAKISTAN AND FIJI”** submitted by **SUMAN** in partial fulfillment of the degree of **MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**. We certify that this is entirely her own work and has not been considered for any other degree either in her or any other University.

We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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# INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to understand the reaction of the Commonwealth to the suspension of democracy in Pakistan and Fiji, which occurred in October 1999 and May 2000, respectively. The study will attempt to shed light on the efforts and the degree of success of the Commonwealth to restore democracy in these countries.

After the disintegration of the USSR, democracy has gained tremendous importance in world politics. The suspension of democracy in Pakistan and Fiji went against the trend towards democracy in the developing world. The study has chosen countries that are different in overall national strength. Pakistan is a more powerful country than Fiji. Pakistan has strong relations with the superpower, America. It is a nuclear power. Its economic conditions are also better than Fiji, though both the countries depend on the outside world for their economic progress and technical development. The main contrast is that Fiji is more dependent on the Commonwealth countries and Pakistan depends more on the US than on the Commonwealth countries.

The study is based on the argument that the causal factors that affected the process of the restoration of democracy by the Commonwealth were size and economic conditions and the overall strength of the country.

The main reason to analyze the Commonwealth reaction is that it is an important international organization, which has tried to involve itself in democratization efforts. Pakistan and Fiji, who were the victims of military coups, are members of the Commonwealth. Both had parliamentary democracy in the pre-coup period. The Commonwealth had taken the initiative to restore democracy in both countries. No other international organization such as the United Nations or the European Union took steps to restore democracy in these countries. The

Commonwealth and its member countries took various steps to restore democracy in Fiji and Pakistan. It was not successful in Pakistan. On the other hand, democracy has come back in Fiji because of the efforts of the Commonwealth.

## **Brief Sketch of the Commonwealth**

The Commonwealth is an association of 54 countries.<sup>1</sup> These had been ruled by Britain at one time or another in the past. It is difficult to define the Commonwealth and its diversity of thinking. According to Sir Ivor Jennings and C. H. Young, “The Commonwealth consists of independent members (who) are fully sovereign states, having a status in international law no different from that of the sovereign states.”<sup>2</sup> According to Arthur C. Turner, “The Commonwealth is ‘to be described most accurately in terms of an association or club’.”<sup>3</sup> J. D. B. Miller described it as “‘A fraternal association’, ‘a purely functional association’, ‘a true cultural community’, ‘a collection of nations associated for a few purposes but disassociated for most’, a ‘loose international political entity’”.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *The Europa World Year Book 2000*. vol. 1 (London: Europa Publication, 2000), p.150.

<sup>2</sup> Peter B. Harris, *The Commonwealth* (London: Longman Group, 1975), p.1.

<sup>3</sup> Peter B. Harris, *The Commonwealth* (London: Longman Group, 1975), p.1.

<sup>4</sup> Peter B. Harris, *The Commonwealth* (London: Longman Group, 1975), p.1.

The Commonwealth is perhaps the most widely misunderstood association there is.<sup>5</sup> The simplest description is that it is a voluntary association of countries whose histories were intertwined for a period and therefore have a common language, working methods and other such things.<sup>6</sup> It is an example of co-operation beyond racial, geographical, and economic barriers. To be a member of the Commonwealth, a country must satisfy two conditions. It should be independent and must be willing to accept the Queen as Head of the Commonwealth. The membership of a member country would be suspended if it loses its independence (politically) or if it refuses to recognize the Queen as Head of the Association. It is important to know that it is not a binding body. A member can leave it without having applied for or without having obtained the consent of other members of the Commonwealth. Therefore, the Commonwealth may be regarded as a community of member states belonging to an international association who are free to leave it at any time.<sup>7</sup> It is neither a federation nor a military or economic bloc. It does not have a foreign policy.

The fundamental cause of the emergence of the Commonwealth was the particular form and manner in which nationalism arose within the colonies of settlement and of crown colonies, constituted by the British Empire in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Certain similarities and affinities existed not only between Britain and its colonies, but also between these colonies themselves which finally transformed the British Empire into the 'Commonwealth'.

The Commonwealth originally was formed by a group of countries with Britain. It was a predominantly British club.<sup>8</sup> In 1884, the words 'the Commonwealth'

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<sup>5</sup> Andrew Walker, *The Commonwealth: A New Look* (London : Pergamon Press, 1978), p.1

<sup>6</sup> Andrew Walker, *The Commonwealth: A New Look* (London : Pergamon Press, 1978), pp.2-3.

<sup>7</sup> Peter B. Harris, *The Commonwealth* (London : Longman Group, 1975), p.2.

<sup>8</sup> Andrew Walker, *The Commonwealth : A New Look* (London : Pergamon Press, 1978), p.7.

were used to describe British and her self-governing countries. Various Australian States called it the Commonwealth of Australia when they came together as a federation in 1901. The Commonwealth had been used in a variety of ways as the British Commonwealth, the Commonwealth of Nations, and the Imperial Commonwealth, for instance.<sup>9</sup>

The modern Commonwealth rests upon the idea of common allegiance to the Crown as the Head of the Commonwealth but not as the Head of State. The Crown is in the case of a majority of the members entirely symbolic. Member states are republics and do not recognize the Queen as their own Head of State. Commonwealth referred only to the white dominions until after the Second World War. India became a member of the Commonwealth in 1948. Republicanism has become the fashion among the newly independent developing countries. They do not feel it necessary to accept the Queen as their Head of State. The Commonwealth of today is a joint creation, produced by the interaction of vastly different peoples.

Till the end of the Second World War the Commonwealth was regarded as a white man's club because it constituted only white member countries such as Canada, Australia and New Zealand. One of the first colonies of Britain in North America was Canada. It was the place where the Commonwealth was born. In 1901, after Canada, Australia became the second original member of the Commonwealth.<sup>10</sup> New Zealand was the third original member country of the association, which became a member in 1901.<sup>11</sup> And the fourth original member of the association was South Africa, which

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<sup>9</sup> Andrew Walker *The Commonwealth : A New Look* (London: Pergamon Press, 1978), p.7.

<sup>10</sup> Patrick Gordon Walker, *The Commonwealth* (London : The Heinemann Groups, 1962), pp.25-36.

<sup>11</sup> Patrick Gordon Walker, *The Commonwealth* (London : The Heinemann Groups, 1962), p.37.



became a member in 1931.<sup>12</sup> The tradition broke down when India and Pakistan and later Ceylon approached the Commonwealth to join in 1948. After that it became a meeting point of different races. The idea of calling it ‘the Commonwealth’ seems to have originated with Lord Rosebery, who said that the empire is a Commonwealth of Nations”.<sup>13</sup>

The Commonwealth is committed to the principles declared and approved in Singapore in January 1971 and in the Harare declaration of 1991. The Commonwealth supports the principles of equality, fraternity and self-determination. It stresses human rights, dignity, trust, and mutual tolerance. According to these principles, the Commonwealth believes in international cooperation to remove the causes of war and secure justice and development among the peoples of the world. It declares that the security of each member state from external aggression is a matter for concern to all members. But there are no moral or categorical imperatives.<sup>14</sup> In 1995, the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG), was set up as per the Harare Declaration, to deal with serious violations of these principles.<sup>15</sup> The Secretariat also organizes activities to promote and strengthen these principles.<sup>16</sup> The Commonwealth provisions two years temporally suspension for member country, from the organization, in case of existence of suspension of democracy in any Commonwealth country, according to Millbrook Action Plan.

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<sup>12</sup> Arthur S. Banks and Thomas C. Muller (eds.), *Political Handbook of the World 1998* (New York: CSA Publication, 1998), p. 841.

<sup>13</sup> Andrew Walker, *The Commonwealth : A New Look* (London : Pergamon Press, 1978), p.7.

<sup>14</sup> Peter B. Harris, *The Commonwealth* (London :Longman Group, 1975), p.6.

<sup>15</sup> “Building Blocks to Democracy : Continuity and Revival on the New Millennium: Report of the Commonwealth Secretary General 2001”.

[http://www.TheCommonwealth.Org/pdf/14\\_Building%20Blocks.pdf](http://www.TheCommonwealth.Org/pdf/14_Building%20Blocks.pdf).

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. “Building Blocks to Democracy : Continuity and Revival on the New Millennium: Report of the Commonwealth Secretary General 2001”.

[http://www.TheCommonwealth.Org/pdf/14\\_Building%20Blocks.pdf](http://www.TheCommonwealth.Org/pdf/14_Building%20Blocks.pdf).

One factor in the evolution of the Commonwealth was the original British control of the empire. Parliamentary democracy, which is based on the British concept of liberal nationalism, is not a gift to the colonies. Mutual interaction of the member countries caused the members to evolve in similar ways. In fact, the evolution of parliamentary government was part of a larger Commonwealth pattern. Britain was not a static factor in the process. Each member of the Commonwealth adopted parliamentary democracy by its will. As a result, parliamentary democracy became common to the Commonwealth. It is a fundamental political affinity among the members that is essential to the coming into being to the Commonwealth.

### **Survival of Democracy**

The Commonwealth has been facing the question of the survival of parliamentary democracy in member countries. A failure or abandonment of parliamentary democracy affects the nature of the Commonwealth.<sup>17</sup> Let us look at the cases of Nigeria, Ghana, Uganda, all cases in Africa

Nigeria had its first military coup on 15 January 1966 by a relatively junior army officer, Major-General Johnson Aguiyi Aronsi.<sup>18</sup> The main reasons for the coup were an undemocratic political culture and ethnic crisis, unequal distribution of natural resources, failure of political integration, regional disparities and a restricted political process. Nigerian political attitudes and behaviour played an important role in the dismissal of democracy. Ethnic competition between the elite increased the chances of a coup. On 29 July 1966, Aronsi was overthrown by another internal military coup and

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<sup>17</sup> Arthur S. Banks and Thomas C. Muller (eds.), *Political Handbook of the World 1998* (New York: CSA Publication, 1998), p. 378.

<sup>18</sup> *The Europa World Year Book 2000*. vol. 2 (London : Europa Publication, 2000), p. 2758.

Yakubu Gowon became the head of government.<sup>19</sup> On 29 July 1975, Gowon was deposed by Brig. Murtala Ramat Muhammad in a bloodless coup.<sup>20</sup> In 1976, power was assumed by Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo, the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces, after the murder of General Murtala in an unsuccessful coup.<sup>21</sup> General Obasanjo ruled until 1979. In the general elections of 1979, a civilian government came back into power, but was taken over in a military coup on 31 December 1983 by Major-General Muhammadu Buhari.<sup>22</sup> Buhari's administration was deposed by Ibrahim Babangida, in a bloodless military coup on 27 August 1985.<sup>23</sup> In November 1993, the Commonwealth suspended Nigeria when General Sani Abacha assumed power.<sup>24</sup> He dissolved all state institutions and banned political activities. In April 1995, the Commonwealth proposed to adopt a number of sanctions against Nigeria following the refusal of the government to restore democracy.<sup>25</sup> In 1996, the Commonwealth decided to visit Nigeria. The CMAG met Nigerian officials in June 1996. Canada imposed a number of sanctions against Nigeria. The CMAG agreed to visit Nigeria at the end of September 1996, but failed to reach a decision till February 1997, regarding sanctions. In July 1997, Nigeria's opposition representative appealed to the CMAG to adopt sanctions against Nigeria. The Commonwealth extended Nigeria's suspension for an additional year and warned Abacha to restore democracy by 1 October 1998.<sup>26</sup> In June 1998, Major-General Abdul Salani Abubakar became the Head of the State, after the

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<sup>19</sup> *The Europa World Year Book 2000*. vol. 2 (London : Europa Publication, 2000), p. 2758.

<sup>20</sup> *The Europa World Year Book 2000*. vol. 2 (London : Europa Publication, 2000), p. 2758.

<sup>21</sup> *The Europa World Year Book 2000*. vol. 2 (London : Europa Publication, 2000), p. 2758.

<sup>22</sup> *The Europa World Year Book 2000*. vol. 2 (London : Europa Publication, 2000), p. 2758.

<sup>23</sup> *The Europa World Year Book 2000*. vol. 2 (London : Europa Publication, 2000), p. 2759.

<sup>24</sup> *The Europa World Year Book 2000*. vol. 2 (London : Europa Publication, 2000), p. 2759.

<sup>25</sup> *The Europa World Year Book 2000*. vol. 2 (London : Europa Publication, 2000), p. 2762.

<sup>26</sup> *The Europa World Year Book 2000*. vol. 2 (London : Europa Publication, 2000), p. 2763.

death of Abacha.<sup>27</sup> He announced a programme for the restoration of democracy by the end of May 1999.<sup>28</sup> In July 1998, he was overthrown in an internal military coup and General Abdul Salam Abubakar became the head. In October 1998, the Commonwealth organized the CMAG meeting to end sanctions against Nigeria and to readmit it to the organization. On 29 May 1999, Nigeria was readmitted to the Commonwealth after the completion of elections to the State and National Assemblies and the restoration of democracy.<sup>29</sup>

Ghana became independent in 1957 and was proclaimed a Republic within the Commonwealth on 1 July 1960.<sup>30</sup> Kwame Nkrumah was its first President. Ghana had become a single party state with absolute powers vested in Nkrumah as Head of the State. Nobody had freedom to criticize it. He arrested numerous peoples of his own party and the Convention People's Party. By 1965, Ghana was on the point of economic collapse. Colonel Joseph A. Joseph led the first military coup. It occurred in 1966, when the military ousted President Nkrumah due to his repressive policies and financial mismanagement. The National Liberation Council (NLC) formed the government. Brig. Akwari Amankw Afrifa replaced General Joseph. The next military coup occurred in January 1972 under Col. Tgantius Kutu Acheampong.<sup>31</sup> In 1975, the Supreme Military Council (SMC) suppressed the NRC, and Akuffo became the Head of the State.<sup>32</sup> Akuffo was deposed in another military coup on 4 June 1979 by a group of junior military officers. On 9 July 1979, the Presidential election was held and Hilla

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<sup>27</sup> *The Europa World Year Book 2000*. vol. 2 (London : Europa Publication, 2000), p. 2763.

<sup>28</sup> *The Europa World Year Book 2000*. vol. 2 (London : Europa Publication, 2000), p. 2763.

<sup>29</sup> *The Europa World Year Book 2000*. vol. 2 (London : Europa Publication, 2000), p. 2763.

<sup>30</sup> Arthur S. Banks and Thomas C. Muller (eds.), *The Political Handbook of 1998* ( New York : CSA Publication, 1998), p.356.

<sup>31</sup> Arthur S. Banks and Thomas C. Muller (eds.), *The Political Handbook of 1998* ( New York : CSA Publication, 1998), p.356.

<sup>32</sup> Arthur S. Banks and Thomas C. Muller (eds.), *The Political Handbook of 1998* ( New York : CSA Publication, 1998), p.356.

Limann became President.<sup>33</sup> He was ousted on 31 December 1981, by Lieutenant Rawlings with Army and Air force supporters.<sup>34</sup> District elections were held in late 1988 and early 1989.<sup>35</sup> On 24 September 1989, Major Courage Quashigan, a close associate of Rawlings, attempted the next coup.<sup>36</sup> In November 1992, elections for President were once again held.<sup>37</sup> Finally, Ghana returned to democracy. The Commonwealth temporarily suspended the membership of Ghana in 1972. It also banned financial aid and assistance.

Uganda became an independent member of the Commonwealth on 6 October 1962.<sup>38</sup> It had its first coup when Milton Obote was deposed by a successful takeover in February 1966, supported by the army. Major-General Idi Amin Dada led the coup. He assumed full executive powers and suspended all political activities. The main reason for the coup was the tyranny of President Obote. The military gave various other reasons for the takeover including corruption, detention without, and unwarranted claims to having established social democracy in the country. Idi Amin ruled until 1980. In 1980, Obote once again became President through elections. In July 1985, he was overthrown by a military coup led by Brig. Bailio Okello. A military council was established on 26 January 1986, headed by Lt.-General Tito Okello. The National Resistance Movement (NRM) took control of Kampala and dissolved the military council. In February 1989, the first national elections were held since 1980.<sup>39</sup> On 29 January 1986, Museveni became President. Uganda was excluded

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<sup>33</sup> Arthur S. Banks and Thomas C. Muller (eds.), *The Political Handbook of 1998* (New York : CSA Publication, 1998), p.356.

<sup>34</sup> *The Europa World Year Book 2000*. vol. 1 (London : Europa Publication, 2000), p. 1614.

<sup>35</sup> *The Europa World Year Book 2000*. vol. 1 (London : Europa Publication, 2000), p. 1614.

<sup>36</sup> *The Europa World Year Book 2000*. vol. 1 (London : Europa Publication, 2000), p. 1614.

<sup>37</sup> *The Europa World Year Book 2000*. vol. 1 (London : Europa Publication, 2000), p.1615.

<sup>38</sup> *The Europa World Year Book 2000*. vol. 1 (London : Europa Publication, 2000), p.3668.

<sup>39</sup> *The Europa World Year Book 2001*. vol. 2 (London : University of London), 2001, p. 3965.

from the Commonwealth in 1976.<sup>40</sup> The British Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, Sir Alec Douglas-Home visited Uganda and reported to the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth stopped all aid money.

## **Political Background of Pakistan**

Pakistan emerged as a sovereign nation state in August 1947 as a consequence of the partition of the British Indian Empire. It comprised two distinct regions: East Pakistan and West Pakistan. Muhammad Ali Jinnah, who was known as Quaid-I-Azam (Great Leader), became the first Governor General of Pakistan.<sup>41</sup>

The Parliament of Pakistan consisted of two chambers, the Senate and the National Assembly. The Senate is the upper chamber. Pakistan's first constitution was promulgated on 23 March 1956.<sup>42</sup> Major General Iskander Mirza became Pakistan's first President. In October 1958, Pakistan had its first military coup led by Mirza. He appointed General Mohammad Ayub Khan as Chief Martial Law Administrator. Ayub Khan assumed more power and removed Mirza from the office and became President himself. He introduced the programme of 'Basic Democracy'. His was an autocratic but modernizing regime that ruled until March 1969. He was forced to resign eventually and martial rule was re-imposed by General Yahya Khan who ruled till 1971 when East Pakistan got separated from West Pakistan.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Andrew Walker, *The Commonwealth: A New Look* (London : Pergamon Press, 1978), p. 74.

<sup>41</sup> *The Europa World Year Book 2000* (London: Europa Publication, 2000), p.2819.

<sup>42</sup> *The Europa World Year Book 2000* (London: Europa Publication, 2000), p.2819.

<sup>43</sup> *The Europa World Year Book 2000* (London: Europa Publication, 2000), p.2819

The first direct general elections were held for the National Assembly in December 1970 and January 1971. Those elections caused the disintegration of Pakistan. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's Awami League had been advocating autonomy for East Pakistan. He won almost all the seats in the east. The Pakistan People's Party (PPP), led by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, won a majority of seats in West Pakistan in the election of 1970. The two leaders could not reach any agreement on a coalition government. As a result, on 23 March 1971, East Pakistan declared its independence as the People's Republic of Bangladesh.<sup>44</sup>

A new constitution, which came into effect in August 1973, provided for a parliamentary form of government.<sup>45</sup> Z. A. Bhutto became Prime Minister. He was deposed in a bloodless military coup on 5 July 1977.<sup>46</sup> Pakistan was governed by its third martial law regime, led by General Mahammad Zia-Ul-Haq. Bhutto was sentenced to death in March 1978, which was executed in April 1979.<sup>47</sup> Zia became the President. The military administrators postponed the general elections several times. Finally, General elections were held in February 1985 for the National Assembly. However, there was widespread dissatisfaction after the elections.

The Eighth Amendment to the constitution was brought in October 1985.<sup>48</sup> It introduced a powerful Presidency.<sup>49</sup> Zia appointed Junejo as the Prime Minister. From 16 to 19 November 1988, general elections were held, after Zia's death in a plane

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<sup>44</sup> *The Europa World Year Book 2000* (London: Europa Publication, 2000), p.2819.

<sup>45</sup> *The Europa World Year Book 2000* (London: Europa Publication, 2000), p.2819.

<sup>46</sup> Arthur S. Banks and Thomas C. Muller (eds.), *The Political Handbook of the World 1998*. (New York : CSA Publication, 1998), p. 698.

<sup>47</sup> Arthur S. Banks and Thomas C. Muller (eds.), *The Political Handbook of the World 1998*. (New York : CSA Publication, 1998), p. 698.

<sup>48</sup> Arthur S. Banks and Thomas C. Muller (eds.), *The Political Handbook of the World 1998*. (New York : CSA Publication, 1998), p. 698.

<sup>49</sup> Arthur S. Banks and Thomas C. Muller (eds.), *The Political Handbook of the World 1998*. (New York : CSA Publication, 1998), p. 698.

crash.<sup>50</sup> A democratic government was formed under the leadership of Benazir Bhutto. Her rise to power in November 1988 was a unique phenomenon. President Ghulam Ishaq Khan subsequently dismissed her government on 6 August 1990 and general elections were once again held. Nawaz Sharif of the Pakistan Muslim League (PML) became the Prime Minister. Sharif had to call midterm elections in 1993, after he lost the support in Punjab.<sup>51</sup> In the next general election of 1993, Benazir Bhutto again came to power. She ruled till 1996. She was dismissed by President Farooq Leghari against a background of rising public discontent.<sup>52</sup> In 1997, the Pakistan Muslim League won a decisive victory gaining 134 votes out of the 204 directly elective seats in the National Assembly.<sup>53</sup> In 1999, Nawaz Sharif was deposed by a military coup, led by General Pervez Musharraf. General Musharraf took over the democratically elected government on 29 December 1999 and dissolved all assemblies. Pakistan's democratic system from 1989 to 1999 came to an end after the fourth coup in the history of Pakistan.

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<sup>50</sup> Arthur S. Banks and Thomas C. Muller (eds.), *The Political Handbook of the World 1998* (New York : CSA Publication, 1998), p.2820.

<sup>51</sup> *The Europa World Year Book 2000*, vol. 2 (London : Europa Publication, 2000), p. 2822.

<sup>52</sup> *The Europa World Year Book 2001*, vol. 2 (London : Europa Publication., 2001), p 2822.

<sup>53</sup> *The Europa World Year Book 2001*, vol. 2 (London : Europa Publication., 2001), p.2823.



## Political Background of Fiji

Fiji achieved independence from British rule on 10 October 1970. Soon after its independence, it was admitted into the Commonwealth.<sup>54</sup> Following the constitution of 1966, promulgated by the British Government, an electoral system was introduced in the newly independent Fiji which combined communal rolls with cross voting. Ratu Kamisese Mara, leader of the Alliance Party, became the first Prime Minister of Fiji. Britain appointed Penaia Ganilau as its first Governor-General. It had a ministerial form of government, consisting almost wholly of elected legislative councils. Fiji adopted the universal adult suffrage system. Parliament had two chambers called the House of Representatives and the Senate, which consisted of nominated members.

The first Prime Minister Ratu Mara, was from the Alliance Party (AP) which was born in Fiji in 1965 before independence. It had the support mainly of indigenous Fijians. The first general elections were held in March and April 1977. The second general elections were held in 1987. As a result, a coalition government of the Fijian Labour Party (FLP) and the National Federation Party (NFP) was made. On 14 May 1987, the Royal Fiji Military Force (REMF) overthrew the democratically elected six months old coalition government and imposed military rule.<sup>55</sup> The coup was led by Lieutenant Colonel Sitiveni Rabuka. On 25 September, just four months later, another coup was re-imposed and Rabuka declared Fiji a Republic. On 6 December 1987, Rabuka resigned as the Head of State. Ratu Mara was re-installed as Prime Minister.

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<sup>54</sup> Bhagwan Singh and Parimal Kumar Das, *Fiji: The Changing Face* (New Delhi: Haranand Publication, 1995), p. 33.

<sup>55</sup> Bhagwan Singh and Parimal Kumar Das, *Fiji: The Changing Face* (New Delhi : Haranand Publication, 1995), p.33.

Mara re-appointed Rabuka as the Minister of Home Affairs. The Former Governor General was declared President. Rabuka resigned in January 1990.<sup>56</sup>

The first political setback to Fiji was its suspension from the Commonwealth after the coup of 1987.<sup>57</sup> New Zealand and Australia condemned Fiji. India became the most consistent critic of the coup primarily because of its racist and anti-Indian ethnic motivation.<sup>58</sup> Another political setback was a political gamble aimed at gathering more Fijian support.<sup>59</sup> Fiji's constitution had been abrogated by Rabuka on 28 September 1987.<sup>60</sup> The interim government in September 1988 approved a new draft constitution. It provided for reservations of the principal offices of states for ethnic Fijians. The military regime announced that at least 50% of positions at all levels would be for indigenous Fijians in the civil services and other statutory organizations.<sup>61</sup> The President approved the new constitution on 5 October 1988.<sup>62</sup> On 25 July 1990, President Ganilau promulgated the constitutional decree. It reaffirmed the primacy of ethnic Fijians. The opposition condemned it as racist and feudalistic. The Commonwealth stated in May 1991 that Fiji would not be readmitted to the organization until it changed the constitution.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> *The Europa World Year Book 2000*. vol. 1 (London : Europa Publication , 2000), p. 1404.

<sup>57</sup> Bhagwan Singh and Parimal Kumar Das, *Fiji: The Changing Face* (New Delhi : Haranand Publication, 1995), p.62.

<sup>58</sup> Bhagwan Singh and Parimal Kumar Das, *Fiji: The Changing Face* (New Delhi : Haranand Publication, 1995), p.70.

<sup>59</sup> Bhagwan Singh and Parimal Kumar Das, *Fiji: The Changing Face* (New Delhi : Haranand Publication, 1995), p .62.

<sup>60</sup> Bhagwan Singh and Parimal Kumar Das, *Fiji: The Changing Face* (New Delhi : Haranand Publication, 1995), p .76.

<sup>61</sup> Bhagwan Singh and Parimal Kumar Das, *Fiji: The Changing Face* (New Delhi : Haranand Publication, 1995), p .63.

<sup>62</sup> Bhagwan Singh and Parimal Kumar Das, *Fiji: The Changing Face* (New Delhi : Haranand Publication, 1995), p .63.

<sup>63</sup> Bhagwan Singh and Parimal Kumar Das, *Fiji: The Changing Face* (New Delhi : Haranand Publication, 1995), p.82.

The first general elections were held in 1992 after the coup of 1987. Rabuka contested from the Fijian Political Party (FPP), but failed to get an absolute majority. The FPP won only thirty seats out of the seventy seats in the Parliament.<sup>64</sup> Two prominent Indian leaders, Jai Ram Reddy and Mahendra Chaudhry, demanded a fair constitution and put it at the top of their political agenda. They announced a boycott of the general elections of 1991, but split from their stated position and eventually took part in the elections. No party could get a complete majority in the elections. Both the National Federation Party (NFP) and the Fijian Labour Party (FLP) won 16% of the vote. The Soqosoqo ni Valkavulewa ni Taukei (SVT) won 44%, the Fijian Rotuman Nationalist United Front Party (FNUF) including the STV won 11%, the National Congress (SNC) won 8%, the General Voter's Party (GVP) and Fijian Indian Congress Party (FIC) won 1% each, with 4% voting for independents.<sup>65</sup> Rabuka formed a coalition government with the GVP and independents. The SVT also backed him. The President, Ganilau, appointed Jai Ram Reddy as leader of the opposition.<sup>66</sup> Ganilau died in December 1993 and Mara succeeded him.

In February 1994, legislative elections were held. Ratu Mara became President after the elections. In 1997, a new constitution came into being, which provided for political quotas to all races and abolished discrimination against non indigenous

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<sup>64</sup> Bhagwan Singh and Parimal Kumar Das, *Fiji: The Changing Face* (New Delhi : Haranand Publication, 1995), p.84.

<sup>65</sup> Bhagwan Singh and Parimal Kumar Das, *Fiji: The Changing Face* (New Delhi : Haranand Publication, 1995), p.98.

<sup>66</sup> Bhagwan Singh and Parimal Kumar Das, *Fiji: The Changing Face* (New Delhi : Haranand Publication, 1995), p.102.

Fijians.<sup>67</sup> Based on this constitution, elections were held in 1999. In this election, the FLP got a majority and made a coalition government with the Fijian Association Party (FAP) and the FTUC. The ethnic Indian leader, Mahendra Chaudhry, became the first Prime Minister of Fiji. However, in May 2000, George Speight (a failed businessman) took over the government.

## **Geographical and Economic Description Of Pakistan and Fiji**

Pakistan has a land area of 796,095 square km.<sup>68</sup> It is located in South Asia. Pakistan shares an eastern border with India and China. Iran lies on the country's western border and Afghanistan runs along its western and northern edge. Pakistan's population was estimated at 134,510,000 (census result) in 1999.<sup>69</sup> Its current growth rate is 3.0%, which is the highest among the most populous countries of the world. The population was 137,510,000 in 2000.<sup>70</sup> It is an Islamic country where Christians and Hindus are minority groups. Its national language is Urdu and official language is English.

Pakistan's GDP increased in real terms from 1990 until 1997 by an annual average of 4.4% in 1990-97.<sup>71</sup> It grew by 4.6% in 1995- 96, by 3.1% in 1996-97 and by an estimated 5.4% in 1997-98.<sup>72</sup> The GDP annual growth rate on average was 5.5% during 1990-96.<sup>73</sup> There was a rise in exports revenues, greater domestic and foreign

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<sup>67</sup> "Fiji Treats Indian on a Par". *News Times* (Hyderabad), 28 July 1998.

<sup>68</sup> *The Europa World Year Book 2000*. Vol. 2 (London : Europa Publication, 2000), p.2829.

<sup>69</sup> *The Europa World Year Book 2000*. Vol. 2 (London : Europa Publication, 2000), p. 2829.

<sup>70</sup> *The Europa World Year Book 2001*. Vol. 2 (London : Europa Publication, 2000), p. 3072.

<sup>71</sup> *The Europa World Year Book 1999*. vol. 2 (London: Europa Publication, 1999), p.2438.

<sup>72</sup> *The Europa World Year Book 1999*. vol. 2 (London: Europa Publication, 1999), p.2438.

<sup>73</sup> *The Europa World Year Book 1999*. vol. 2 (London: Europa Publication, 1999), p.2439.

investment and a revitalization of the private sector in the first half of the 1990s.<sup>74</sup> Pakistan's total exports in 1998-99 were US\$7,779.3 million and total imports were US\$9,431.7 million in 1997-98.<sup>75</sup>

In 1948, Pakistan became a member of the Commonwealth. Pakistan decided to do so for its own advantage. It was not interested in the democratic approach of the Commonwealth. Since its independence, it has depended more on powers outside the Commonwealth, especially on the US. It has always been interested in securing economic and military aid to strengthen its defence against India. It hoped, while joining the Commonwealth, that the world would help Pakistan solve its disputes with India. Pakistan soon realized that the international community would not contribute towards this end. Pakistan joined the association but was not keen on contributing to its political ideas and principles.

The Republic of Fiji forms part of the Melanesian group of islands, situated about 1,930 km south of the equator in the Pacific Ocean.<sup>76</sup> It has a land area of 18,333 square km.<sup>77</sup> It comprises more than 300 islands of which 100 are inhabited. Its four main islands are Viti Levu (on which almost 70% of the country's population lives), Vanua Levu, Taveni and Kadavu. The islands of Rotuma also form part of Fiji in the northern Polynesian belt. Fiji became independent on 10 October 1970, after 96 years under Britain and was one of the last nations to emerge from European colonialism. It

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<sup>74</sup> *The Europa World Year Book 1999*. vol. 2 (London: Europa Publication, 1999), p.2439.

<sup>75</sup> *The Europa World Year Book 2000*. vol. 2, (London: Europa Publication, 2000), p. 2833.

<sup>76</sup> Bagwan Singh and Parimal Kumar Das, *Fiji : The Changing Face*. (New Delhi :Haranand Publication, 1995), p.9.

<sup>77</sup> *The Europa World Year Book 2000*. vol. 2, (London : Europa Publication, 2000), p.1407.

emerged as a multiracial nation in contrast to other South Pacific states. Its total population was 772,655 according to the 1996 census, consisting of 51.1% indigenous Fijians, 43.6% ethnic Indians and 5.3% of other ethnic groups such as Rotumans, Chinese and Europeans.<sup>78</sup> Indians were brought for the first time by the British to work in the sugar estates as labourers in 1879. Today, one half of the population is of Indian ancestry. Most of the Fijians are Methodist Christians and most of the Indians are Hindus. Fiji's official language is English. Inter-marriage between Indians and Fijians is rare. Australia is the most important trade partner as well as the most important neighbouring country. Another important neighbouring country of Fiji is New Zealand. Australia and New Zealand are also Commonwealth members.

Fiji is not very strong economically. It mainly depends upon agriculture, sugar and other leading export commodities. Gold is the most important metal, which is found in mines on a large scale. Fishing and tourism are also other important sources of income, contributing more than 20% of GDP in 1994.<sup>79</sup> There was a real decline of 7% in its GDP at a 6.2 % average, soon after the first coup in 1987.<sup>80</sup> Per capita income increased by nearly 46% after this period (from F\$ 1800 to F\$ 2500).<sup>81</sup> According to the World Bank (WB), in 1997, Fiji's Gross National Production (GNP), measured at average 1995-97 prices, was US\$2,007 million equivalent to \$2,460 per head.<sup>82</sup> In 1997, its budgetary deficit was \$F196.0 million.<sup>83</sup> From 1987 to 1995, some

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<sup>78</sup> Arthur S. Banks and Thomas C. Muller (eds.), *The Political Handbook of the World 1998*. (New York : CSA Publication, 1998), p.312.

<sup>79</sup> Arthur S. Banks and Thomas C. Muller (eds.), *The Political Handbook of the World 1998*. (New York : CSA Publication, 1998), p.310.

<sup>80</sup> Arthur S. Banks and Thomas C. Muller (eds.), *The Political Handbook of the World 1998*. (New York : CSA Publication, 1998), p.310.

<sup>81</sup> Arthur S. Banks and Thomas C. Muller (eds.), *The Political Handbook of the World 1998*. (New York : CSA Publication, 1998), p.312.

<sup>82</sup> *The Europa World Year Book 2000*. vol. 1, (London : Europa Publication , 2000), p. 1406.

<sup>83</sup> *The Europa World Year Book 2000*. vol. 1, (London : Europa Publication , 2000), p. 1406.

72,688 citizens emigrated from Fiji.<sup>84</sup> In 1970, soon after its independence, Fiji became a member of the Commonwealth. Fiji always intended to be a member because of its weak economic and political conditions. It has always showed a faith in the democratic ideas of the Commonwealth, despite military coups, as it knows that without the assistance of the Commonwealth and its members (Australia, Britain, India and New Zealand, in particular), it could not survive economically at all.

The Introduction has discussed the Commonwealth, its principles and aims. It focused on the development of the Commonwealth and has shed light on some previous cases of suspension of democracy in the Commonwealth such as Ghana, Nigeria and Uganda. It also provided a brief overview of the political, economic and geographical conditions of Pakistan and Fiji.

Chapter One focuses on the basic question, of the causes of the suspension of democracy in Pakistan and Fiji. Chapter Two analyzes the Commonwealths reaction towards the coups in Pakistan and Fiji. It deals with what efforts were made by the Commonwealth regarding the restoration of democracy in Pakistan and Fiji. Chapter Three focuses on the effects of the Commonwealth efforts for the restoration of democracy in Pakistan and Fiji. It also analyses the response of Pakistan and Fiji towards the Commonwealth efforts to restore democracy. It mainly deals with why the Commonwealth has been successful or not in these countries.

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<sup>84</sup> *The Europa World Year Book 2000*. vol. 1, (London : Europa Publication , 2000), p. 1406.

# **CHAPTER 1**

## **REASONS BEHIND THE SUSPENSION OF DEMOCRACY**

This chapter will examine the causes behind the coups in Pakistan and Fiji. It will discuss the internal and external factors, which contributed to the coups. The chapter is divided into two sections: Pakistan and Fiji. Both sections have two sub-sections on internal factors and external factors.

### **The Case of Pakistan**

The political culture of Pakistan has never been conducive to mass participation in the political process. In the absence of democratic institutions, democracy was removed and replaced by military rule three times. The first coup in Pakistan occurred on 27 October 1958 when Ayub Khan imposed military rule over Pakistan and dismissed the President. Ayub Khan said that parliamentary democracy had failed in Pakistan. According to most people in Pakistan, parliamentary democracy was for the benefit of the ruling class only. Ayub argued that a certain degree of authoritarianism was necessary. He dismissed the central and provincial governments, dissolved the national and provincial assemblies, and abolished all political parties. There were political and economic reasons behind military rule. Pakistan was a sick country from every point of view. Corruption and administrative inefficiency was getting worse. The problem of employment, settlement of refugee problems and poverty remained.

Ayub Khan ruled till March 1969, when General Agha Muhammad Yahya Khan, the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, led another military coup. Martial law was re-imposed. After that, the first general elections were held in 1970. The elected government



of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto came into existence after the separation of East Pakistan. General Mohammad Zia-Ul-Haq deposed him in a bloodless military coup in July 1977. Bhutto was sentenced to death by the military regime. Zia ruled from 1977 to his death in an airplane crash in 1988.

All military rulers argued that the Western democratic system was not suitable for Pakistan.<sup>1</sup> After the period of Zia and the restoration of democracy, there were four general elections and both Benazir Bhutto and Mian Nawaz Sharif enjoyed two terms each as Prime Minister. They were not able to provide clean, efficient and popular administration. As a result, Pakistan had a fourth military coup in October 1999 led by General Pervez Musharraf. It raised the issue of whether democracy has a future in Pakistan. The military coup of 12 October 1999 has proved that democracy cannot be easily sustained in Pakistan. Democracy has been unable to take root in Pakistan due to weak political institutions and because of its deeply feudal structure. The military bureaucratic elite intervened in politics not just because of the strength of the military, bureaucracy and judiciary, but also because of the weakness of other institutions such as political parties, press and various representative bodies.

To consolidate military rule, the army took all possible steps. It dismissed all four provincial governments on 13 October 1999.<sup>2</sup> Parliament was controlled by troops on 14 October 1999.<sup>3</sup> General Musharraf announced an emergency in the country on 15

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- <sup>1</sup> Kalim Bahadur, *Democracy in Pakistan* (New Delhi: Haranand Publication, 1998), p.24.  
<sup>2</sup> Kalim Bahadur, *Democracy in Pakistan* (New Delhi: Haranand Publication, 1998), p.27.  
<sup>3</sup> Kalim Bahadur, *Democracy in Pakistan* (New Delhi: Haranand Publication, 1998), p.27.

October 1999.<sup>4</sup> He appointed himself the “Chief Executive” of Pakistan. The President was ordered to act as ordered by the chief executive. Parliament and Constitution were suspended. The Army declared martial law. There were a lot of reasons for the dismissal of the democratic government and occurrence of the military coup in Pakistan. The causes can be divided into two categories: internal causes and external causes.

## **Internal Factors**

A number of internal factors contributed to the coup in 1999. This sub-sections will try to explain the internal factors such as : the role of the military, ethnic crises, economic and political problems, mutual conflict among political parties and political leaders, social disturbances such as lawlessness and corruption, problem of integration at the national level, and Islamic fundamentalism.

### ***Role of the Military***

A number of factors and developments contributed to the military coup, Internally, politicians were responsible for failing to cope with issues, which was the main reason for the ascendancy of the military. Pakistan never had a stable political system and a high quality leadership. It has always faced economic distress and social disturbance. Democratic governments never provided political stability. Politicized ethnic consciousness, high levels of unemployment, political divisions, increasing economic problems, discontentment in society, terrorism, corruption and sectarianism had caused military takeovers several times. Deep divisions existed among the civilian leaders.

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<sup>4</sup> Kalim Bahadur, *Democracy in Pakistan* (New Delhi: Haranand Publication, 1998), p.24.

Democracy has never had much chance. It has lasted as long as the army wanted it. In Pakistan, we find two types of army roles: the arbitrator type and the ruler type. The arbitrator type army secures the conditions for democracy and then returns to the barracks. The ruler type army intends to rule as long as possible.<sup>5</sup> The army in Pakistan has enjoyed considerable internal autonomy. It has never truly supported democracy and democratic government in Pakistan. There was no cooperation and understanding between the civilian democratic government and the army. In the light of the conflicts in center-state relations, a centripetal tendency has been at the base of the Pakistani political system, which has been the result of a long spell of military rule. The army established its credibility with its intervention as the only coherent force committed to strengthening the newly created country. Civil administration exposed its incapability at the same time. Weakness of political leadership also gave strength to the military. The Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) and the Military Intelligence (MI) are both military agencies, but the ISI is more committed to the army while MI favours the civilian democratic government.<sup>6</sup> Musharraf and Sharif used their respective agencies. The ISI has become a powerful organization in Pakistan, which is very active outside too. The Army of Pakistan does not allow the political leadership to intervene in its workings. Nawaz Sharif's intervention in the army also caused his removal. The resignation of the Chief of the Army Staff Jehangir Karamat in 1998 and of the Chief of the Navy, Admiral Faish Bokhari, in 1999 had showed the absence of co-ordination between the military leadership and Nawaz

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<sup>5</sup> Bidanda M. Chengappa, "Pakistan's Fourth Military Takeover". *Strategic Analysis*. vol. 23, no.5, p.1441.

<sup>6</sup> Bidanda M. Chengappa, "Pakistan's Fourth Military Takeover". *Strategic Analysis*. vol. 23, no.5, p.1443.

Sharif.<sup>7</sup> Nawaz Sharif kept vacant the post of Joint Chief of Staff Committee (CJCSC) for a full five months. This indicated the strains in the political-military relationship.<sup>8</sup> Sharif did not consult with Musharraf when he appointed Lt. General Ziauddin as the DG-ISI (Directorate General - ISI).<sup>9</sup>

The army also had problems with Benazir Bhutto. There was mutual distrust and hostility between Benazir and the military elite. One reason for that hostility was her interference in military affairs. She transferred many army officers from one place to another, which the army considered as a violation of its freedom and interference in its professional affairs. Relations between Nawaz Sharif and military were particularly precarious though. During the Gulf war, General Aslam Beg took a position in opposition to the policy of Nawaz Sharif. In October 1998, Jehangir Karamat criticized the economic and political policies of his government and demanded that the armed forces should be given a direct role in government decisions.<sup>10</sup>

Another reason for the coup was that in the crises, the political leaders invited the military to intervene and pleaded mediation by the military. Sharif himself involved the army in civilian affairs such as collection of water and electricity bills. The army had

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<sup>7</sup> Bidanda M. Chengappa, "Pakistan's Fourth Military Takeover". *Strategic Analysis*. vol. 23, no.5, p.1440.

<sup>8</sup> Bidanda M. Chengappa, "Pakistan's Fourth Military Takeover". *Strategic Analysis*. vol. 23, no.5, p.1440.

<sup>9</sup> Bidanda M. Chengappa, "Pakistan's Fourth Military Takeover". *Strategic analysis*. vol.23, no. 9, p.1437.

<sup>10</sup> *The Europa World Year Book 2001* ( London: Europa Publication, 2001) ,vol. 2, 2001, p.3064.

control over the administration of Sind province. It also had control of management of the Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA). These further raised the supremacy and significance of the military. Due to the great weakness of the civil administration, military regimes were seen as better governments.

### ***Inability of Political Leaders and Democratic Governments***

A major reason for the overthrow of democratic government by the military was that politicians had been involved in bitter infighting. There was also a division between them and the religious elite. Martial law came about mainly because of the resulting crises of governmental performance. The governments of Benazir and Nawaz Sharif failed to fulfill their responsibilities in the political, economic and social fields. Pakistani society was corrupt and disintegrated in the absence of a strong government. Poor economic performance and weak social development were the result of weak governance and the inability of political leaders to solve problems and to govern successfully. There was no sign of rule and regulation in society. There was also growing ethnic conflicts and tribal violence. The political leadership failed to tackle all these problems. Military intervention became imminent because of increasing constitutional difficulties. Pakistan faced sectarian strife in various parts of the country and governments were unable to resolve them. The governments could not do anything to stop all the bloodshed and rising violence. A rapid rise in numbers of the poor, both in rural and urban areas, made things even more difficult.

The democratic governments failed to mobilize people for participation in political life, which is very necessary in any democracy. They failed to consolidate democracy. Of course, democracy had been restored after 1988, but the country could not

get a stable polity. There was also the problem of national integration and nation building. The Mujahir Qaumi Movement (MQM) created riots in Sind and Karachi. No consensus on the political rules of the game existed. The democratic governments failed to fulfill their responsibilities in the fields of education, health and transport. The private sector increased in the decade of the 1990s and exploited society by establishing private schools, hospitals and transport systems to earn profits. During this decade, urbanization also increased, which resulted in growing disparities between villages and cities. It became more difficult for democratic governments to handle the situation arising out of rapid urbanization, in particular the level of social stress and violence.

According to Musharraf , “They (democratic governments and their leaders) have put Pakistan on the road to destruction”.<sup>11</sup> The military and supporters of Musharraf blamed Nawaz Sharif and Benazir . The army argued that despite civilian rule for last 12 years they could not provide transparent administration. The army also argued the inability of democratic governments to solve the problems of growing economic disorder, increasing religious and ethnic militancy, the elite’s efforts to grab political power and economic privileges, and the government’s arbitrary attitude towards a critical press, and above, all the failure to stop the criminalization of the political system as the causes of the coup of 1999.<sup>12</sup>

### ***Conflicts Among Political Leaders***

There had been conflicts and differences between the political leaders of the various democratic governments. They always chose to protect their political interests over

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<sup>11</sup> Derek Ingram, “Commonwealth Update”. *The Round Table*. Issue 358, January 2001, p.28.

<sup>12</sup> Iftikar H. Malik , “Pakistan in 2000: Starting Anew or Stalemate”. *Asian Survey*. vol. 12, no.1, Jan-Feb 2001, p.106.

compromise on behalf of national interests. Benazir Bhutto faced a vicious campaign against her government and husband, Asif Ali Zardari. The PPP of Benazir and the PML of Nawaz Sharif never left any opportunity to contradict and oppose each other. There were a number of divisions, not only among political parties, but even among leaders of the same political parties. Benazir Bhutto and her brother Murtaza Bhutto had deep politico-ideological differences.<sup>13</sup> In 1996, her own trusted political associate, President Farooq Ahmed Leghari, removed Benazir Bhutto. Conflicts between the center and state governments were also one of the reasons for weak governance. There was a tendency for the ruling party in Islamabad to install governments of their own choice in all the four provinces. After the Zia period, no democratic government completed the tenure of five years. In both tenures, the Presidents removed the elected Prime Ministers, Benazir and Nawaz Sharif, after a short period.

The political crises between the Prime Minister and the President in the summer of 1993 for power ultimately brought about the intervention of the Army Chief, General Abdul Waheed. In his first tenure, Nawaz Sharif had a bitter experience with President Ghulam Ishaq Khan. Sharif tried to curtail the power of the President in 1993.<sup>14</sup> He also faced major threats from the fundamentalist opposition parties. They had been criticizing him for his autocratic behaviour of work, increasing corruption and other things. The PML and the Jammat-I-Islami were not agreed with Sharif on the point of withdrawal of the army troops from Kargil. The Jammat-I-Islami launched a nationwide protest against

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<sup>13</sup> Kalim Bahadur, *Democracy in Pakistan* (New Delhi: Haranand Publication, 1998), p.247.

<sup>14</sup> Kalim Bahadur, *Democracy in Pakistan* (New Delhi: Haranand Publication, 1998), p. 97.

the Nawaz Sharif government and claimed it was a 'dishonest' and 'corrupt government'.<sup>15</sup>

Nawaz Sharif had been accused of concentrating autocratic power. He was called a democratic dictator.<sup>16</sup> He was criticized for his autocratic behaviour and arbitrary rule. Several leaders, like Ijazal Haq, the son of the military ruler General Zia-Ul-Haq, demanded that a constitutional position should be given to the military. A serious rift developed between Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court in the latter half of 1997, over the appointment of new judges to the court. The government of Nawaz Sharif was also criticized by the opposition as being the government of Punjabis and as being centralized in the hands of Nawaz Sharif.

### ***Economic Fallouts***

Pakistan faced severe economic problems during the period of democratic government in the decade of the 1990s. In 1993, the national budget was Rs. 45.5 billion.<sup>17</sup> The budgetary deficit was of the order of 6% of the GDP.<sup>18</sup> In 1994, imports had gone down by 12%.<sup>19</sup> The industrial sector had stagnated. In 1995, the budgetary deficit was Rs. 42.7 billion.<sup>20</sup> A numbers of heavy taxes were imposed on Pakistan in 1996-97. The Benazir government was strongly criticized by the entire business community for imposing fresh tax burdens and a gas and petroleum price hike in a mini budget, announced on 22

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<sup>15</sup> Surendra Nath Kaushik, "The Sharif Regime and the Military Takeover"(eds.) Ramakant, S.N. Kaushik and Shashi Upadhay, *Contemporary Pakistan: Trends and Issues* (Delhi: Kalinga Publication), 2001, p. 292.

<sup>16</sup> Kalim Bahadur, *Democracy in Pakistan* (New Delhi : Haranad Publication, 1998), p. 127.

<sup>17</sup> Kalim Bahadur, *Democracy in Pakistan* (New Delhi : Haranad Publication, 1998), p. 126.

<sup>18</sup> Kalim Bahadur, *Democracy in Pakistan* (New Delhi : Haranad Publication, 1998), p. 126.

<sup>19</sup> Kalim Bahadur, *Democracy in Pakistan* (New Delhi : Haranad Publication, 1998), p.146.

<sup>20</sup> Kalim Bahadur, *Democracy in Pakistan* (New Delhi : Haranad Publication, 1998), p.134.



October 1996.<sup>21</sup> Deficit and continued governmental expenditures went higher. The Gross Domestic Production (GDP) of Pakistan in 1997 was 6.3%; it was 5.6% in 1998 and it continued to reduce in 1999, when it was just 3.7%.<sup>22</sup> Economic growth declined steeply as investors lost confidence, private capital flows virtually ceased, and new official development assistance was suspended. Consequently, Pakistan faced a severe foreign exchange crisis. There was a decline in foreign exchange to \$415 million in November 1998.<sup>23</sup> There had been rising debt and government expenditures on unproductive purposes after 1998. Due to a lower fiscal deficit and debt rescheduling, the government retired Rs.68.4 billion of domestic debt.<sup>24</sup> The budget of 1997 presented by the Nawaz Sharif government failed to reflect the precarious state of the national economy.<sup>25</sup> In 1996-97, experts and opposition predicted that the country was facing an economic collapse.<sup>26</sup> Slow economic growth, extremely low private sector confidence, and unsustainable domestic and foreign debt obligations frustrated the people of the country.

Pakistan's economy throughout the 1990s suffered from significant distortions. Its debt accounted for 61.3% of the GDP. There was a slow introduction of structural reforms and a more transparent financial system. Pakistan faced the biggest ever-financial

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<sup>21</sup> Surendra Nath Kaushik. "The Sharif Regime and Military Takeover" in Ramakant, S. N. Kaushik and Shashi Upadhyay eds., *Contemporary Pakistan: Trends and issues* (Delhi : Kalinga Publication, 2001), pp.276-77.

<sup>22</sup> *Asian Development Outlook 2000* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 144.

<sup>23</sup> *Asian Development Outlook 2000* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), p.143.

<sup>24</sup> *Asian Development Outlook 2000* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), p.143.

<sup>25</sup> Kalim Bahadur, *Democracy in Pakistan* (New Delhi : Haranand Publication, 1998), p.169

<sup>26</sup> *Asian Development Outlook 2000* (New York : Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 144

scam when cooperative banks in Punjab collapsed during the government of Nawaz Sharif. Nor was there any sign of recovery. Pakistan remained completely dependent on the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF).

The popularity of democratic governments was undermined by the introduction of new taxes and austere budgets. In June 1996, Pakistan faced large budget deficits. There was a trade deficit of US\$ 239.9 million and a deficit of US\$ 1,712 million on the balance of payments account in 1997.<sup>27</sup>

	<u>1997</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>
GDP growth	1.9	4.3	3.1
GD Investment (GDP)	17.7	17.1	14.8
Gross National Savings	11.3	14.2	1.1
Inflation Rate (Consumer Price Index)	11.8	7.8	5.7
Money Supply (Mz) growth	12.2	14.5	6.3
Fiscal Balance	-6.3	-5.6	-3.7
Current Account Balance/GDP	5.6	-2.7	-2.7

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Sources – State Bank of Pakistan (1999), Government of Pakistan (1999), Staff Estimate, IMF 2000.

### ***Corruption***

During the 8-10 years of democratic rule, corruption had become rampant. In 1994, a number of businessmen and politicians borrowed huge amounts of money from the banks of Punjab and did not repay them. There was corruption in every governmental department. Government officials lost all respect in the eyes of the people. Benazir's husband, Asif Zardari, also was accused by the military in a number of cases of corruption. Benazir's brother publicly criticized her government. The purchase of a Rs. 7

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<sup>27</sup> *The Europa World Year Book 2001* (New Delhi : Haranand Publication, 2001), p.3070.

million Mercedes Benz car by Benazir was raked up. Former intelligence chief, Brigadier Imitaz, was arrested on charges of treason, in Operation Midnight Jackal.<sup>28</sup> The Sind High Court issued an arrest warrant against the leader of the PPP in March 1997 for misuse of power during her last term of office as Prime Minister and for allegations of corruption.<sup>29</sup> In 1990 and 1996, the governments of Benazir were dismissed on charges of corruption.<sup>30</sup> She and her husband were convicted of corruption and given jail sentences in 1999.<sup>31</sup> Zardari used the office of the Prime Minister to make shady financial deals, to sell permits and licenses for industries, and gave patronage to friends.<sup>32</sup> The Mehran Bank revealed that politicians received a huge amount. Benazir's party stalwarts shared the payoff from the Mehran Bank and the Habib Bank. The Jamaat-e-Islami also attacked the government of Benazir Bhutto on charges of corruption and mismanagement. The Army Chief Aslam Beg received Rs. 140 million from the Bank. In 1993, the President dismissed the Nawaz Sharif government on charges of corruption. In December 1995, the Benazir government had filed 140 cases against Nawaz Sharif and his family in the courts. Nawaz Sharif used his position and secured huge amounts for his family business from the Mehran Bank.<sup>33</sup> Serious allegations of corruption were leveled against the Prime Minister, his family, and his party in 1999. Recently, after the coup of 1999, the military regime also criticized his government for corruption. It was argued by the military regime that the governments of both Nawaz Sharif and Bhutto had failed to

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<sup>28</sup> *The Europa World Year Book 2001* (New Delhi : Haranand Publication, 2001), p.3070.

<sup>29</sup> *The Europa World Year Book 2001* (New Delhi : Haranand Publication, 2001), p.3064.

<sup>30</sup> BBC News/South Asia/Timeline : Pakistan . A Chronology of Key Events. 2000.  
[http://www.news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/world/newsid\\_478000/478528.stm-28k](http://www.news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/world/newsid_478000/478528.stm-28k).

<sup>31</sup> BBC News/South Asia/Timeline : Pakistan . A Chronology of Key Events. 2000.  
[http://www.news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/world/newsid\\_478000/478528.stm-28k](http://www.news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/world/newsid_478000/478528.stm-28k).

<sup>32</sup> Saeed Shafqat, *Civil Military Relation in Pakistan: From Z.A. Bhutto to Benazir Bhutto* (New Delhi : Westview Press, 1997), p. 233.

<sup>33</sup> Kalim Bahadur, *Democracy in Pakistan* (New Delhi : Haranand Publication, 1998), p. 120.

stop corruption and could not take any action against corruption because they were also involved in all these illegal activities.

### ***Ethnic Crisis and the Problem of National Integration***

The problem of national integration has been a major problem in Pakistan including during the rule of Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif. It is considered that democracy is the best source of national integration because it allows for communication between people and political leaders, between dominant classes and masses. The incapacity of the political leaders and ruling class was the main reason for the failure of national integration in Pakistan. Mixing Islam with social and economic objectives caused great confusion. There arose many demands for the creation of separate nation states within Pakistan. The MQM was also demanding a separate province for muhajirs. Ethnic problems had remained explosive during the year 1993. Several madrassas were organized by jihadi elements. This played an important role in heightening the rhetoric and Islamic ideals of trans-regionality.<sup>34</sup> There was also the sectarian violence between the Sunni and Shia militant organizations.

Divisions between ethnic, religious and cultural groups have characterized Pakistan. Pakistani democratic governments always failed to fulfill their responsibilities to stop conflicts. Destabilization in Pakistan was mainly caused by the upsurge of ethnic feelings. Mujahir alienation has been one of the main reasons for all the bloodshed. In 1993, ethnic crises in Sind were out of control in spite of the operations launched by the army since 1990.<sup>35</sup> In 1994, Pakistan saw serious clashes at the end of August, when

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<sup>34</sup> Iftikar H. Malik, "Pakistan in 2000: Starting A New or Stalemate?" *Asian Survey*. vol.12, no.1, Jan-Feb 2001, p. 111.

<sup>35</sup> Kalim Bahadur, *Democracy In Pakistan* (New Delhi : Haranand Publication, 1998), p.99.

fighting broke out between the Bugti and the Raisini tribes. Three grandsons of Akbar Bugti, the Chief Minister of Baluchistan, died in these conflicts.

Karachi had become a flashpoint during Benazir Bhutto's government, sixty percent of the cities population was Muhajir, Punjabis, Pathans and Sindhis together and Baluchis, Kashmiris, and Hazaras constituted another 40%.<sup>36</sup> The MQM had started a guerrilla war against the Benazir Government in 1993. On an average, 10 to 20 persons died daily in 1995. Benazir's government failed to stop the bloodshed. The Pucca Qila incident was highly coloured by ethnic factors. At least 20 persons were killed and caused a reaction in the city of Karachi where over 350 persons died.<sup>37</sup> There were also a number of violent ethnic conflicts in various parts of the country particularly in the financial metropolis, Karachi.<sup>38</sup> The failure of the government of Nawaz Sharif is also visible in its inability to curb ethnic violence. In January 1998, a clandestine Sunni group murdered 24 Shia Muslims in Lahore in sectarian violence. Unidentified gunmen killed a total of 17 worshippers in a Shia mosque in January 1999 near Multan. Almost 2,000 people including about 250 members of the security forces were killed during 1995 in ethnic-political violence in Karachi.<sup>39</sup> The government of Nawaz Sharif was unable to curb the rising violence. A number of innocent people fell victims of sectarian fanaticism. The military regime claimed that the democratic government had failed to stop the violence.

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<sup>36</sup> Saeed Shafqat, *Civil Military Relations In Pakistan :From Z. A. Bhutto to Benazir Bhutto* (Oxford : Westview Press, 1997), p. 242.

<sup>37</sup> Saeed Shafqat, *Civil Military Relations In Pakistan :From Z. A. Bhutto to Benazir Bhutto* (Oxford : Westview Press, 1997), p.229.

<sup>38</sup> *The Europa World Year Book 2001* (London : Europa Publication, 2001), p.2822.

<sup>39</sup> *The Europa World Year Book 2001* (London : Europa Publication, 2001), p.2822.

## *Islamic Fundamentalism*

There has been an unending demand for an Islamic state in Pakistan, which helped destroy democracy. Three major Islamic fundamentalist parties exist in Pakistan: Jamaat-I-Islami (JI), Jamet-e-Ulama-e-Islam (JUI), and Jamaiet-e-Ulama-e-Pakistan (JUP). They are violent, militant and aggressive. They argue that there is no room for political parties and no opposition parties in Islam. In November 1994, there arose an Islamic movement. The Tehrik-I-Nifaz-I-Shariat-I-Muhammad,(TNSM), led by Sufi Muhammad, challenged the political and judicial institutions directly and presented claims for socio-religious reforms. Another movement, in the Khyber Agency, called the Tanzeem-I-Ittehad-I-Ulana-Qabail (TIUQ), in 1995 charged the local leadership with failure on social and religious grounds. The agitation for the enforcement of Islamic laws in the Malakand divisions of the NWFP developed into Islamic insurgency. On 14 May 1994, the security forces fired on a caravan of the Tehrik volunteers. Twelve persons were killed in this incident.<sup>40</sup> The Ulama of Sunni theology declared the Pakistani Prime Minister, Benazir Bhutto, a “Kafir”. The Saudi regime and the Taliban are the inspirers and financiers of the Islamic fundamentalist movements in Pakistan. The JUP did well during the 1988 and 1990 elections. Fundamentalist parties were angry with the democratic governments of Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto as they were close to the US. They opposed the Westernization of the country. The ideology of the Islamic groups assured the people of Pakistan that Islam could provide a social system with justice and without exploitation. In 1994, politicians used Islamic slogans and promises for political purposes.

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<sup>40</sup> Arthur S. Banks and Thomas C. Muller (eds.), *Political Handbook of the World 1998* (New York: CSA Publication, 1998), p. 313.

It is important to know that the army also supported Islamic fundamentalist parties and their ideology. The Pakistani Islamic front comprised many retired army officers. In 1995, nearly 40 army officers were arrested on suspicion of plotting to overthrow the government and to establish an Islamic fundamentalist state. The Prime Ministers of democratic governments were helpless in facing this fundamentalist challenge. Both the main political parties, the PPP and the Muslim League, depended on fundamentalist parties to win the elections and to sustain their governments at the center and in the provinces. Islamic fundamentalism posed a threat to Pakistan's liberal political culture. The fundamentalist parties became a major threat to the governments of Benazir and Nawaz Shari. When Pakistan lost the Kargil war, the Nawaz Sharif government was under pressure from the Islamic parties. Various Islamic parties, including the JIP, protested and organized rallies against Nawaz Sharif's government throughout the country.<sup>41</sup>

### ***Lawlessness***

The democratic governments of Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif failed to restore law and order in the country. The deterioration of law and order led to an increase in sectarian conflicts, bloodshed and terrorist activities and also encouraged the Talibanization of Pakistan. The democratic governments themselves were responsible for lawlessness. Political leaders were involved in illegal activities. Asif Ali Zardari was charged with murdering Mir Murtaza Bhutto in July 1997. There were twenty-one former officials who were involved in that murder and conspiracy. In March 1995, unidentified gunmen killed two US officials in the Sind capital in 1994; a large number of killings were linked to the

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<sup>41</sup> *The Europa World Year Book 2001* (London : Europa Publication, 2001), p.2824.

drug mafia.<sup>42</sup> A total of eighteen people were killed in a car bomb that exploded outside the Egyptian Embassy in Islamabad.<sup>43</sup> In the first half of 1996, Pakistan witnessed further acts of violence, terrorism and lawlessness. In July 1996, a bomb exploded at Lahore airport, which killed 6 people<sup>44</sup> Two Iranian engineers were killed by unidentified terrorists in February 1998 in the city of Karachi.<sup>45</sup> In 1999, more than 20 people were killed in a bomb blast on a passenger train in Lahore. In the same year, four people were killed in Punjab in a bomb blast.

## **External Factors**

A number of external factors also played an important role in the coup. This sub-section will deal with all these factors such as the US factor, Indian factor and Taliban factor.

### ***The US Factor***

The US had been considered the most significant foreign player in Pakistani politics since its independence. It has played the most vital role in the formulation of the country's foreign and defence policies.<sup>46</sup> America always provided finance and gave strength to the military establishment in Pakistan. The connections of the army with the US made it the most important institutional vehicle for influence in Pakistan and established its primacy

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<sup>42</sup> *The Europa World Year Book 2001* (London : Europa Publication, 2001), p.2824. p. 2824.

<sup>43</sup> *The Europa World Year Book 2001* (London : Europa Publication, 2001), p.2824. p. 2824.

<sup>44</sup> *The Europa World Year Book 2001* (London : Europa Publication, 2001), p.2824. p. 2824.

<sup>45</sup> *The Europa World Year Book 2001* (London : Europa Publication, 2001), p.2824. p. 2824.

<sup>46</sup> Mushahid Hussain, and Hussain, Akmal, *Pakistan : Problem of Governance* (New Delhi: Kanark Publication, 1993), p. 29.



in the political structure.<sup>47</sup> Pakistan joined the US bloc in 1954 as a way of balancing against India.<sup>48</sup>

The US has helped the Pakistani military and provided military aid, weapons and technology. Since its independence, Pakistan has depended on the US for financial and military aid more than on any other country. Pakistan's enmity with India inspired Pakistan to make a close military and political connection with the US. After the collapse of the USSR and emergence of the vast market of the Central Asian republics, Pakistan became important for its links with that region. Pakistan's difficulties with India encouraged Islamabad to try for closer military and political connections with Washington. Importantly, Nawaz Sharif took a decision to withdraw military troops from Kargil under the pressure of the US. Sharif agreed on 4 July 1999, in an agreement with the US President Bill Clinton at Washington, to withdraw the army and to ensure the sanctity of the LOC.<sup>49</sup> For this step, Sharif had to face a stiff challenge from the opposition. The opposition collectively demanded his resignation.

The US always performed a major role in political changes in Pakistan. US officials had encouraged Iskandar Mirza and Ayub Khan towards authoritarianism.<sup>50</sup> The US also supplied weapons to Pakistan and strengthened the military establishment in Pakistan during the period of 1951-58.<sup>51</sup> Relations between Pakistan and the US cooled down in Z.A. Bhutto's period. Relations, once again, were renewed after Zia's takeover

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<sup>47</sup> Mushahid Hussain, and Hussain, Akmal, *Pakistan : Problem of Governance* (New Delhi: Kanark Publication, 1993), p.90.

<sup>48</sup> Kalim Bahadur. *Democrac in Pakistan* (New Delhi : Haranad Publication, 1998), p.185.

<sup>49</sup> Kalim Bahadur. *Democrac in Pakistan* (New Delhi : Haranad Publication, 1998), p.185.

<sup>50</sup> Kalim Bahadur, *Democracy in Pakistan* (New Delhi : Haranad Publication, 1998), p.193.

<sup>51</sup> Kalim Bahadur, *Democracy in Pakistan* (New Delhi : Haranad Publication, 1998), p.194.

in Pakistan. In 1999, the military regime also had the blessings of the US, as it did not take any action against the military coup and General Pervez Musharraf.

### ***The Indian Factor***

India is Pakistan's most important neighbouring country. In Pakistan, there is a general perception of India as the main threat to its territorial integrity. There has been a general perception among Pakistanis that India as a Hindu country is a major threat to Pakistan. India's size, population, economic development and resources are much bigger than Pakistan's, which has been the reason for fear of India. Pakistan looks at India as a powerful state with hegemonic ambitions.<sup>52</sup> India's help to East Pakistan for its independence increased the tensions between India and Pakistan. On the other hand, Pakistan's support for terrorists in India in Kashmir and Punjab has been a major problem for India. Kashmir has been the reason for four wars between India and Pakistan (including Kargil).

In 1994, both India and Pakistan tried to relax tensions and to manage conflicts within limits. They agreed on various confidence-building measures (CBMs). In 1991, both sides agreed to and drafted an agreement in Islamabad to solve the problem of the Tulbul Navigation Project in Kashmir. The relationship changed further after the elections of February 1997 when Nawaz Sharif took office as the Prime Minister of Pakistan. He took the initiative of a dialogue with India to resolve all outstanding problems. Nawaz had been serious about improving Indo-Pakistani relations.<sup>53</sup> However, most political

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<sup>52</sup> Shalini Chawla, "Pakistan's Military Spending : Socio Economic Dimensions. ". *Strategic Analysis*. vol. 35, no.5, August 2001, p.106.

<sup>53</sup> Surendra Nath Kaushik, "The Sharif Regime and the Military Takeover" in Ramakant, S. N. Kaushik and Shashi Upadhyay eds., *Contemporary Pakistan : Trends and Issues* (Delhi : Kalinga publication, 2001), p.246.

leaders in the army and ethnic groups such as JUI, JUP and other small groups did not want to see Sharif and Vajpayee move closer.<sup>54</sup>

The Indian attitude has always been that Pakistan's desire for a strong and powerful military is an obstacle to peace. The Pakistan army caused the Kargil war. In Pakistan, the Kargil war was considered a military victory but diplomatic defeat for Pakistan. It is important to know that Sharif and Musharraf did not agree on the withdrawal of the Pakistan army from Kargil. Musharraf did not want to pull back the Pakistani army. On the other side, Sharif was under pressure from Washington. That is why, after the withdrawal of Pakistani troops, there was increased bitterness between General Musharraf and Prime Minister Sharif. Pakistan's defeat in 1999 in the Kargil war affected the future of the PML government and was a major turning point in the democratic history of Pakistan. It increased the tensions between the army and the political leadership. Nawaz Sharif and the PML government faced a strong reaction in the country. The Kargil adventure led to the imposition of a 15% sales tax at the behest of the IMF.<sup>55</sup> It became a major cause in the removal of the democratic government and the takeover of General Pervez Musharraf.

### ***The Taliban Factor***

The Taliban always enforced and supported Islamic fundamentalism in Pakistan. In September 1996, the Jamat-I-Islami government of Rabbani was forced to flee Kabul by

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<sup>54</sup> Iftikar H. Malik, "Civil Military Relations in Pakistan". *Asian Survey*. vol. 22, no.1, Jan-Feb 2001, p.361.

<sup>55</sup> Surendra Nath Ksaushik, "The Sharif Regime and the Military Takeover" in Ramakant, S. N. Kaushik and Shashi Upadhyay eds., *Contemporary Pakistan : Trends and Issues* (Delhi : Kalinga publication, 2001), p.285.

the Taliban, after the fall of Najibullah in Afghanistan in 1992.<sup>56</sup> Taliban's capture of Kabul in 1996 had the support of the Pakistani intelligence agencies. Pakistan was the first country that recognized the Taliban regime in Kabul. Talibanis worked hard to spread their influence in Pakistan as well. In 1998, a high-powered Taliban delegation visited Pakistan. Most of the early recruits to the Taliban had come from the madrassas of Pakistan. They provided help to friendly militant organization in Pakistan. Hundreds of Pakistanis got ideological and military training from Afghanistan. The Taliban also provided help in spreading terrorism in Kashmir. A major and typical militant organization was the Markaz Dawa Wal Irshad, which is based about 30 kilometers outside of Lahore.<sup>57</sup> The Taliban follows a very narrow interpretation of Islam and supports the fundamentalist parties of Pakistan such as the Jammah-I-Islami and Jammah-Al-Ulama. The Shia and Sunni conflict is a major threat, partly fuelled by the Taliban in Pakistan. The Taliban generally is supportive of fundamentalism in Pakistan. Most of the fundamentalist parties do not believe in democratic government and supported the military regime in Pakistan. Sharif's sudden and vocal critique of the interference of the Taliban in Pakistan also caused his removal.

## **The Case of Fiji**

The first military coup occurred in Fiji on 14 May 1987 when the Royal Fiji Military Force (RFMF) overthrew the democratically elected coalition government. "The coup brought an end to 17 years of parliamentary democracy, peaceful racial co-existence,

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<sup>56</sup> Kalim Bahadur, *Democracy in Pakistan* (New Delhi : Haranand Publication, 1998), p.77  
<sup>57</sup> Kalim Bahadur, *Democracy in Pakistan* (New Delhi : Haranand Publication, 1998), p.80.

political stability and economic prosperity.”<sup>58</sup> The second coup occurred on 25 October 1987; just four months after of the first coup drove the country into a deepening crisis. It was the first military intervention in South Pacific politics. Its objective was to overthrow the coalition government headed by Ratu Mara, which believed in multi-racial principles across the racial boundary. However, reasons such as economic decline, rampant corruption in the existing government, spontaneous mass disorders, widespread lack of political participation, and weak public commitment to civilian institutions, traditions of military rule, very low levels of economic development and absence of a sense of legitimacy were the causes of the coup.

In May 2000, Fiji faced another crisis. Under the constitution of 1997, from 8 May 1999 to 15 May 1999, the first general elections were held. The Constitution of 1997 provided for a political quota in Parliament. A total of 23 seats were reserved for Melanesians, 19 for Indians, 4 for other groups and another 25 were open to all.<sup>59</sup> Mahendra Chaudhry , leader of the Indian-dominated Fiji Labour Party (FLP), became the first ethnic Indian Prime Minister of Fiji. He won 27 seats out of the 71 seats in the general election and made a coalition government including the FLP, Fiji Association Party (FAP), Veitokani ni Leuanivanua Vahanisito (VLV), and the Party of National Unity (PNU). Rabuka, the previous coup leader of the SVT party, was defeated. Chaudhry rated the most popular leader with 62% of the total population six months after taking office.<sup>60</sup> Many ethnic Fijian leaders and politicians, though, were not ready to accept him as their Prime Minister .As a result he did not enjoy power for a long period,

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<sup>58</sup> Bhagwan Singh and Parimal Kumar Das, *Fiji: The Changing Face* (New Delhi: Haranand Publication, 1997), p.34.

<sup>59</sup> “Pacific Islands”. *Telegraph* (Calcutta), 21 May 1999.

<sup>60</sup> “Fiji’s First Indian Led Government Marks Year In Office”. *Indian Express* (New Delhi), May 19, 2000.

and in May 2000 George Speight took over the government of Chaudhry and suspended democracy. He defended his action as being in the interest of ethnic Fijians. He considered the constitution of 1997 as a discriminatory constitution and claimed the government of Chaudhry was working against ethnic Fijians. The democratic government was condemned on several grounds as it failed to provide economic development to the country. The government could not get the trust of the ethnic Fijians in the case of the land lease problem, which threatened the stability of the democratic government. Since its independence, Fiji has been under military rule intermittently. People do not feel that democracy can be successful there. Ethnic crises also threatened the democratic system. Speight's overthrow of the democratic government was followed by a takeover by the military. Ten days after Speight's takeover of Parliament, the army of Fiji seized power and declared martial law.<sup>61</sup> We can divide the causes of the removal of democracy in Fiji, as in Pakistan, into two types of factors: internal factors and external factors.

## **Internal Factors**

Fiji had various internal factors behind the takeover by George Speight and then by the military. This sub-section deals with a number of internal causes, which contributed to the coup. These include the ethnic problem, political and economic underdevelopment, opposition to Mahendra Chaudhry, problems of governance in a coalition government, the role of the military, and the ambitions of George Speight, and the provisions of the 1997 constitution.

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<sup>61</sup> "Army Wrests Power in Fiji, Mara Quit". *The Hindustan Times* (New Delhi), May 30, 2000.

## *Ethnic Crisis*

Fiji represents a multi-religious, multi-cultural and multi-ethnic society consisting of indigenous Fijians, Indians, Christians, Chinese and other Pacific people such as the Rotumans. Racial relations have been explosive and a sensitive issue in Fiji. Mainly there have been conflicts between the almost equal number of indigenous Fijians and the Indian population. Ethnic Indians demand the same rights as the indigenous Fijians, on the ground that they have been living there for a long time and have been contributing to its political and economic development. On the other hand, Fijians argue that they share their land with ethnic Indians, and ethnic Indians have enjoyed more economic power in comparison to them. Ethnic Indians and Fijians are in almost the same proportion. Fijians accuse the local and foreign media of publishing one-sided accounts.<sup>62</sup> Ethnic Indians had objections to the uncivilized attitude of ethnic Fijians towards them. Fijians also have similar objections to the attitudes of Indians.<sup>63</sup> Ethnic Fijians are 51% and ethnic Indians are 43% of the 800,000 population of Fiji.<sup>64</sup> Fijians feel themselves to be on the receiving end of the economic power of Indians and a social, economic and political order whose evolution has been marginalizing and eroding their identity and values.<sup>65</sup> The Indian community, according to Fijians, made the ethnic Fijians feel marginalized in their own homeland. On the other hand, ethnic Indians do not feel secure.

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<sup>62</sup> John Davies, John Davies , "On the Source of Inter Ethnic Conflicts in Fiji, And on Whether the Reeves Report and the 1997 Constitution After a Workable Solution". *Peace Initiatives* vol. 6, no. 1-3, Jan-June, p.50.

<sup>63</sup> John Davies , "On the Source of Inter Ethnic Conflicts in Fiji, And on Whether the Reeves Report and the 1997 Constitution After a Workable Solution". *Peace Initiatives* vol. 6, no. 1-3, Jan-June, p.44.

<sup>64</sup> "Fiji's First Indian Led Government Marks Year in Office". *Indian Express* (New Delhi), 19 May 2000.

<sup>65</sup> John Davies , "On the Source of Inter Ethnic Conflicts in Fiji, And on Whether the Reeves Report and the 1997 Constitution After a Workable Solution". *Peace Initiatives* vol. 6, no. 1-3, Jan-June , p.43.

The current crises have their roots in the previous coup in 1987 when Sitiveni Rabuka overthrew the multiracial coalition government in the name of indigenous rights. Fijians feel that Indians are never satisfied. According to them Indians want more and more materialistic prosperity. Indians argue that Fijians have been privileged with major additional scholarships for education and access to bank loans. Indians pay 80% of total taxes, but government expenditures on the Fijians are relatively more.<sup>66</sup> Fijians condemn Indians for being anti Fijian. According to them, Indians students often speak and write against Fijians. They claim Indians academics too do not have any interest in Fijian research topics.<sup>67</sup> According to Fijians, the Indian community is concerned only with its own interests.

There were various reasons behind ethnic conflict and tensions. The first cause was economic power. The ethnic Indian community is more prosperous in comparison to the Fijians. Indians control most of the business and commerce. Secondly, political leaders also have been creating problems between ethnic Indians and ethnic Fijians for political advantage. George Speight claimed that he was defending the rights of the narrow 51% majority of indigenous Fijians. Sitiveni Rabuka also supported him in the name of indigenous rights. The third cause was that Indians felt they should have equal

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<sup>66</sup> John Davies, "On the Source of Inter Ethnic Conflicts in Fiji, And on Whether the Reeves Report and the 1997 Constitution After a Workable Solution". *Peace Initiatives*. vol. 6, no. 1-3, Jan-June, p.42.

<sup>67</sup> John Davies, ' On the Source of Inter Ethnic Conflicts in Fiji, And on Whether the Reeves Report and the 1997 Constitution After a Workable Solution". *Peace Initiatives*. vol. 6, no. 1-3, Jan-June, p.46.



rights with Fijians in all respects on the grounds of their qualitative and quantitative contributions. Most Fijians found this difficult to accept. They treated Indians as migrant labour. They are not ready to share equal rights with them. On the other side, Fiji's Indian community had made strong demands for a racially balanced constitution. All-important positions in Fiji are being held by ethnic Fijians in the Army and the administration and government. In recent times, the quality of parliamentary debates demonstrated the consequences of Fiji's racial preoccupation. Important policy considerations were reduced to some form or the other of racial bargaining. As a result of the ethnic crises, Mahendra Chaudhry, an ethnic Indian, was not accepted by the whole country as Prime Minister.

### ***Political Conflicts***

Governor General Penaia Gauilau considered it necessary to protect the special rights of Fijians who had become a minority in their own land.<sup>68</sup> This was especially so after the election result of 1999, which raised fears among the indigenous Fijians, that ethnic Indians were taking over the country. The Labour Party dominated by ethnic Indians won the election. It chose to make a coalition government with two smaller Fijians parties. Fijians, and especially those Fijians who are discriminating against Indians, wield political power thanks to the coups. Fijian perceptions of injustice and discrimination are based on their lack of economic strength and a feeling of backwardness or inferiority at the commercial success of Indians and others. They say that Indian politicians behave like businessmen and favour civil service appointments and government policies for their

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<sup>68</sup> Bhagwan Singh and Parimal Kumar Das, *Fiji: The Changing Face* (New Delhi : Haranand Publication, 1997), p.82.

own community.<sup>69</sup> According to them, Indians go for the civil services to earn money. On the other hand, Indians say that there has been political discrimination against ethnic Indians. Indians could not become Prime Minister or President or Head of the Armed Forces. After the 1997 constitution, this has changed somewhat. After the election results of 1999, tensions were rising among the majority of Fijians. According to the tribal leadership, the result showed that Fijians were losing their control over Fiji. Political conflicts arose due to the ethnicized political setup and associated communalization of electoral and parliamentary politics. Nationalist parties, especially the SVT and the VLV, tried to consolidate their Fijian political base.

Legislation in 1999 attracted further criticism from the opposition on the distribution of power between the President and the Prime Minister. In February 2000, FAP announced its withdrawal from the governing coalition.<sup>70</sup> They were not satisfied with Chaudhry's leadership. The extremist nationalist Taukei movement publicized a campaign of civil disobedience and demonstration. They prompted the Army to take action against the government. The campaign attracted considerable public support. This culminated in a march through Suva by some 5,000 people in early May.<sup>71</sup>

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John Davies, "On the Sources of Inter Ethnic Conflicts in Fiji, And on Whether the Reeves Report and the 1997 Constitution After a Workable Solution". *Peace Initiatives*. vol. 6, no. 1-3, Jan-June, p. 51.

<sup>70</sup> *The Europa World Year Book 2001*(London : Eroupa Publication, 2001), p.1525.

<sup>71</sup> *The Europa World Year Book 2001*(London : Eroupa Publication, 2001), p.1526.

The electoral system has been radicalized in Fiji comprising three electoral rolls- Fijian, Indian and general. Fiji's ethnic minority communities include Banabans, Chinese, Europeans, Gilbertese, Part Europeans, Samoans, Solomon Islanders, Tongans and Tuvaluans. They have aligned themselves with indigenous Fijian interests. "Part European" is the most influential and largest group in the general category. Sam Speight, the father of George Speight, was also part European and became a "born again Fijian" in the post coup era. He won an indigenous Fijian electoral seat in the Parliament in 1992.<sup>72</sup> George Speight represented himself as a representative of the indigenous Fijian interest. According to him, he took over the government of Chaudhry to save the interests and rights of Fijians.

Mahendra Chaudhry's Labour coalition government had strong backing from Ratu Mara who had solid support in the police and the army. The government went into crisis because other indigenous Fijians groups were challenging Rata Mara's authority which gave George Speight the opportunity to attack the government.

### ***Problems of Governance***

Though the FLP government, headed by Mahendra Chaudhry was working very efficiently, it had to face criticism also. Thousands of ethnic Fijians criticized the government for renewing expiring leases on farmland for ethnic Indians, who were the core of his political support.<sup>73</sup> General dissatisfaction grew with the abrasive style of functioning of Chaudhry after he took office.

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<sup>72</sup> Teresia Teaiwa, "An Analysis of Current Political Crises in Fiji". *Peace Initiatives*. vol. 6, no. 1-3, Jan-June, p. 36.

<sup>73</sup> "Coup in Fiji: PM Taken Hostage". *News Times* (Hyderabad), May 20, 2000.

Chaudhry's policies did not help. When he came to power, he brought in too much regulation. At a regional accountants congress, the US Ambassador, Usman Siddique, criticized the government for its excessive interference in the private sector. According to Trevor Wisemantle (Chairman of the Association of Banks), "regulations were becoming a danger for Fiji".<sup>74</sup> Fijian nationalist groups of aggravating racial divisions between the majority Fijian community and ethnic Indians accused the government.<sup>75</sup> Chaudhry was accused of promoting pro-Indian policies such as planning to extend the land lease period in favour of ethnic Indians.<sup>76</sup> The rebels complained of discrimination against majority indigenous Fijians by Chaudhry's Indian-dominated government in the land lease matter.

Chaudhry was unable to gain the trust and confidence of the Fijian people. In the case of land leases, Fijians had no trust in the government. They felt that the government would extend the period of land leases in favour of ethnic Indians. They felt they were losing control over their land in the period of Chaudhry's prime ministership.<sup>77</sup> The FLP had defeated the PNU in the election of 1997. That is why Apisai Tora (leader of the PNU) became the biggest critic of Chaudhry and FLP. The first protest march against Chaudhry's government was conducted under the leadership of Tora.

George Speight, who took over the government of Chaudhry, claimed that his administration was not in favour of ethnic Fijians. He and the armed gangsters argued that Chaudhry's government was not protecting the rights of the ethnic Fijians. Former

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<sup>74</sup> "Fiji's First Ethnic Indian Led Government Marks Year in Office". *Indian Express*, (New Delhi), 19 May 2000.

<sup>75</sup> "Chaudhry Returns Not Guaranteed: Says Mara: Fiji Troops Preparing to Storm Parliament". *National Herald* (New Delhi), May 23, 2000.

<sup>76</sup> Shubha Singh, "Economic Reasons Behind Fijian Crisis". *Organizer* (New Delhi), June 18, 2000.

<sup>77</sup> Shubha Singh, "Economic Reasons Behind Fijian Crisis". *Organizer* (New Delhi), June 18, 2000.

Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka blamed Chaudhry for letting Fiji down because of his political style.<sup>78</sup> According to him, Chaudhry had lost his sense of balance. Opposition groups organized a number of demonstrations against the working style of the government. One other thing, which caused the coup, was the problem between Chaudhry and the military, due to the decision of Chaudhry to abolish the military-controlled Fiji Intelligence Services (FIS) and to entrust intelligence collection to the Indo-Fijian officers of the Police Special Branch, which were directly accountable to him.<sup>79</sup> He could not implement it, as the bill to bring to an end the FIS was rejected by the Senate upper house. The government's decision to disband the Fiji Intelligence Services from December 1999 was criticized by the opposition.<sup>80</sup>

### ***Opposition to the Ethnic Prime Minister***

Chaudhry's election to the prime ministership was the first time an Indian had risen that high politically. Mahendra Chaudhry became Prime Minister under the provision of the 1997 multi-racial constitution. Till 1997, the posts of Prime Minister and President were reserved for ethnic Fijians only. There was not strong support for the Prime Minister because of his status as an ethnic Indian. The opposition leader Jai Ram Reddy declared,

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<sup>78</sup> Shailendra Singh, "Chaudhry Missed Chance to Bring Fiji Together: Rabuka". *The Times of India* (New Delhi), 27 July 2000.

<sup>79</sup> Binay Srikanta Pradhan, "Politicization of Ethnic Differences in Fiji". *Peace Initiatives*. vol. 6, no. 1-3, January-June, p.101.

<sup>80</sup> *The Europa World Year Book 2001* (London : Europa Publication, 2001), p.1525.

“Fiji is not ready for an Indian PM.”<sup>81</sup> Reddy was the main rival of Chaudhry in the 1999 general elections. Indigenous nationalist groups opposed vehemently the possibility of an Indian becoming the Prime Minister of the country. They clearly said they would not accept an Indian. They wanted the constitution of 1998 to be revised. Sitiveni Rabuka gave primacy to indigenous Fijians. According to him, Indians should not be allowed to occupy the top political posts. The Fiji Association Party (FAP) warned Chaudhry, which was a member of the coalition headed by him that his appointment would threaten the unity and stability of Fiji.<sup>82</sup> The National Federation Party, also exclusively representing the Indian community, took part in the election of 1999. Its leader Jai Ram Reddy felt that that it was not the right time for an ethnic Indian to become the Prime Minister.<sup>83</sup> He argued that Chaudhry had made the mistake of accepting the leadership of a coalition government without ascertaining the wishes of its partners.<sup>84</sup> Various nationalist groups were committed to bring down the Chaudhry administration. The nationalist groups blocked every move made by the government, to find solutions to the problems of the country. After a year, on the first anniversary of the coalition government, nationalist

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<sup>81</sup> “Fiji’s First Indian Led Government Marks Year in Office”. *Indian Express* (New Delhi), 19 May 2000.

<sup>82</sup> Sam Rajappa, “Fiji Not Ready for an Indian PM”. *Statesman* (Calcutta), May 21, 2000.

<sup>83</sup> Sam Rajappa, “Fiji Not Ready for an Indian PM”. *The Statesman* (Calcutta), May 21, 2000.

<sup>84</sup> Sam Rajappa, “Fiji Not Ready for an Indian PM”. *The Statesman* (Calcutta), May 21, 2000.

groups planned to march through Suva calling for the resignation of Chaudhry.<sup>85</sup> *The Observer* said that the nation was not ready for an Indian Prime Minister due to the resentment of Rabuka, who blamed Chaudhry and suggested the government be suspended. FAP members threatened Chaudhry's broad based government. They remained in the coalition government due to the interference of the President, Ratu Mara. In June 1999, a strong demand arose against the FAP to withdraw from the coalition due to discontentment among the party members. NVTLP also demanded the resignation of Chaudhry. In the latter half of 1999, various nationalist groups including the SVT strongly demanded that an indigenous Fijian leader replace Chaudhry.<sup>86</sup> A number of demonstrations were organized, expressing disillusionment with the government.

### ***Economic Causes***

There were also a number of economic reasons behind the suspension of democratic government. Ethnic Indians in Fiji are economically richer than ethnic Fijians. Indians control all key industries and economically dominate the society. The Indian community earns over 70% of personal income.<sup>87</sup> Ethnic Indians control business and commerce, including the major foreign exchange earners. They had the advantage of business acumen and numerical strength. Ethnic Indians also control the sugar industry, which is the most important industry in Fiji. The Indians are better educated which led to their dominance. Very few Indians are poor, while Fijians are not necessarily rich.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> "Fiji's First Ethnic Indian Led Government Marks Year In Office". *Indian Express* (New Delhi), May 19, 2000.

<sup>86</sup> *The Europa World Year Book 2001* (London : Europa Publication, 2001), p.1525.

<sup>87</sup> John Davies, "On The Source of Inter Ethnic Conflict in Fiji". *Peace Initiatives*. vol. 6, no. 1-3, Jan-July, p.43.

<sup>88</sup> Ambreesh, "Prosperity of Indians Behind Ethnic Tensions: Envoy to Fiji". *The Hindustan Times* (Bhopal), May 31, 2000.

Indians easily entered the wage employment sector in the mining and copra industries. Fijians are crucial to the sugar industry as plantation and mill workers and later as smallholder tenant farmers.<sup>89</sup> Fijians numerically dominate Suva in the public sector while Indo-Fijians dominate the sugar towns in the west. Fijian employers also dominate the gold and fish canning industries. Consequently, the space was few and far between where ethnic groups interacted.

Fiji basically has an agriculture based market economy. Its commercial sector is heavily concentrated around sugar. The mining of gold and copper has acquired economic importance. Another major issue is the agriculture land lease issue. The Indian community is 44% of the total population and the majority of the Indian population works in sugarcane on land leases.<sup>90</sup> Indian farmers lease land from ethnic Fijians. Most of the land leases were due to expire. This had been a serious concern for the Indians.

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<sup>89</sup> Satendra Prasad, "The Fijian Constitutional Debate and Dilemma". *Peace Initiatives*. vol. 6, no. 1-3, Jan-July, p.10.

<sup>90</sup> Man Mohini Kaul, "An Overview of the Crisis in Fiji". *Peace Initiatives*. vol. 6, no. 1-3, Jan-July, p.1.



The government was discussing the matter. The Native Land Trust Board (the board which manages the land leases for the Fijians owners) claimed that the FCP was trying to extend the period of leases in favour of ethnic Indians.

Fijians also claimed that the government of Chaudhry was planning to withdraw state funds which were provided to indigenous Fijians to assist their business interests. According to them, the government was promoting racism against ethnic Fijians. According to the Asian Development Bank (ADB), in 1999, agriculture (including forestry and fishing) contributed only 16.0% of GDP (at constant 1989 prices).<sup>91</sup> The sugar industry also experienced a decline. The services sector declined in 1999 by 1.1% while it had increased by some 3.4% in 1998.<sup>92</sup> A trade deficit of US\$ 15.6 million was recorded in 1999.<sup>93</sup> The deficit was projected as 1.2% of GDP.<sup>94</sup>

### ***The Role of George Speight and His Self Interests***

George Speight led the coup. He had some personal interests behind his takeover of the democratically elected government of Chaudhry. He is a businessman and the son of an opposition member of Parliament. He argued that behind his takeover was the interest of all indigenous Fijians against the discriminating government of Mahendra Chaudhry. The main reason, it seems, though, was his personal interest.

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<sup>91</sup> *The Euorpa World Year Book 2001*(London : Europa Publication, 2001), p.1527.

<sup>92</sup> *The Euorpa World Year Book 2001*(London : Europa Publication, 2001), p.1527.

<sup>93</sup> *The Euorpa World Year Book 2001*(London : Europa Publication, 2001), p.1527.

<sup>94</sup> *The Euorpa World Year Book 2001*(London : Europa Publication, 2001), p.1527.

On 19 May 2000, the takeover attempt was driven more by personal ambitions and economic interests.<sup>95</sup> Speight was a failed businessman. His business interests had suffered under the leadership of Chaudhry who terminated his appointment as the Chairman of two Fijian firms, which were involved in the country's lucrative timber trade. He was also sacked from the post of the Managing Director of Insurance Broker Health (Fiji) Ltd. Chaudhry alleged Speight had misused funds.<sup>96</sup>

Speight had a close relationship with Rabuka's government. His father, Sam Speight, belonged to Rabuka's SVT party and was a Member of Parliament as well as member of the opposition party in 1999. Speight himself used to play golf with Rabuka. Rabuka's party had been defeated by FLP in the elections of 1997. George Speight also had bad relations with Chaudhry. Speight demanded the post of Prime Minister in order for him to release all the hostages. The army refused to accept his demand. Then Speight demanded seats for his supporters in the interim government. Speight did not have a military background but rather a political background. He was a key player in an American company, which had lost a bid to harvest Fiji's mahogany forests.<sup>97</sup> He took over the elected democratic government on the grounds of protecting the rights of indigenous Fijians, though this was not true.

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<sup>95</sup> "The Fijians". *The Pioneer* (New Delhi), May 29, 2000.

<sup>96</sup> Teresia Teaiwa, "Who Is George Speight". *Peace Initiative*. vol. 6 no. 1-3, Jan-July, p.39.

<sup>97</sup> Teresia Teaiwa, "Who Is George Speight". *Peace Initiative*. vol. 6, no. 1-3, Jan- July, p.39.

## *The Army and the Tradition of Military Rule*

Fiji had been under military rule in 1987, led by Rabuka. There was a general assumption that military rule was more suitable for multiracial, multiethnic and multicultural Fiji. In 1987, Rabuka took over the elected democratic government in the name of protecting the rights of indigenous Fijians. The British provided recruitment and training to Fijians in the colonial period. After independence, Fijians played an important role in administration. The large-scale expansion of Fiji's military began in 1997.<sup>98</sup> Senior appointments moreover had always been closely allied to the ruling political elite in Fiji. Many military officers were recruited to public service jobs. So the bureaucracy was under the influence of the Army.

Fijian society pushed the Army to restore law and order in Fiji. Fiji has an army comprising of 3796 personnel, formed into 7 infantry battalions equipped with small arms.<sup>99</sup> All the personnel in the Army were ethnic Fijians. Indians and peoples of other races were not allowed to join it. Its Navy consists of 275 officers and ratings.<sup>100</sup> It operates four Israeli-built inshore patrol craft and five assorted ships.<sup>101</sup> According to the *CIA Fact Book* of 1998, US\$32 million was spent in military expenditure in 1997, 5% of GDP.<sup>102</sup> In 1998, the Army wanted US\$ 32.76 million for naval communication expenses

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<sup>98</sup> Satendra Prasad, "The Fijian Constitutional Debate and Dilemma". *Peace Initiatives*. vol. 6, no. 1-3, Jan- July, p.14.

<sup>99</sup> Mehendra Ved, "Fiji Army Finally Asserts Authority". *The Times of India* (New Delhi), 27 July 2000.

<sup>100</sup> Mehendra Ved, "Fiji Army Finally Asserts Authority". *The Times of India* (New Delhi), 27 July 2000.

<sup>101</sup> Mehendra Ved, "Fiji Army Finally Asserts Authority". *The Times of India* (New Delhi), 27 July 2000.

<sup>102</sup> Mehendra Ved, "Fiji Army Finally Asserts Authority". *The Times of India* (New Delhi), 27 July 2000.

and maintenance of vehicles, but it was provided US\$25.48 million.<sup>103</sup> Large scale expenditures on Fiji's military began only in 1977.<sup>104</sup> In 1980, Fijian Military Force (FMF) strengthened its relations with the US. All senior appointments and posts are filled by indigenous Fijians, even reserved for them.<sup>105</sup> Rabuka had the full support of the FMF during his coup in 1987. After the coup, the military developed its alliances with France, China and Israel, which strengthened the FMF.<sup>106</sup>

The military in Fiji opposes democratization because of the fear of loss of jobs and resources. The military has a vested economic interest in opposing democracy in Fiji. Many military officers have been recruited in public services jobs and the police force, after leaving the military. It ensures the presence of the FMF across the state bureaucracy.<sup>107</sup> Fiji's powerful Great Council of Chiefs showed sympathy with George Speight's demands. Disillusioned soldiers had also expressed support for Speight's aims.<sup>108</sup> The Defence Force is exclusively comprised of Fijians. Fijians dominate the functional portion of the police force. So the entire system of law and order is in their hands. By arresting George Speight, who took over the government of Chaudhry, Fiji's tiny army was seen as finally arresting its loss of authority.

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<sup>103</sup> Mehendra Ved, "Fiji Army Finally Asserts Authority". *The Times of India* (New Delhi), 27 July 2000.

<sup>104</sup> Satendra Prasad, "The Fijian Constitutional Debate and Dilemma". *Peace Initiatives*. vol. 6, no. 1-3, Jan- July, p.14.

<sup>105</sup> Satendra Prasad, "The Fijian Constitutional Debate and Dilemma". *Peace Initiatives*. vol. 6, no. 1-3, Jan- July, p.14.

<sup>106</sup> Satendra Prasad, "The Fijian Constitutional Debate and Dilemma". *Peace Initiatives*. vol. 6, no. 1-3, Jan- July, p.14.

<sup>107</sup> Satendra Prasad, "The Fijian Constitutional Debate and Dilemma". *Peace Initiatives*. vol. 6, no. 1-3, Jan- July, p.15.

<sup>108</sup> Teresia Teaiwa, "Who Is George Speight". *Peace Initiative*. vol. 6, no. 1-3, Jan- July, p.39.

## *The Constitution of 1997*

The constitution of 1997 provided the opportunity to ethnic Indians to take part in the political system of Fiji. It provided ethnic quotas for the 71 seats of Parliament. Under this system, 23 seats were ensured for Melanesians, 19 for Indians, 4 for other groups and only 25 seats were open to all to ensure there can never be a government that does not have Melanesian representation.<sup>109</sup> The Senate approved it after a gap of 7 years. The 1997 constitution was a non-racial one, which provided for the political participation of all races including the Fiji Indians. According to the constitution of 1997, the post of Prime Minister was opened to all races, though the post of the President was still reserved for ethnic Fijians only.

The constitution of 1990 was heavily loaded against the ethnic Indians. It ensured political dominance by ethnic Fijians. Ethnic Indians strongly opposed the constitution of 1990, which was based on racial discrimination against Indians, as there were different provisions for ethnic Indians and for ethnic Fijians. Fijians had privileges compared to ethnic Indians. All top posts were reserved for ethnic Fijians. After 7 years, a new constitution came into effect, which ensured equal political rights for all ethnic races in Fiji. However, Fijians felt that the constitution of 1997 was giving too much power to the ethnic Indian minority.

Fijians felt that they were losing control over the country because of economic weakness. In addition, political rights were being provided to the ethnic Indians. As a

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<sup>109</sup> "Pacific Island". *Telegraph* (Calcutta), May 21, 1999.

result, they felt they would lose complete control. On the other hand, the Indians were worried about the security of their lives and rights. When George Speight took over the government, he claimed that he wanted to put control back in the hands of indigenous Fijians. Fijians argued that Indians were not eligible to get equal political rights in Fiji. They argued that Indians were often unaware of the feelings of Fijians because they had little interest in understanding the Fijian world. According to them, Indians emphasized the feudal and undemocratic character of the chieftain system and the marginalization of western Fijians by the eastern elites.<sup>110</sup> Many Indian political leaders and press blamed the Fijian community for the racial troubles in Fiji. Fijians considered this nonsense.

Still on the theme of attitudes shaped by history, the contrasting efforts of Fijians and Indians in World War Two are a subject of perennial consideration. Almost 2,201 Fijian soldiers saw active service in the Solomons (42 lost their lives) and, despite numerous attempts to mobilize an Indian regiment, only one Indian saw active service: a non-combatant doctor.<sup>111</sup> Fijians argue that the primary political objective of Indians was to secure status, wages, educational opportunities and political representation. Fijians were suspicious of the idea of democracy, of one-person one vote because as a result of democracy Indians dominated the town councils at the municipality level, which concentrated Indian settlements in urban areas. The policies of these municipalities did not serve the interests of the masses/Fijians who elected them. According to the Fijians,

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<sup>110</sup> John Davies, "On the Source of On the Source of Inter Ethnic Conflicts in Fiji, And on Whether the Reeves Report and the 1997 Constitution After a Workable Solution". *Peace Initiative*. vol. 6, no. 1-3, Jan- July, pp.46-47.

<sup>111</sup> John Davies, "On The Source of Inter-Ethnic Conflicts In Fiji, And on Whether the Reeves Report and the 1997 Constitution After a Workable Solution". *Peace Initiative* . vol. 6, no. 1-3, Jan- July, p. 48.

they had no status and no identity in their own land. For them, the fear of an Indian-dominated government was strong. Indians behaved like businessmen. It was not simply the political force of Indians but also their private sector influence and the imprint in little Fiji of the globally massive Indian culture.<sup>112</sup>

## **External Factors**

Not only internal but also external factors were important in the coups in Fiji. These external factors affected the situation a lot. In particular, the US and India were factors in Fiji's domestic politics.

### ***The US and Indian Factor***

It was not so obvious, but there was an American factor behind the takeover of 2000. George Speight, who played an important role in this crisis, had become a key player in the US company, called Trans Resources Management (TRM). In August 1999, Chaudhry sacked him from the FHCL, another US company. The US company was interested in Fiji's hardwood timber. After the removal of George Speight, it became difficult for the US to get hardwood timber from Fiji. In a recent interview, Chaudhry claimed that the reason behind the coup was that, "There were international bids for mahogany. TRM, an American consortium, set up for the bid...we have evidence that Speight was a proxy and received money from TRM...; the US embassy in Suva was pushing for TRM getting the timber deal by putting indirect pressure on my government through the Attorney General and prominent coalition members. There was money and

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<sup>112</sup> John Davies, "On The Source of Inter-Ethnic Conflicts In Fiji, And on Whether the Reeves Report and the 1997 Constitution After a Workable Solution". *Peace Initiative*. vol. 6, no. 1-3, Jan- July, p.51.

big power involvement...I think the game plan was to remove us because we could not be bullied".<sup>113</sup> George Speight was a failed businessman. Chaudhry terminated him from all-important posts in dealing with important resources. His removal from FHCL caused tensions and difficulties for both Speight and the US. In these circumstances, the US was interested in removing the democratic government of Chaudhry. So the US used Speight. It is important to note that the South Pacific has traditionally been an American Lake. America and FLP never had good relations. In 1980, on the heels of New Zealand's nuclear free proclamation, FLP followed an anti nuclear policy, which deeply upset American and Western military interests.

The Indian Government's response to Fiji was another cause of the coup. India generally supported the interests of the ethnic Indians in Fiji. As a result, Fijians took it as an intervention power. India had played an important role in the suspension of Fiji's membership from the Commonwealth after the earlier coup. India also blocked Fiji's reentry to the Commonwealth. It not only imposed a number of sanctions on Fiji but also agreed with some other countries such as New Zealand and Australia, that assistance and programmes to Fiji should be stopped. India mobilized the world against the Fiji coup. India's reaction aroused anti-Indian feelings among Fijians. During Fiji's first coup period, India was the biggest critic. In 1990, India in the Commonwealth criticized the racial-based constitution of Fiji. India has always been raising its voice in favour of the ethnic Indians in the country.

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<sup>113</sup> Karan R. Sawhny, "Editorial". *Peace Initiative*. vol. 6, no. 1-3, Jan- July, p.i.



## *Other Causes*

According to Teresia Teaiwa, Chaudhry was not the problem. The main problems were Fijians and Fijian leadership.<sup>114</sup> The Fijian leadership had been controlled by a group of alert and ambitious businessmen. The group used the Fijian leadership for its own advantage. Indigenous Fijians are not united.<sup>115</sup> Fijian is divided in various ethnic minority groups. The government of Mahendra Chaudhry remained in power as long as it did because of the support of President Ratu Mara. The government had problems when other indigenous groups challenged President Ratu Mara's authority.

There have been three indigenous Fijian Prime Ministers: Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, Timoci Bavadra and Sitiveni Rabuka. There always had been resentment over the leadership of Ratu Mara in the Western provinces in Fiji. The Eastern provinces were not ready for Timoci Bavadra, a Fijian Prime Minister from the Western provinces. Rabuka did not have such problems, but had failed to get the support of Fijian society because of his bad political decisions and sexual and financial indiscretions.<sup>116</sup> Another reason for the removal of Chaudhry's democratic government was that the coalition government, itself, had no unity. The coalition government led by Chaudhry had no unity. Ratu Timoci Silatolu, one of the members of FAP, which was a part of the coalition government, was involved in the illegal overthrow of the government. He was also a part of the rebel group.

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<sup>114</sup> Tersia Teaiwa, "An Analysis of the Current Political Crisis in Fiji" *Peace Initiatives*. vol. 6, no. 1-3, Jan- July, p. 35.

<sup>115</sup> Tersia Teaiwa, "An Analysis of the Current Political Crisis in Fiji" *Peace Initiatives*. vol. 6, no. 1-3, Jan- July, p.37.

<sup>116</sup> Tersia Teaiwa, "An Analysis of the Current Political Crisis in Fiji" *Peace Initiatives*. vol. 6, no. 1-3, Jan- July, p. 36.

## **Conclusion**

To conclude, there were many reasons behind the suspension of democracy in Pakistan and Fiji. Both external and internal factors contributed to these crises. Some causes were indirect, not direct, but they played an important role. The seeds of the crises were sown a long time ago, virtually after independence.

In Pakistan, a number of causes were responsible for the coup of 1999, such as economic decline, deterioration of law and order, growing inequalities between rich and poor and ethnic conflict. Afghanistan and India were important neighbouring countries of Pakistan. Relations with these countries played a vital role in the suspension of democracy. The superpower, America, also was a key factor.

There were rather similar causes for the suspension of democracy in Fiji as in Pakistan. The most important cause was the ethnic crisis between indigenous Fijians and ethnic Indians who had been living there since the colonial period. External factors did not play a direct role but certainly an important one.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **THE COMMONWEALTH RESPONSE TOWARDS THE SUSPENSION OF DEMOCRACY IN PAKISTAN AND FIJI**

The Commonwealth not only opposed the military regimes in Pakistan and Fiji but also took steps to restore democracy in both countries. It used a variety of measures to restore democracy as soon as possible. The last chapter dealt with the reasons behind the coup. This chapter will discuss the Commonwealth's efforts regarding the restoration of democracy in Pakistan and Fiji. It is organized in the following sections. The first section deals with the overall Commonwealth reaction towards Pakistan and the second describes the Commonwealth reaction towards Fiji. Both sections have sub-sections, which describe the reaction of some important countries of the Commonwealth separately, such as, Australia, Britain, Canada, India and New Zealand.

#### **Pakistan and the Commonwealth**

The Commonwealth suspended Pakistan from the association on 18 October 1999 when democracy was suspended in Pakistan after the 12 October 1999 military coup

that ousted the government of Nawaz Sharif.<sup>1</sup> The Commonwealth suspended Pakistani participation in its advisory councils including the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) pending the restoration of democracy.<sup>2</sup> The association appointed the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) to restore democracy in Pakistan and to keep a watch on political developments there. The head of the Commonwealth team warned the military regime in October 1999 that Pakistan's membership would be suspended if democracy was not restored.<sup>3</sup> The head of the Commonwealth has been pressing the military to hold elections as early as possible.

The Action Group condemned the unconstitutional overthrow of the democratically elected government in Pakistan by the military leadership. It considered this overthrow a serious violation of the Commonwealth's fundamental political principles.<sup>4</sup> A mission of four countries was sent to Pakistan by the Action Group to meet the military rulers. On 20 October 1999, they told Islamabad to stay away from the Commonwealth summit conference in South Africa the following month.<sup>5</sup> The Commonwealth delegation pressurized Pakistan to fix a timeframe for the return of democratic government. It offered two years to achieve this goal.<sup>6</sup>

Kaye Whiteman, the Commonwealth spokesman, said that if Pakistan agreed to restore democracy within two years, the association could provide technical

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<sup>1</sup> "Pakistan And The World: Chronology: Oct-Dec 1999". *Pakistan Horizon*. vol. 53, no.1, January 2000, p.52.

<sup>2</sup> "Islamabad Suspended from the Commonwealth Councils". *Public Opinion Trends (POT)*. vol.27, no.276, Part-4 (New Delhi: Press Enclave, 1999), October 23, 1999, p.4023.

<sup>3</sup> "Commonwealth to Watch Pakistan for Six Months". *POT*. vol.27, no.289, Part.4 (New Delhi: Press Enclave, 1999), November 6, 1999, p. 4289.

<sup>4</sup> "Islamabad Suspended from the Commonwealth Councils". *POT*. vol. 276, no.276, Part-4 (New Delhi: Press Enclave, 1999), October 23, 1999, p. 4024.

<sup>5</sup> "Coup to Save the Country". *Guardian* (London), October 21, 1999.

<sup>6</sup> "Coup to Save the Country". *Guardian* (London), October 21, 1999.

assistance to the military regime for drafting a new constitution.<sup>7</sup> It requested the Secretary General Don Mckinnon to assist Pakistan by appropriate technical help to draft a new constitution and to restore democracy in Pakistan. Whiteman said that according to the Commonwealth Millbrook programme, Pakistan should restore democracy within two years or else it should be expelled from the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth Secretary General, Emeka Anyaoku, stated that technical assistance to Pakistan would however, not be affected by the decision of 18 October 1999.<sup>8</sup>

The CMAG delegation included Lloyd Axworthy (the Canadian Foreign Minister), Billie Miller (Deputy Prime Minister of UK), Victor Gheho (Foreign Minister of Barbados) and Tan Sri Dato Mus Abin Hiltan (special envoy of the Prime Minister of Malaysia). The delegation met with General Pervez Musharraf, President Rafiq Tarar, Abdul Sattar (the Foreign Minister-Designate) and several other politicians. It met with some politicians from the ousted governing party, the PML, members of an alliance of 19 opposing political parties, and Benazir Bhutto. The delegation also wanted to meet the ousted Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, but the Pakistani government did not allow it. Nawaz was in military custody.

On 14 October 1999, Thabo Mbeki (President of South Africa) chaired the High Level Review Group of Heads Of Government. He said in Cape Town (South Africa), that the Commonwealth would not allow Pakistan to attend the Commonwealth Heads of Governments Meeting (CHOGM) being held in South

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<sup>7</sup> "Pakistan And The World: Chronology: Oct-Dec 1999". *Pakistan Horizon*. vol. 53, no.1, January 2000, p.52.

<sup>8</sup> "Islamabad Suspended From Commonwealth Councils". *POT*. vol.27, no.276, Part.4 (New Delhi: Press Enclave, 1999), p. 4024.

Africa in November 1999.<sup>9</sup> He believed Pakistan would be suspended from the Commonwealth. On 30 October 1999, another Commonwealth Ministerial delegation met Pakistan's military ruler, General Musharraf.<sup>10</sup> After the meeting, Axworthy said about the process of restoration of democracy in Pakistan, "We have to monitor to see, that, in fact, democracy takes place."<sup>11</sup> In early November 1999, the Commonwealth ministers spent two days in Islamabad. The delegation said that it would urge a summit of the Commonwealth leaders next month to provide a limited time of six months to Pakistan to return to democracy.<sup>12</sup> The Commonwealth had banned Pakistan from taking part in its meetings. In November 1999, the Commonwealth had decided to suspend Pakistan from the association.<sup>13</sup> The Commonwealth Secretary General Emeka Anyewku also promoted the suspension of Pakistan from the association. On 11 November 1999, Kerckhove and Malaysian High Commissioner Dadu Abdullah met Nawaz Sharif in Islamabad for twenty minutes. The Pakistani daily, *The News* reported that the Commonwealth had warned Pakistan of further strong actions in case the military did not speedily restore democracy.<sup>14</sup> A meeting of the CHOGM was held in Durban, regarding the suspension of Pakistan from the Commonwealth. On 12 November 1999, in the

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<sup>9</sup> "Pakistan And The World: Chronology: Oct-Dec 1999". *Pakistan Horizon*. vol. 53, no.1, January 2000, p.52.

<sup>10</sup> Amit Barush, "Musharraf Non Committal on Time Frame". *Hindu* (Madras), October 30, 1999.

<sup>11</sup> Amit Barush, "Musharraf Non Committal on Time Frame". *Hindu* (Madras), October 30, 1999.

<sup>12</sup> "Commonwealth to Watch Pakistan for Six Months". *POT*. vol. 27, no.290, Part.4, November 9, 1999, p.4289.

<sup>13</sup> "Commonwealth to Watch Pakistan for Six Months". *POT*. vol.27, no.289, Part.4, November 9, 1999, p. 4341.

<sup>14</sup> "Commonwealth Warns of Further Actions Against Pakistan". *POT*. vol.27, no.305, November 26, 1999, Part.4, p.4576.

Durban Summit, the CHOGM decided to suspend Pakistan from the Group.<sup>15</sup> The CMAG was requested by the CHOGM to keep the situation under review.

Subsequently, a meeting was held between Secretary General Don McKinnon and deposed politicians on 27 August 2000 in support of a quick return to democracy.<sup>16</sup> In the meeting of the CMAG, in London in May 2000, the Commonwealth expressed its concern about the restoration of democracy in Pakistan. It criticized the ban on the participation of political parties in the local elections. It also condemned the military regime for the absence of any timeframe for parliamentary elections. On 25 August 2000, McKinnon expressed the concern of the Commonwealth regarding the return of democracy and reminded General Musharraf to restore democracy within two years.<sup>17</sup> He also indicated that the Commonwealth would extend assistance to Pakistan for the restoration of democracy and would assist Pakistan by appropriate technical help to draft a new constitution. He hoped for Pakistan's entry in the association again in the near future. The CMAG warned Pakistan on 16 September 2000 in New York that if Pakistan did not return to democracy and did not firm up a timetable for general elections, it could be permanently suspended from the 54-nation group. Pakistan had had its membership of the Commonwealth temporally suspended because of anti democratic developments

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<sup>15</sup> "Commonwealth Upholds Pakistan's Expulsion". *POT*. vol.27, no.303, Part. 4, November 24, 1999, p.4542.

<sup>16</sup> "Sharif Declares Wife's Name for PML Chief's Post". *NewsTimes* (Hyderabad). August 28, 2000.

<sup>17</sup> Derek Ingram. "Commonwealth Update". *The Round Table*. Issue. 358 January 2001, p.8.

in the country.<sup>18</sup> McKinnon reported to the CMAG about democratic developments in Pakistan from the coup till December 2000. He heard presentations from Pakistani political parties such as the Jammat-I-Islami (JI), the PPP, the PML, Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf (PTI) and civil society organizations such as the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry, the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative and the Abdul Sattar Foundation.<sup>19</sup> The CMAG criticized the military regime's weak accountability and slowness in restoring democracy and revoking the ban on political parties.

The CMAG suggested that the association should observe the local government elections in 2001. Its member ministers requested the Commonwealth to keep in touch with the military regime and to stress a definite commitment to a timetable for the full and early restoration of democracy. McKinnon said, "We in the Commonwealth wish that General Musharraf holds the general and regional elections by the time (the Commonwealth) leaders meet in Brisbane."<sup>20</sup> The CMAG ministers met in London in mid April and listened to submissions from Pakistan opposition's parties including Benazir Bhutto, representatives of the Jammat-I-Islami, the MQM

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<sup>18</sup> "Musharraf Snubbed". *Tribune* (Chandigarh), June 10, 2000.

<sup>19</sup> "Documentation". *The Round Table*. Issue 360, July 2001, p.446.

<sup>20</sup> "Commonwealth Wants General Elections by October". *POT*. vol. 27, no.87,Part-2, April 12, 2001, p.1450.



the PML and the PTI.<sup>21</sup> The CMAG did not accept the delaying of parliamentary elections in Pakistan. It pressured the military regime to fix the date for elections and for lifting the ban on the Provincial and National assemblies. It warned Pakistan that the Commonwealth would take stronger actions and would use effective and harsh measures if a timetable regarding fair and free elections by October 2001 was not promulgated.<sup>22</sup> The CHOGM also recommended stronger measures against the military regime.

In October 2001, another meeting was organized by the CMAG in Brisbane. Leaders of the CMAG met there to discuss the period of suspension of Pakistan from the association. They extended the time from two to three years. On 21 March 2001, the CMAG called upon the government to announce specific dates for the elections. This meeting was held in London. The Foreign ministers of Australia, Bangladesh, Barbados, Botswana, Canada, Malaysia, Nigeria and UK attended the meeting.<sup>23</sup> It reviewed the situation of Pakistan and recommended general elections as early as possible.

On 20 June 2001, the Commonwealth condemned General Musharraf when he named himself President and dissolved the National Assembly.<sup>24</sup> McKinnon expressed his disappointment and said, "I consider these steps unfortunate. Foreign Minister Sattar's discussion with me last week implied that the Musharraf regime would be moving towards democracy. What we have seen instead are steps in the

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<sup>21</sup> "Musharraf Has Lost Public Support, Claims Commonwealth Secy". *POT*. vol.29, No-91, Part-2, March 30,2000, p.1528.

<sup>22</sup> "Documentation". *The Round Table*. Issue 360 July 2001, p.447.

<sup>23</sup> Rashmee Z. Ahmad, "Pakistan Asked to Restore Democracy". *The Times of India* (New Delhi), March 22, 2001.

<sup>24</sup> Zahid Hussain and Richard Beestrm, "Military Leader Seizes Pakistan Presidency". *The Times of India* (New Delhi), June 21, 2001.

wrong direction...”<sup>25</sup> On 23 April 2001, McKinnon met Musharraf and Sattar, and the Alliance for the Restoration of Democracy (ARD) leader, Nawabzada Nasrullah. They discussed the political scenario and issues relating to the return of democracy in the country and Pakistan’s membership of the Commonwealth. The association once again warned Pakistan that it could take further actions against it.

McKinnon met Sattar in early July 2001. The CMAG ministers reminded him that the Millbrook programme required a maximum two years for the restoration of democracy. McKinnon visited Pakistan on 25-28 August 2000 and met General Musharraf and Sattar.<sup>26</sup> The Commonwealth Secretary General demanded the release of Nawaz Sharif and the restoration of civilian rule in the country. He said that the Commonwealth would seek the ouster of Pakistan from all other world bodies. According to him, this was the only way to stop military coups in the future. The association commented, “ The message from the Commonwealth is clear; until a roadmap and timeframe for the restoration of democracy is made available, Pakistan’s isolation threatens to grow.”<sup>27</sup>

The Commonwealth has suspended Pakistan till the year 2002. The Commonwealth leaders in the meeting on 3 March 2002 refused to readmit Pakistan into the association. After the CHOGM, the conference spokesman, Johel Kiabazo said,“They (the leaders) noted the progress that has been made by President General Musharraf, but Pakistan is still suspended.”<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Amit Narendra, “Pervez-Ive-questions”. *The Pioneer* (New Delhi), July 4, 2001.

<sup>26</sup> Derak Ingram. “Commonwealth Update”. *The Round Table*. Issue 358, January 2001, p.8.

<sup>27</sup> “Commonwealth Seeks Remarks on Nawaz Sharif Verdict Slammed”. *POT*. vol-28, no. 93, Part-2, April 20, 2000, p.1673.

<sup>28</sup> “Pakistan : No Return to Democracy”. *Hindustan Times* (New Delhi), March 4, 2002.

## Response of the Commonwealth Countries to the Pakistan Coup

In this section we will look at the reaching of the various Commonwealth countries, in particular Australia, Britain, India and New Zealand.

### *Britain*

Britain demanded the suspension of Pakistan from the Commonwealth. It suspended all financial assistance and economic aid to Pakistan. It also froze all direct development assistance to the Pakistan government.<sup>29</sup> Its department for international development spends about \$33 million a year on projects in Pakistan, with about half that total going as aid to the government.<sup>30</sup>

Britain condemned General Musharraf's decision to dissolve the National Assembly and then to name himself President of Pakistan. On 21 June 2001, Foreign Secretary Jack Straw said, "There is bound to be widespread anxiety that this represents a setback in the transition to elected democracy."<sup>31</sup> Straw met Abdul Sattar in early July 2001 and emphasized the need for the restoration of democracy. He said, "I was deeply concerned to hear that General Musharraf has dissolved and suspended assemblies and assumed the Presidency."<sup>32</sup>

Britain has the largest share in Pakistan's exports, at 6.54%, among the Commonwealth countries.<sup>33</sup> Its share of Commonwealth imports in Pakistan's trade

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<sup>29</sup> "Pressure on Pakistan Rises as General Tightens Rule". *International Herald of Tribune* (Bangkok), October 16, 1999.

<sup>30</sup> "Pressure on Pakistan Rises as General Tightens Rule". *International Herald of Tribune* (Bangkok), October 16, 1999.

<sup>31</sup> "Pakistan Ruler's Elevation Under Cuts His Aid in US". *International Herald of Tribune* (Bangkok), June 22, 2001.

<sup>32</sup> Anil Narendra, "Pervez-Ive-Questions". *The Pioneer* (New Delhi), July 4, 2001.

<sup>33</sup> "Commonwealth Decision Will Hit Pakistan Exports and Imports". *POT*. vol. 27, no. 298, Part-4, November 18, 1999, p.4448.

stands at 23.4% of total imports.<sup>34</sup> As a result, it is among the top three countries in terms of Pakistan's imports.<sup>35</sup> It is also the second largest source of foreign direct investment after the US, accounting for 22.7% of all foreign direct investment in Pakistan.<sup>36</sup>

Britain invited Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar to London in mid June 2001. It was the first contact between the two countries at the Foreign Ministers level since the military coup of 12 October 1999. The reaction of the British government to the political changes in Pakistan was harsh. British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook strongly criticized the developments.<sup>37</sup> Peter Hain, British Foreign Office Minister for South Asia, showed no confidence in the military regime. According to him, it had no intention of restoring democracy. Hain met Hasan Nawaz (the son of Nawaz Sharif) in early January 2000 to discuss the issue of the imprisonment of Nawaz Sharif. Hain said that the UK had been calling upon the military authorities to respect the safety and legal rights of all those who had been arrested including former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif.<sup>38</sup> He demanded the release of all arrested family members of Sharif. In the meeting of the Commonwealth that held on 12-15 November 2000 in Durban, the minister demanded the immediate release of Nawaz Sharif. "We have consistently

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<sup>34</sup> "Commonwealth Decision Will Hit Pakistan Exports and Imports". *POT*. vol. 27, no. 298, Part-4, November 18, 1999, p.4448.

<sup>35</sup> "Commonwealth Decision Will Hit Pakistan Exports and Imports". *POT*. vol. 27, no. 298, Part-4, November 18, 1999, p.4448.

<sup>36</sup> "Commonwealth Decision Will Hit Pakistan Exports and Imports". *POT*. vol. 27, no. 298, Part-4, November 18, 1999, p.4448.

<sup>37</sup> "UK Invites Pakistan for Talk on Vital Issues". *POT*. vol. 29, no. 140, Part-2, June 13, 2001, p.2360.

<sup>38</sup> "Britain Calls for Fair and Open Trial of Nawaz". *POT*. vol.28, no.2, Part-1, January 3, 2000, p.28.

called for an early transition to democracy in Pakistan and pressed the military authorities for a credible timetable for its achievement,” the minister said.<sup>39</sup>

Sir Charles Guthrie (Chief of British Defence Staff) had been delegated to General Musharraf to discuss the prospects for the return of democracy. Guthrie offered help to Pakistan to reform institutions such as the police and judiciary, if Pakistan moves towards democracy. He added, “Britain does not approve of military coups and wants to see an irreversible timeframe for a return to democracy”.<sup>40</sup> Right after Musharraf took over; Cook said that no coup is acceptable.<sup>41</sup>

Cook, led the Commonwealth in November 1999, in suspending Pakistan from all the Commonwealth councils, even though, it stopped short of expulsion. Britain stopped all economic discussions, and economic and financial aid was frozen. *The News* from London reported on 21 January 1999, that the UK Parliamentary Under Secretary of State said that London would keep in touch with Islamabad to ensure that the country returned to democracy as soon as possible. She said that Britain was watching developments in Pakistan. She added, “Coups can only hinder the democratic process. An apathetic response to a coup in a country of Pakistan’s size and importance would have sent a destabilizing signal to other fragile democracies throughout the Commonwealth and rest of the world”.<sup>42</sup> The British minister also commented on the ongoing trial of the ousted Prime Minister urging that it must be fair and open. Britain was still watching closely the process of the trial.

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<sup>39</sup> “Britain Calls for Fair and Open Trial of Nawaz”. *POT*. vol.28, no.2, Part-1, January 3, 2000, p.28.

<sup>40</sup> “No Intention to Ban Political Parties, Assures Omer Asghar”. *POT*. vol.28, no.16, January 19, 2000, p.293.

<sup>41</sup> “No Intention to Ban Political Parties, Assures Omer Asghar”. *POT*. vol.28, no.16, January 19, 2000, p.293.

<sup>42</sup> “UK Not to Turn Its Back on Democracy : Minister”. *POT*. vol.28, no.25, Part-1, January 19, 2000, p.443.

Britain has not been ready to believe Musharraf and his words on a timetable for the restoration of democracy in Pakistan. Peter Hain said, “You can’t trust on face value the words of generals who mount military coups. You have to be extremely skeptical about them.”<sup>43</sup>

In mid January 2000, Britain again moved to normalize the relationship with Pakistan. It sent its Chief of Defence Staff to Islamabad on 13 January 2000.<sup>44</sup> Britain decided to restore technical help in different areas. It started public relief packages also after the dialogue between Finance Minister Shaukat Aziz and the British Minister for Foreign Aid in June 2000.<sup>45</sup> Britain decided to send a team to Pakistan to carry out a survey and to set priorities for giving assistance to Pakistan. The British government did so with the belief that the Pakistani government was serious and sincere in restoring democracy than it was earlier.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> “Britain Unlikely to Take CE’s Words On Face Value”. *POT*. vol. 27, no. 296, Part-4, November 16, 1999, p.4407.

<sup>44</sup> ‘UK Sending Special Envoy in Move To Restore Links With Pakistan’. *POT*. vol. 28, no. 16, Part-1, January 19, 2000, p.292.

<sup>45</sup> “Britain to Restore Technical Aid to Pakistan”. *POT*. vol. 28, no.143, Part-2, June 17, 2000, p.2504.

<sup>46</sup> “Britain to Restore Technical Aid to Pakistan”. *POT*. vol. 28, no.143, Part-2, June 17, 2000, p.2504.

## *India*

India did not make any strong statements in October 1999 as most other countries had done. Jaswant Singh (India's External Affairs Minister) noted, "We don't have to comment on events in Pakistan. As events by themselves are a deadly comment on the situation in that country."<sup>47</sup> According to him, India was not interested in the decision on Pakistan's expulsion. He said that India's commitment to democracy was clear. It was ironic that on the eve of the swearing in of the Vajpayee government, coup leaders took control of Pakistan and the country went under martial rule.<sup>48</sup>

India did not offer congratulations to Musharraf when he dissolved the National government and became the President. However, it invited him to talk with Prime Minister Vajpayee on 14 July 2001 saying that it would recognize his new role.<sup>49</sup> New Delhi was not in the forefront of the suspension of Pakistan from the Commonwealth. Atal Bihari Vajpayee merely hoped that friendly relations would eventuate. India showed its concern but it did not oppose Musharraf openly. It did not welcome the military regime either. Indian officials called the coup 'a matter of grave concern' and Indian troops were reportedly placed on high alert.

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<sup>47</sup> Seema Guha, "Why India's Lips are Sealed for Now". *The Times of India* (New Delhi), October 17, 1999.

<sup>48</sup> Seema Guha, "Why India's Lips are Sealed for Now". *The Times of India* (New Delhi), October 17, 1999.

<sup>49</sup> "Pakistan Ruler's Elevation Under Cuts His Aid in US". *International Herald Tribune* (Bangkok), June 22, 2001.

## *Canada*

Canada suspended all aid and financial programmes to Pakistan. It also supported the removal of Commonwealth membership. Canada has provided a large amount of assistance to Pakistan.<sup>50</sup> The assistance from Canada to Pakistan in the year 1999-2000 was entirely grant based.<sup>51</sup> The Canadian Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy led the Commonwealth delegation in October 1999 to urge the government of General Musharraf to set a timetable for the return of democracy. He warned Pakistan either to restore democracy or to face strong steps. Canada has been a member of the CMAG. Axworthy tried to meet Nawaz Sharif in 1999. He also reviewed the situation in Pakistan at that time. Canada had also demanded the restoration of the constitutional and democratic system in Pakistan as soon as possible.

## *Australia*

Australia also was a member of the CMAG, which reviewed political developments in Pakistan many times under the supervision of Don McKinnon. Australia demanded strong steps against Pakistan's military government. It considered illegal the imprisonment of Nawaz Sharif and other members of his family and of his party and demanded their release as soon as possible. Australia asked the Commonwealth to continue to pressurize the present government of General Musharraf. Australia recommended using the influence of other member countries of the Commonwealth.

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<sup>50</sup> "Commonwealth Decision Will Hit Pakistan Exports and Imports". *POT*. vol. 27, no.299, Part-4, November 18, 1999, p.4448.

<sup>51</sup> "Commonwealth Decision Will Hit Pakistan Exports and Imports". *POT*. vol. 27, no.299, Part-4, November 18, 1999, p.4448.



Canberra supported the suspension of Pakistan from the Commonwealth. It has followed all the Commonwealth resolutions on the subject and stopped all economic and financial assistance to Pakistan. It had also banned all economic programmes to Pakistan. In 2001, Australia welcomed the announcement of general elections for provincial councils in August 2001.<sup>52</sup> In March 2001, it also visited Pakistan as a member of the CMAG to review the political situations in Pakistan.

## **Fiji and the Commonwealth**

Rebels under the leadership of George Speight took over the democratically elected government of Mahendra Chaudhry in May 2000. The Commonwealth strongly criticized this action of Speight. The foreign ministers of the Commonwealth met in London and advocated that Fiji should be suspended from the association.<sup>53</sup> The Commonwealth appointed Don McKinnon as Head of the CMAG to take action and to review the political conditions of Fiji. McKinnon called for a meeting of the

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<sup>52</sup> “Mckinnon Hails Democratic Roadmap”. *The News* (Islamabad), September 17, 2001.

<sup>53</sup> Derek Ingram, “Commonwealth Update”. *The Round Table*. Issue-360, July 2001, p.324.

CMAG in London, which recommended strong and practical steps against Fiji. It also recommended suspension of the membership of Fiji from the association. The action was implemented in June 2000.

The association took economic sanctions under consideration but it also said that it did not want to target the peoples of Fiji. Some countries favoured sanctions and demanded Fiji's expulsion from the organization and the imposition of trade sanctions. On the other hand, some Commonwealth members opposed it and considered it an internal matter of Fiji. According to them, trade sanctions would hurt the peoples of Fiji. Finally, the Commonwealth decided to impose economic and trade sanctions on Fiji. It forced Fiji to adopt a new and more democratic constitution as of 1997. The rebels considered it blackmailing and condemned the CMAG. According to Fiji Radio, "The crisis is an internal problem and the Fijians of this country want to look at it and address it, even if you have to remove the government of the day."<sup>54</sup> Australia, Britain, New Zealand and some other countries cut off their aid to Fiji. The Commonwealth Foreign Ministers included Australian Alexander Downer and Phil Goff of New Zealand who decided to visit Fiji in June to find a solution to the crisis.

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<sup>54</sup> Mike Corder, "Fiji Rebels See Commonwealth". *The Times of India* (New Delhi), June 8, 2000.

The CMAG reviewed developments in Fiji. The CMAG decided to monitor the situation very carefully and hoped for the return of democratically elected government. It continued its dialogue with the interim Fiji administrators and asked McKinnon to appoint a special envoy for the restoration of democracy and the promotion of national unity. The association decided not to talk to George Speight and other rebels.

A fact-finding mission was sent by the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI). It urged the formation of an elected government of national unity as an interim administration. The CHRI said in October 2000 that if Fiji did not install democracy under the 1997 constitution it should be expelled from the Commonwealth.

McKinnon visited Fiji on 6 June 2000. He urged leaders in Fiji to return to democracy and the rule of law as soon as possible. He recommended that the administration should work according to the constitution of 1997. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister John Battle said: “ We are disturbed that the deal struck... abrogates the 1997 constitution and leaves almost half the population without democratic representation.”<sup>55</sup> McKinnon announced a meeting of the CMAG in London in early June 2000 and urged Fijian leaders to return to democracy speedily and to establish the rule of law in accordance with the Harare Declaration.<sup>56</sup>

The Commonwealth delegation, which reached Suva on 15 June 2000, included the Foreign Ministers of Australia, Alexander Downer, Foreign Minister of

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<sup>55</sup> Derek Ingram “Commonwealth Update”. *Round Table*. Issue 358, January 2001, p.41.

<sup>56</sup> Derek Ingram “Commonwealth Update”. *Round Table*. Issue 358, January 2001, p.41

New Zealand, Phil Goff, and ministers of many other countries.<sup>57</sup> The Commonwealth ministers called for the restoration of democracy in Fiji shortly after arriving in the South Pacific. They discussed the political crisis and the stand of Fiji with the military leaders. They also held discussions with religious, political and indigenous representatives on 16 June 2000.<sup>58</sup> The CMAG tried to get a pledge from the Fijian military government to return to multiracial democracy. They also emphasized the reestablishment of the constitution in the framework of the 1997 Constitution. They condemned George Speight's takeover of the elected government of Mahendra Chaudhry and demanded the release of the hostages.

Justice Pius N. Langa (Deputy President of the Constitutional Court of South Africa) was appointed by McKinnon on 1 December 2000 as his special envoy to the Fiji Islands to promote democracy and national unity there.<sup>59</sup> The Commonwealth Secretary General had submitted the review reports of his special envoy to the group. The CMAG encouraged Langa to continue the efforts to promote national unity and the restoration of democracy in Fiji. It also offered technical assistance to the Secretary General for his work of restoring democracy. Langa visited Fiji in December 2001, January 2001 and March 2001. The Fiji Court of Appeals was welcomed by the group, which upheld the 1997 Constitution as the Fiji Supreme Law of the Country.

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<sup>57</sup> "Delegation Hails Now For Multiracial Democracy in Fiji".  
<http://www.cnn.com/2000/ASIANNOW/australiasia/06/16/Fiji.unrest/-46k>

<sup>58</sup> "Delegation Hails Now For Multiracial Democracy in Fiji".  
<http://www.cnn.com/2000/ASIANNOW/australiasia/06/16/Fiji.unrest/-46k>

<sup>59</sup> Derek Ingram, "Commonwealth Update". *The Round Table*. Issue 359), April 2001, p.183.

The Ministers of the CMAG refused to hold talks with the coup leader George Speight, but they did meet military, church, tribal and community leaders. The Commonwealth hoped that discussions would contribute to the restoration of constitutional rule and democratic government. They also talked with Fiji's military to help release all the hostages.

The Court of Appeal of Fiji declared the military-backed government illegal on 1 March 2001. The military promised to uphold the court decision as a result of the pledge to work towards the return to constitutional rule by President Ratu Josefa Iloilo and Interim Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase. Fiji remained suspended from the Commonwealth till the general election in 2001.

## **Response of the Commonwealth Countries to the Coup in Fiji**

This section deals with the response of individual Commonwealth countries such as Australia, India, New Zealand and the UK to the coup in Fiji.

### ***Britain***

Britain imposed a range of sanctions on Fiji. It emphasized the formation of a new government in accordance with the constitution of 1997. It condemned Rabuka and indicated support for the democratically elected government of Mahendra Chaudhry. Britain cancelled aid programmes and military visits to Fiji.<sup>60</sup> It also withdrew its High Commissioner, Michael Dibben.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Derek Ingram, "Commonwealth Update". *The Round Table*. Issue 358, January 2001, p.41.

<sup>61</sup> Derek Ingram "Commonwealth Update". *The Round Table*. Issue 358, January 2001, p.41.

## *India*

Fiji's crises have long been a major challenge to Indian foreign policy. India strongly condemned the action of George Speight. The Indian response to the crises in Fiji have been cautious. India demanded the immediate restoration of democracy. India condemned the undemocratic nature of Speight's action. Atal Bihari Vajpayee said that India would not accept any move to oust the legitimately elected government in Fiji.<sup>62</sup>

India said it would raise its concern about the situation. Vajpayee recommended international pressure to restore democracy and the government of Mahendra Chaudhry in Fiji.<sup>63</sup> The Prime Minister ordered External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh to take up the matter urgently with the Commonwealth Secretary General and the British Government. Jaswant Singh made bilateral visits for this purpose. The External Affairs Ministry considered it necessary to use international pressure to restore democracy and the legitimate government in Fiji. The Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP), which is a part of the NDA coalition government, urged the Union government to take every step to restore democracy in Fiji. It said the government should use all measures including economic sanctions to restore democracy in Fiji.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> "India Wants Commonwealth to Take Up Fiji Issues". *News Times* (Hyderabad), May 24, 2000.

<sup>63</sup> "Speight Refuses to Free Chaudhry, Others". *The Times of India* (New Delhi), May 24, 2000.

<sup>64</sup> "Army Scraps Fiji Constitution". *Statesman* (Calcutta), May 31, 2000.

A spokesman of the Indian External Affairs Ministry said in Harare and Millbrook that only the restoration of the legitimately elected constitutional government at Suva would be acceptable.<sup>65</sup> India attended the ASEAN post ministerial conference in July 2000 and asked for trade and economic sanctions against Fiji. Jaswant Singh at Bangkok recommended trade and economic sanctions against Fiji for the abrogation of the constitution and the overthrow of a lawfully elected government.

India reached out to all-important countries, which could play an effective role to restore democracy in Fiji and urged them to take actions against it. It coordinated with Australia and New Zealand. After the martial law in Fiji, on 29 May 2000, S.T. Devare, Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs was instructed by the Indian External Affairs Minister to visit Australia and New Zealand to get their help against the rebels in Fiji. Devare also visited Suva to examine the situation. C.P. Ravindranathan, High Commissioner of India in Canberra studied the ground situation of persons of Indian origin.

The Indo-Fijian community expected strong steps by the Indian government. It also recommended that India should use its connections with the Commonwealth in imposing restrictions on Fiji and pressed for an immediate return to democratic

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<sup>65</sup> "Fiji Likely to Dominate Commonwealth Meeting". *The Hindustan Times* (New Delhi), June 6, 2000.

government.<sup>66</sup> India showed its faith in the Commonwealth's capacity to resolve the Fiji problem. S.T. Devare, the Indian envoy, attended the discussion held by the Commonwealth to consider the Commonwealth's approach to the issue during the Commonwealth High Level Review Group meeting of the CMAG in Pretoria, South Africa, in July 2000. India raised the Fiji problem. India always kept in touch with the CMAG member nations, although it was not in the CMAG at that time.

India demanded international pressure against Suva, especially from the democratic countries of the world. The Indian spokesperson in Pretoria stressed the implementation of the Harare Declaration of the Commonwealth and the Millbrook action plan outlined the principles of action against Fiji.<sup>67</sup> India demanded economic sanctions against Fiji in the Annual Ministerial Meeting of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN).<sup>68</sup> Jaswant Singh called on the ASEAN countries and its main dialogue partners to enforce economic sanctions on Fiji in favour of the

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<sup>66</sup> Gopala Rao and Sujit Ghosh, "Fiji and Sri Lanka: Comparing India's Response to Two Ethnic Conflicts". *Peace Initiatives*. vol.6, no. 1-3, Jan-June 2000, p.76.

<sup>67</sup> Gopala Rao and Sujit Ghosh, "Fiji and Sri Lanka : Comparing India's Response to Two Ethnic Conflicts" . *Peace Initiatives*. vol.6, no. 1-3, Jan-June 2000, p.76.

<sup>68</sup> Gopala Rao and Sujit Ghosh, "Fiji and Sri Lanka: Comparing India's Response to Two Ethnic Conflicts". *Peace Initiatives*. vol.6, no. 1-3, Jan-June 2000, p.76-77.



restoration of democratic rule. However, India didn't demand the suspension of Fiji from the Commonwealth. It demanded the reinstatement of the deposed Prime Minister, Mahendra Chaudhry, and did not recognize the regime under the new President.

India did not play as active a role as expected. The nature of the relationship of the Indian community with national Fijians affected Indian attitudes. In the ASEAN Post Ministerial Conference in July 2000, India kept quiet over the suspension of Fiji from the Commonwealth. India maintained diplomatic relations with Fiji after the coup of May 2000. It was confused on the sanctions issue and urged that sanctions were necessary but also that sanctions would be harsh not only on the economy but also on the ethnic Indians in Fiji.

India maintained a cautious approach towards the Speight coup in Fiji in comparison to previous coups. It adopted this approach to keep ethnic Indians safe. India knew that its attitude would be counterproductive and that it could hurt the Indians in Fiji. India feared a backlash by the Melanesians against the Indians. On the other hand, India kept close contact with the regional powers as well as democratic countries to restore democracy in Fiji. The Indian submissions generally stressed ethnic equality and "a non-discriminatory political system."<sup>69</sup>

### ***Australia***

Australia is a key trading partner of Fiji. It has been an important provider of development assistance to Fiji. Australia has a 48% share of the Fiji market.<sup>70</sup> Fiji is

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<sup>69</sup> Gopapla K. Rao and Sujit Ghosh, "Fiji and Sri Lanka: Comprising India's Response to Two Ethnic Conflicts". *Peace Initiatives*. vol.6, no. 1-3, Jan-June 2000, p.77.

<sup>70</sup> Sanjay Kumar Lal, "Australia's Response to the Coup of May 2000". *Peace Initiatives*. vol.6, no. 1-3, Jan-June 2000, p.86.

the thirtieth largest export market of Australia.<sup>71</sup> Bilateral trade in goods and services was \$ 1.5 billion in 1999 and amounted to \$966 million (\$604 million in Australian exports to Fiji and \$362 million in Fijian exports to Australia).<sup>72</sup> Australia serves as an important market for the manufactured goods of Fiji . Fiji is also an important market for Australian value added products. Australia provides a place for small to medium enterprises of Fiji in its market.<sup>73</sup>

Australia condemned the apparent consolidation of unconstitutional and undemocratic rule in Fiji. It recommended the expulsion of Fiji from the Commonwealth and threatened a range of economic and trades sanctions on 29 May 2000.<sup>74</sup> Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer warned that it would not compromise on the restoration of democracy in Fiji. He also refused to accept any compromise which undermined Chaudhry's elected government.<sup>75</sup> Australia threatened economic sanctions on Fiji unless it returned to full multiracial democracy. Australia's Foreign Affairs spokesperson stated on 21 May 2000 that it condemned the criminal and anti- democratic action by George Speight. The Australian Prime Minister John Howard was horrified by the move against Mahendra Chaudhry, a democratically elected leader of a fellow Commonwealth nation.<sup>76</sup> Kim Beazley, the Australian opposition leader, also emphasized that a democratically elected

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<sup>71</sup> Sanjay Kumar Lal, "Australia's Response to the Coup of May 2000". *Peace Initiatives*. vol.6, no. 1-3, Jan-June 2000, p.86.

<sup>72</sup> Sanjay Kumar Lal, "Australia's Response to the Coup of May 2000". *Peace Initiatives*. vol.6, no. 1-3, Jan-June 2000, p.86.

<sup>73</sup> Sanjay Kumar Lal, "Australia's Response to the Coup of May 2000". *Peace Initiatives*. vol.6, no. 1-3, Jan-June 2000, p.86.

<sup>74</sup> Sanjay Kumar Lal, *Statement by Australian Minister For Foreign Affairs : Alexander Downer*. *Peace Initiatives*. vol.6, no. 1-3, Jan-June 2000, p.89.

<sup>75</sup> "India to Take Up Fiji Government 'Ouster' With Commonwealth". *Indian Express* (New Delhi), May 24, 2000.

<sup>76</sup> Sanjay Kumar Lal, "Australia's Response to the Coup of May 2000." *Peace Initiatives*. vol.6, no. 1-3, Jan-June 2000, p.80.

government must be sustained. Laurie Bereton, the opposition Foreign Affairs spokesperson insisted on the immediate release of the Prime Minister of Fiji. She also urged the Australian Government to reduce its ties with Fiji and demanded its expulsion from the Commonwealth.

On 30 May 2000, Australia warned of tough sanctions if Fiji did not take steps towards democracy.<sup>77</sup> Foreign Minister Downer said that Australia would continue to keep its eyes on developments there. Although Australia had announced a number of lists of potential economic, military and sporting sanctions, it recommended limited trade and economic sanctions against Fiji. It said that it didn't want to hurt the peoples of Fiji. Downer said, "Frankly we do not want to destroy the Fijian economy and damage those peoples such as Fiji Indians who have nothing to do with the coup."<sup>78</sup>

According to Downer, George Speight was a terrorist and felt it was intolerable that he should participate in a Fijian government. Australia demanded the release of all hostages as soon as possible. The government of Australia opposed military intervention to release the hostages. Downer said that Australia should keep sanctions on Fiji until the hostages were released.<sup>79</sup> He stated that if Australia did not take steps it would damage the entire international system. Australia also opposed immediate economic sanctions against Fiji, although it had announced a list of economic, trading, and sporting sanctions that could be considered when the hostages

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<sup>77</sup> "Fiji Army Springs Second Coup". *Statesman* (Calcutta), May 30, 2000.

<sup>78</sup> "No Military Solution Yet to Fiji Crisis". *Indian Express* (New Delhi), June 7, 2000.

<sup>79</sup> Sanjay Kumar Lal, "Australia's response to the Coup of May 2000". *Peace Initiatives*. vol.6, no. 1-3, Jan-June 2000, p.83.

were freed.<sup>80</sup> Australia suspended all bilateral aid (around 30%), financial assistance and military ties with Fiji to achieve this end.<sup>81</sup>

Australian trade unions refused to handle Fijian goods. They warned that they might intensify the Fijian trade ban unless George Speight released all the hostages. Australian workers had refused to fully load a fuel tanker bound for Fiji in June 2000. The Australian Council of Trade Union's leader, Sheran Burrow, warned that it could block further fuel.<sup>82</sup> Union workers also refused to handle cargo to or from the country.

After the release of the hostages on 18 July 2000, Australia announced several measures, which were designed to help the return of democracy in Fiji. These included suspension of the Australian Fiji Trade and Economic Relations Agreement (AFTERA). Canberra downgraded the aid relationship and cut certain defence ties. It banned all clubs and team based sporting contacts between the two countries apart from the Olympic Games.<sup>83</sup>

Australia's Foreign Minister promised to bring international pressure against George Speight, a terrorist, and his friends. He declared that Australia would maintain all essential assistance to Fiji for the restoration of democracy there. Australia always kept in touch with Mahendra Chaudhry and demanded his release as soon as possible. Prime Minister Howard urged the Commonwealth to play a key role in the crisis. The

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<sup>80</sup> Sanjay Kumar Lal, "Australia's response to the Coup of May 2000" *Peace Initiatives*. vol.6, no. 1-3, Jan-June 2000, p.84.

<sup>81</sup> Sanjay Kumar Lal, "Australia's response to the Coup of May 2000". *Peace Initiatives*. vol.6, no. 1-3, Jan-June 2000, p.85.

<sup>82</sup> Mark Tran, "Commonwealth Ministers Call For Democracy". *Guardian Unlimited, Special Report*. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/fiji/article/0,2763,332410,00.html-29k>. June 15, 2000.

<sup>83</sup> Sanjay Kumar Lal, "Australia's Response to the Coup of May 2000". *Peace Initiatives*. vol.6, no. 1-3, Jan-June 2000, p.85.

opposition parties also supported this view. Kim Beazley urged the international community to become involved. He believed that Australia had a responsibility to play an important role to maintain pressure on Fiji. He demanded the support of the opposition parties also. Downer said it would be completely 'unacceptable' for Speight or his 'henchmen' to be included in the new Fiji government.<sup>84</sup>

Downer said that despite the current gloomy prognosis, Australia would continue to press for an early return to constitutional rule within the framework of the 1997 Constitution and would be watching very closely the path taken by the new interim civilian administration. Australia offered technical assistance and financial aid to help Fiji. He warned that Australian might intensify the Fijian trade ban unless George Speight released his hostages. The Fiji Trade Union Congress supported the trade ban as a means of restoring democracy in a meeting with the Commonwealth delegation.

### ***New Zealand***

New Zealand was equally forthright as Australia. Phil Goff, Foreign Minister of New Zealand, organized a trip to Fiji in June 2000 to find a solution to the crisis. New Zealand threatened economic sanctions and warned that it would not withdraw them unless the multiracial constitution and democratic government was restored. New Zealand cut off all its financial aid and trade programmes. It banned all trade. Goff said that New Zealand could destroy Fiji's economy, but he did not want to hurt the Fijian population as a whole.

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<sup>84</sup> "Families Hopeful of Early Release of Hostages in Fiji and Have Discontinued Military and Sporting links". *The Times of India* (New Delhi), June 21, 2000.

New Zealand had a number of meetings regarding the reestablishment of constitutional and democratic government in Fiji. It stated, "He (Chaudhry) was kidnapped and detained unlawfully. It was a criminal act. He was democratically elected. And what George Speight and his supporters are arguing for is a racially prejudiced constitution."<sup>85</sup> New Zealand discontinued its military and sporting links. It also applied as much pressure as possible on Fiji to obtain the release of the hostages.

## Conclusion

To conclude, the Commonwealth had been doing as much possible to restore democracy in Pakistan and Fiji since the removal of democratic government. It strongly condemned the undemocratic actions and demanded the reestablishment of democratic rule to resolve the problem.

Don McKinnon said, "There is no question of suspension from the councils of the Commonwealth... The issue is now how can the Commonwealth best act through the CMAG to bring Pakistan back."<sup>86</sup> The Commonwealth maintained the technical cooperation necessary to bring the country back to democracy. Although, it had suspended Pakistan from the organization, as an immediate reaction to the military coup, in October 1999. It changed towards Pakistan when the organization decided to take strict measures in response to the military take over. It has been calling for the

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<sup>85</sup> "What Next in Fiji?". *Tribune* (Chandigarh), July 15, 2000.

<sup>86</sup> "Commonwealth Upholds Pakistan's Expulsion". *POT*. vol. 27, no. 303, Part-4, November 24, 1999, p.4542.

restoration of democracy as early as possible. The Commonwealth ministerial group since the military coup has made a number of visits. The overall international reaction has been moderate, although the Commonwealth took a decision to suspend Pakistan's membership from the association. It also stopped all financial and economic aid to Pakistan.

Fiji did not have much importance in international politics, but after the suspension of democracy in May 2000 it became fairly important. No international organization, except the Commonwealth, took the initiative to restore democracy there. The Commonwealth took a variety of steps in this regard. It suspended all aid programmes, and placed an economic and financial ban on interactions with Fiji. Almost all the Commonwealth countries followed the Commonwealth resolutions against Fiji. Australia, New Zealand and India have been the most active in trying to force Fiji to return to the democratic path.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **IMPACT OF THE COMMONWEALTH EFFORTS FOR THE RESTORATION OF DEMOCRACY IN PAKISTAN AND FIJI**

Chapter One dealt with the reasons behind the suspension of democracy in Pakistan and Fiji. The second chapter explained the Commonwealth's efforts regarding the restoration of democracy in these countries. This chapter will attempt to shed light on the success or failure of the Commonwealth in Pakistan and Fiji. It will try to analyze the responses of Pakistan and Fiji to the Commonwealth efforts.

The study has basically proceeded with hypothesis that the Commonwealth, an international organization, has been successful in smaller and weaker countries rather than larger and more powerful ones. Fiji and Pakistan are alike in several important ways but different in size and strength. For decades, scholars have recognized that size and strength are important factors for any country. Size relates to population and the area of the country. Strength has three main things-economic capacity, military capacity and manpower capability. The chapter suggests that the size and strength of the country do matter the most.

Since ancient times, various thinkers have emphasized the size and strength of the state. Often scholars have emphasized that small countries have higher levels of political participation. Val Larwin has commented that small countries may be advantaged by their more intimate politics, the opportunity of leaders to know each



other and their citizens more closely.<sup>1</sup> Larry Diamond in his book *Developing Democracy: Toward Consolidation* has written that one of the most striking features of the distribution of democracy around the world is the importance of small countries which have low population.<sup>2</sup> He further said that during the third wave only 23% of the larger states had democracy and the rest were small states.<sup>3</sup>

According to G. Bingham Powell, political participation and stable and effective government connects to economic development.<sup>4</sup> He also argues that countries at lower levels of economic development and wealth are much more likely to experience a serious threat to democracy.<sup>5</sup> Barry Buzan explains the weakness of the state in security terms. He suggests that the state contains three inter-linked components- the political idea of the state; the physical basis of the state; and the institutional expression of the state. According to him, the physical basis of the state includes defined territory, population, resources and wealth. All are interrelated. He further notes that security and other services provide legitimacy to the state. According to Holsti, economy is one of the important trends, which weaken or strengthen the state.<sup>6</sup>

Powerful and large countries have always been able to take their own decisions in international politics. On the other hand, small and weaker countries in economic

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<sup>1</sup> G. Bingham Powell (Jr.), *Contemporary Democracies : Participation, Stability and Violence* (London: Harvard University Press, 1982), p. 33.

<sup>2</sup> Referred into Larry Diamond, *Developing Democracy Toward Consolidation*.(Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1999), p.15.

<sup>3</sup> Larry Diamond, *Developing Democracy Toward Consolidation*.(Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1999), p.15.

<sup>4</sup> G. Bingham Powell (Jr.), *Contemporary Democracies : Participation, Stability and Violence* (London: Harvard University Press, 1982), p. 34..

<sup>5</sup> G. Bingham Powell (Jr.), *Contemporary Democracies : Participation, Stability and Violence* (London: Harvard University Press, 1982), p. 52..

<sup>6</sup> K. J. Holsti, *The State, War and State of War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p.83.

and military terms have depended on other countries or on international organizations. According to Andrew Walker for many small countries of the Commonwealth, the association is important because it permits them to enjoy the advantage of big power status with none of the disadvantages.<sup>7</sup> The International organizations or powerful countries influence the political structure and system weaker countries. India is the best example in the context of size and strength. It is a developing country but has always been very much able to take its own decisions on national and international levels just because of its economic as well as military power and large area, size and population. It is important that India is the largest democratic country of the world.

## **The Case of Pakistan**

The Commonwealth was unable to get any positive and definite outcome of its efforts on the restoration of democracy in Pakistan. On every occasion, the CMAG returned without achieving its main objective, the restoration of democracy. The Commonwealth suspended the membership of Pakistan from all councils, but, despite this, the Pakistan Army clearly showed that it had no plans to restore democracy in the foreseeable future.<sup>8</sup> The Army condemned the Commonwealth for interfering in the internal matters of Pakistan. Pakistan said that the Commonwealth was doing the wrong thing by suspending it. The Foreign Secretary of Pakistan, Shamshad Ahmad, expressed regret at the decision of the CMAG to suspend Pakistan's membership of

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<sup>7</sup> Andrew Walker, *The Commonwealth: A New Look* (London: Pergamon Press, 1995), p. 125.

<sup>8</sup> M.K. Dhar, "Pakistan: The Failing General". *National Herald* (New Delhi), September 15, 2000.

the Commonwealth.<sup>9</sup> However, Pakistan refuses to install democracy in the near future.

Despite the continuous demand of the Commonwealth, General Musharraf avoided specifying the timeframe for general elections and for the revival of democracy. The military regime refused to make any commitment to the Commonwealth in this regard. Meanwhile, he said that it could take from three months to three years to go to back democracy. According to Musharraf , a deadline could create political instability.<sup>10</sup> Musharraf clarified that there is no question of a return to democracy, at least in the near future. According to him, Pakistani democracy was neither representative nor effective; the military could pull the country together. He remembered earlier phases of democracy as a ‘sham democracy’ and clarified that there was no room for sham democracy.<sup>11</sup> Musharraf appreciated the efforts of all military regimes in Pakistan and said that military rule had been welcomed with enthusiasm by most Pakistanis, even by those who champion democracy.<sup>12</sup> The military had held full authority since the coup. It was interested to continue and wanted a direct role in governance. Even, Asghar Khan, a retired Air Marshal, politician, and the ‘Mr. Clean’ of Pakistan politics, argued that “Hurried polls would be a disaster.”<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> “Pakistan Annotated Works : Chronology : October December 1999.” *Pakistan Horizon*. vol. 53, no. 1, January 2000, p.53.

<sup>10</sup> Zahid Hussain, “General Rules Out Early Democracy”. *Times* (London), November 5, 1999.

<sup>11</sup> Kuldip Nayer, “Musharraf’s Mousetrap”. *The Times of India* (New Delhi), November 23, 1999.

<sup>12</sup> Barry Bearak, “Paksitan Leader at Ease With Coup”. *International Herald Tribune* (Bangkok), November 19, 1999.

<sup>13</sup> Jason Burke, “Not Just Another Dictator”. *India Today*. November 1999. p.56.

The activities of the military regime revealed that it had no plan to restore democracy. General Musharraf clearly said to the Commonwealth that democracy was not his immediate priority. He said, “ I cannot give the timeframe for a return to democracy until the main objective of reviving the economy is achieved”.<sup>14</sup> His priorities were economic development and cleaning out a deeply corrupt system. Musharraf pointed out that the election would not be held before the end of 2000.<sup>15</sup> Musharraf stated that his focus was on the revival of the economy, and not the restoration of assemblies at the centre and the provinces. He did not give any attention to any political option but only to economic development and other priorities. Musharraf promised to install real democracy after cleaning up the political and state institutions.<sup>16</sup>

The Commonwealth condemned the Musharraf regime as illegal. It demanded an effective role for the Supreme Court. The Army Chief manipulated the judiciary. Musharraf had succeeded in getting a certificate of legitimacy in favour of his administration. Several judges tried to raise their voice against the military regime, which resulted in their removal from office. It is obvious that Musharraf has influence over the Court and uses it for his personal advantage. The availability of justice for all is an essential condition for democracy. Without a free judicial system, democracy cannot exist in Pakistan or anywhere else. The Supreme Court gave three years in May 2000 for the restoration of democracy from the date of the coup. Musharraf also promised to hand over the country to an elected civilian government. He stated on 1

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<sup>14</sup> Zahid Hussain, “General Rules Out Early Democracy”. *Times* ( London), November 5, 1999.

<sup>15</sup> “Army Rule Likely Till 2000 End”. *The Times of India* (New Delhi), December 6, 1999.

<sup>16</sup> “Pakistan Get Pledge Democracy Will Return”. *International Herald Tribune* (Bangkok), May 26, 2000.

January 2001 that his government was committed to completing the return to democracy by the deadline of October 2002, given by the Supreme Court and the Commonwealth.<sup>17</sup> However, he does not seem serious about obeying the Supreme Court order. Nasrullah Khan, the Chief of the Alliance for the Restoration of Democracy (ARD), hoped that political forces would succeed in ousting the military regime in the timeframe given by the Court. Several political claimed that there was no justification for the Chief Executive to remain in power.

Musharraf had no wish to hold a general election. Under some economic pressure and to get legitimacy from the international community, Musharraf outlined a plan for the restoration of democracy on 14 August 2001. He declared that the Local Bodies Polls (LB Polls) would start in December 2000 and be completed by July 2001.<sup>18</sup> In the meeting with the heads of three main Islamist Parties in July 2000, Musharraf had showed no intention to revive the suspended assemblies. He also showed no plan either for Sharif or Bhutto in any future

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<sup>17</sup> "Various Options on Democracy Available: Says Moin Haider". *POT*. Vol. 29, no.1, Part-4, January 1, 2001, p.13.

<sup>18</sup> Zahid Hussain, "Pakistan Maps Out Road to Democracy". *Times* (London), August 15, 2000.

political set up.<sup>19</sup> On 31 December 2000, the first phase of elections had been completed. After that the election Commission (EC) postponed the second phase of the polls, under the pressure of Musharraf. The EC did not feel any responsibility to explain the postponement.

Earlier, Musharraf had said that the announcement of a national general elections depended on the success of the LB elections. After the postponement of LB polls, hope for the national elections in the near future was destroyed. The Secretary General of the Commonwealth, Don Mckinnon, met Musharraf during the LB polls. He said that there was no doubt that the authorities in Pakistan had no interest in elections. Several other interlocutors were of the view that Musharraf had no plan to restore democracy in the foreseeable future. In June 2001, Musharraf declared himself President. The Commonwealth strongly criticized this action of Musharraf. Musharraf forced Rafiq Tarar to resign.

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<sup>19</sup> Prem Shankar Jha, "The Threat That Hangs Over Sharif: Asia- I". *Hindu* (Madras), July 19, 2000.

Political analysts believe Musharraf's actual motive was to ensure to supremacy of the military.<sup>20</sup> He was condemned in Pakistan also. Altaf Baruni, a Pakistani political commentator, criticized Musharraf on his presidential takeover. He continued in his post of Chief Executive and of Chief of Army too. However, Musharraf assured the people of Pakistan that he would do the job with sincerity and devotion. Baruni pointed out, "Every military ruler of Pakistan held out such an assurance but none of them cared to rise to the task and he (Baruni) finds no reason to think that the new President would be an exception..."<sup>21</sup>

The Commonwealth had been pleading for the release of the former Prime Minister. The military ruler did not bother about its recommendations. It did not say anything about the fate of Nawaz Sharif who was under house arrest. In November 1999, the Commonwealth delegation tried to meet Nawaz Sharif, but it was not allowed to meet him. On 19 December 2000, Nawaz was suddenly released by the military regime. This was due to the pressure of Saudi Arabia. Five trillion rupees had been paid by Saudi Arabia and other Islamic countries as economic assistance to secure the release of Nawaz.<sup>22</sup> Musharraf used this money for his consolidation. At the same time, by sending him in to exile, the military regime secured its position at home. Nawaz was sentenced to exile for life and warned to stay out of Pakistan. Sharif and his family promised to abstain from politics. The other thing that Musharraf got by releasing Nawaz was that Islamic countries would not threaten his military regime.

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<sup>20</sup> Mubashir Zaidi, "Musharraf Peomotes Himself to Presidentship". *The Hindustan Times* (New Delhi), June 21, 2001.

<sup>21</sup> Satyabrata Rai Chowdhuri, "For Dictators Will be Dictators". *The Pioneer* (New Delhi), July 16, 2001.

<sup>22</sup> "Arabs Paid Five Trillion For Sharif's Release : PML". *Deccan Herald* (Bangalore), December 20, 2000.

Just eighteen months after the takeover, the military regime banned all political parties and political activities in Pakistan.<sup>23</sup> Without political parties modern democracy cannot exist. Musharraf banned marches and rallies. Nobody could raise a voice against the military regime. Nawaz was arrested but his party had not dared to organize protests against the army, as it was not safe. No party was allowed to take part in the LB polls. Musharraf was uncertain about that the participation of political parties in the national and provincial assemblies.<sup>24</sup> So far he has not indicated when he would lift the ban on the activities of political parties. During the referendum also, political parties were not allowed to campaign.

President Musharraf announced the referendum on 28 April 2002 and got a decisive and comfortable victory. The Commonwealth did not appreciate the referendum. The Commonwealth criticized Musharraf saying that he used state instruments such as the police and the Army to a get victory in the referendum. It was a controversial referendum. After it, Musharraf's rule has been extended for five years. The political parties in Pakistan fully opposed it because they were not allowed to campaign. The political parties were allowed to come together just one time, thirteen days before the vote. At all other times, they weren't allowed to be together. Meanwhile, Musharraf launched his campaign with a huge rally in Lahore, three weeks before the referendum. The parties could not organize rallies. Evidence has shown that the machinery of state was used to influence the results. The public sector workers were quoted as saying they had been pressurized to cast their ballots for

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<sup>23</sup> "Judicial Tehelka in Pakistan". *International Herald Tribune* (Bangkok), April 9, 2001.

<sup>24</sup> A. G. Noorani, "Pakistan Army Rule: A Dismal Failure". *Indian Express* (New Delhi), October 28, 2000.



Musharraf. It was also claimed that the police opened ballot papers at several polling stations to see which way people had voted. The people were not terribly excited by the referendum, assuming that everything was in Musharraf's hand. They said it would not make any difference whether they voted or not.

Musharraf took various steps to remain in power. He arrested Nawaz Sharif in November 1999. Benazir Bhutto was also accused of a number of charges. Since then she has been living outside Pakistan. She was warned that she would be arrested if she came back to Pakistan. As a consequence, Musharraf ousted the two most powerful parties from politics. The leader of the third largest party, MQM, was also arrested by the military regime. By keeping out the three largest parties of Pakistan, Musharraf has tried to secure his political future. The Commonwealth condemned Musharraf for arresting Nawaz and had been demanding the release of Sharif. The Commonwealth also assured Benazir Bhutto that it would work for her return to Pakistan, but could not do so. Musharraf has also suspended several senior military officers to promote his close and loyal friends.<sup>25</sup> According to analysts, "Pakistan's military regime had strengthened its position against any opposition already weakened by internal divisions by sending the ex Prime Minister and Benazir Bhutto into exile."<sup>26</sup>

A final factor in the military regime's calculation has been domestic opinion. Though the military regime delayed setting a timeframe for the restoration of democracy, no one seemed bothered at home. People were happy when Musharraf took over the Nawaz Sharif government. Many celebrated through the entire night.

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<sup>25</sup> "A Clever Deal". *Deccan Herald* (Bangalore), December 11, 2000.

<sup>26</sup> "Sharif Begins Exile in Saudi Arabia". *The Hindustan Times* (New Delhi), December 11, 2000.

The people widely supported Musharraf's decision to not to hurry the polls.<sup>27</sup> Gohar Ayub Khan, a former minister, believed that Musharraf had been 'forced to act'.<sup>28</sup> He considered army rule inevitable under the circumstances. Even the reaction of the PML was not critical, as would have been expected.<sup>29</sup>

It is obvious that the Commonwealth has not been successful in its aim to restore democracy in Pakistan. The Commonwealth had given Pakistan two years for the restoration of democracy, which was extended for three years after some time. Still, the military regime remains. As was mentioned earlier, Pakistan has a large area and big population. It has nuclear weapons and conventional military power. The reason that the Commonwealth's efforts could not be successful regarding the restoration of democracy in Pakistan is that Pakistan is a strong country. Pakistan has been less dependent on the Commonwealth or the Commonwealth countries for military assistance or financial aid and therefore can resist the association. The country, which has been important for Pakistan, is the US. The US has much influence

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<sup>27</sup> Jason Burke, "Not Just Another Dictator". *India Today*. November 1999, p56

<sup>28</sup> Jason Burke, "Not Just Another Dictator". *India Today*. November 1999, p56.

<sup>29</sup> Sumita Kumar, "Sharif Vs. Musharraf: The Future of Democracy in Pakistan". *Strategic Analysis*. vol..24, no.10, January 2001, p. **1866**.

over the Pakistani political system. This study argues that the Commonwealth has not been successful in Pakistan to restore democracy because Pakistan is strong enough to resist.

The Commonwealth had announced financial and economic sanctions against Pakistan, but it could not affect the Pakistani economy very much. Pakistan discovered new ways of getting assistance. The US has been providing loans to Pakistan from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank (WB), even after the suspension of democracy. Pakistan only cares for the US. After the attack on America, on 11 September 2001, America started a war against the Taliban and Al Qaeda in Afghanistan. Pakistan took advantage of this opportunity and assured the US of all help against the Taliban. By this step, Musharraf secured full military assistance and financial aid for Pakistan. America waved all economic sanctions against Pakistan, imposed after the nuclear tests. The other economic source for Musharraf became Saudi Arabia. It also has been an important trading partner of Pakistan. By releasing Nawaz Sharif, Musharraf got some important advantages from Saudi Arabia. First, he got five trillion Pakistani rupees from Saudi Arabia to release Nawaz Sharif, which helped him to strengthen the economy. Second, he secured long-term economic help from Saudi Arabia. Pakistan does not fear a military threat from any other country because it has a strong military and nuclear weapons. Pakistan spends a big amount from its national budget on military defence. In 1999-2000, Pakistan's total defence expenditure was Rs.1,42,000 million (22% of total expenditure).<sup>30</sup> The US helped to

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<sup>30</sup> Shalini Chawla, "Pakistan's Military Spending :Socio-Economic Dimensions". *Strategic Analysis*. vol.25, no.2, August 2001, p.705.

fulfill the long-desired modernization plans of Pakistan. The US also helped Pakistan in its nuclear programme. The most important thing is that Pakistan has the backing of the superpower.

Of course, Pakistan did stress that it wanted to establish democracy as soon as possible. The regime's admission that it wanted to restore democracy at the appropriate time was due once again to economics. Here, the key pressure was from the US. Pakistan depends on the US more than the Commonwealth. Economics was also involved in its willingness to discuss the issue with the Commonwealth. Pakistan could not avoid the association altogether because some Commonwealth countries such as Australia, Canada and UK are larger trading partners of Pakistan, more important than the Commonwealth countries.

## **The Case of Fiji**

The response of Fiji to Commonwealth efforts was cooperative in the context of the restoration of democracy. The response of Fiji shows that it wanted to reestablish democracy there.

Fiji felt disappointment when the Commonwealth suspended its membership. That is why, immediately after the takeover of the civilian government by George Speight, President Ratu Mara formally invited Rabuka on 22 May 2000, as Chairman of the Great Council of Chiefs, to find a solution of the crisis.<sup>31</sup> The interim government of Qarase assured the Commonwealth that he would call elections within

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<sup>31</sup> *The Europa World Year Book 2000*. vol. 1 (London : Europa Publication), 2000, p. 1526.

three years. He got support from the association to hold early elections. The interim government had been briefing the Commonwealth, from time to time, for the preparation of the general election and constitutional review process and to watch the situation during the elections. Fiji was willing to restore its membership in the Commonwealth. After the election, Fiji asked about the reentry of Fiji into the association and pleaded to be readmitted. In response the Commonwealth Secretary General recommended Fiji's Commonwealth membership. Fiji President Ratu Mara tried to draw out the armed rebels occupying the Parliament and make them surrender. He refused to replace the government of Chaudhry and said, "If Chaudhry wants to resign, he can resign, but it must come from him."<sup>32</sup>

Due to the condemnation by the Commonwealth, the military did not entertain Speight's demands. The army did not include any of Speight's associates in the interim government, saying that there would be an international backlash. The army knew that the Commonwealth could not accept Speight or his supporters in the interim government. And they weren't ready to face additional threats by the Commonwealth. Commodore Frank Bainimarama (Armed force head), did not allow them to play a role in the interim government under the pressure from the international community. In the last week of July 2000, the military arrested Speight and sent him to jail for conspiracy and treason. He and his group were charged with unlawful assembly. Around 350 supporters of Speight were arrested in a raid on a rebel stronghold in the last week of July 2000.<sup>33</sup> According to military spokesman Major Howard Politini ,

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<sup>32</sup> "Seight Refuse to Free Chaudhry, Others". *Indian Express* (New Delhi), May 23, 2000.

**33** "No Military Solution Yet to Fiji Crisis". *The Times of India* (New Delhi), June 13, 2000.

extra troops had been sent to the two areas. Speight and his supporters were not allowed to stay free after the release of the hostages. A number of rebels were sent to jail. Neither he nor any of his supporters was included in the interim government. The military clearly stated, "We won't let Speight play a role in the next government."<sup>34</sup>

The Commonwealth had condemned the army of Fiji for the takeover. That is why the interim government was formed by the army to assure the Commonwealth that it had no desire to remain in power. The interim government was directed to initiate a constitutional review process. It had a mandate to guide Fiji to elections in about eighteen month's time. The interim government welcomed the Commonwealth group to watch the process of restoration of democracy during the elections. Qarase, Prime Minister of the interim government, had resigned when the Court of Appeal ordered him to do so. The interim government promised on 1 March 2001 to prepare for a return to constitutional rule.

The military spokesman, Filipe Tarakinikini, stated that the interim government was 'a just and honest' government.<sup>35</sup> The police commissioner, Isikia Savua, warned Speight he would be arrested in case he tried to leave the compound. He said the act of Speight was a criminal act. In early July 2000, the army decided to appoint an interim government without including any hostage takers in it. The army argued that it intervened only to establish law and order after the political crisis. According to Tarakinikini, the declaration of martial law was taken to protest democracy. He also said the military would try to establish democracy and would

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<sup>34</sup> Rodrey Joyce and Richard Norton Taylor, "Fiji President Forced Out as Martial Law Declared". *Guardian* (London), June 1, 2000.

<sup>35</sup> "Fiji Constitution will be Restored". *The Hindustan Times* (New Delhi), June 16, 2000.

create favourable conditions for democracy in Fiji. He promised to hold elections within two years. The police had been allowed to continue their normal law enforcement duties and investigation. The judiciary had not been tampered with and the bureaucracy had been allowed to continue with occasional guidance from the military authorities.<sup>36</sup> The interim government also tried its best to continue normalcy and did not work as a dictatorship. The military government considered Speight a criminal. It arrested a large number of supporters of Speight from various parts of the capital of Fiji. After the appointment of Qarase as the Prime Minister in the interim government, Bainimarama undertook a constitutional review and directed the interim administration to initiate the constitution review process by encompassing the post coup 1999 constitution and the 1997 constitution. The army talked to Speight and reached an agreement called the 'Muarikau Accord' on 23 June 2000 to end the political crisis and to release the hostages.<sup>37</sup>

The military-backed government assured the Commonwealth that it would undertake a constitutional review. The interim government promised to draft a new constitution within three years. It announced that the Supreme Body representing indigenous Fijians would select three members of a commission, which would rewrite the constitution, two other Fiji Indian members, one from Fiji's other ethnic

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"Fiji's Military Defends Martial Law". *Indian Express* (New Delhi), June 12, 2000.

**37**

"Speight Makes Many Concessions". *The Times of India* (New Delhi), June 20, 2000.

community. The government stated that a lawyer would be Chairman.<sup>38</sup> The new constitution was rewritten very quickly. It took only seventeen months, but before the end of the timeframe that had been set. Fiji wrote its new constitution and held elections. Regarding the new constitution, it made sure that the new provisions were realistic and workable. Fiji made sure that it truly reflected the wishes of all communities in the country.

The Fiji Court of Appeal was under tremendous pressure from the Commonwealth to restore democracy. So the Court took the initiative. It considered the removal of the democratically elected government of Mahendra Chaudhry and the suspension of the 1997 constitution illegal. The Court called on the interim government to leave office by 15 March 2001.<sup>39</sup> As a result, Qarase resigned in the early days of the second week of March 2001. The Court of Appeal advised the government in June 2001 to dissolve Parliament and to call for early elections. The High Court of Fiji did a good job regarding the restoration of democracy. It gave legitimacy to Mahendra Chaudhry and his elected government. The judges declared the government of Chaudhry to be legal and called it back. According to them, the act of George Speight was illegal and he would be punished. The High Court ordered the return of the ousted multiracial government. It told the deposed President Ratu Mara to recall Parliament and appoint a Prime Minister. The High Court also declared the interim government illegal. It is important that Qarase, the Prime Minister of the interim government, accepted this and resigned after the judgment of the Court.

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<sup>38</sup> "Fiji Indian in Panel of Rewrite Constitution". *The Times of India*. (New Delhi), August 26, 2000.

<sup>39</sup> "Fiji SC Declares Government Illegal". *The Indian Express* (New Delhi), March 3, 2001.



President Josefa Iloilo called early elections. Tarakinikini announced the elections before the arrival of the Commonwealth delegation, due to pressure by the Commonwealth.<sup>40</sup> After the establishment of the 1997 constitution, general elections were held in Fiji in August 2001. Fiji had returned to constitutional rule. All political parties participated in the general elections. In elections, the SDL party of Qarase won the largest number of seats comprising 31 of the 71 members of the Parliament. The Fiji Labour Party (FLP) was the second largest party. It secured 27 seats in the parliament. The Nationalist Conservative Alliance (NCAP) got six and a bloc of moderate parties and independents also gained six seats in the elections. The voting for one seat was postponed for some time due to the death of a candidate during the campaigning.<sup>41</sup> Since he had not won a majority in Parliament, Qarase, the leader of the SDL, invited the NCAP leader George Speight to join hands with him to form a coalition government. The NCAP demanded an amnesty and pardon for one of their elected members, George Speight, and his fellow conspirators. The largest party of Fiji, after the elections, was invited to form the government by the President.

The response of Fiji to the Commonwealth efforts shows that it intended to restore democracy. Fiji had its interests in keeping its membership in the Commonwealth. Australia, Britain and New Zealand, all important members of the Commonwealth, are the most important trading partners of Fiji. Fiji depends on the Commonwealth for financial and technical assistance more than any other

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<sup>40</sup> Fiji Constitution Will be Restored". *Hindustan Times* (New Delhi), June 16, 2000.

<sup>41</sup> "Working Verdict". *Deccan Herald* (Bangalore), September 8, 2001.

organization. That is why Fiji could not ignore the wishes of the Commonwealth. When we analyse the situation and the process of the restoration of democracy we find that Fiji was willing to restore democracy. The Commonwealth became successful in Fiji because of that country's dependence on various Commonwealth countries in the economic and military fields. The two main economic resources, tourism and sugar, were badly affected by the coup. Resorts and hotels were closed due to failing occupancy. Indian sugar farmers were not ready to go to work until army protection was given to them. The Commonwealth community had stopped all financial aid and economic assistance since the May 2000 coup. Australian union workers were also not ready to handle cargo to or from the country because Australia was not in favour of military rule in Fiji. The major countries were not ready to restart their help until the restoration of democracy. Fiji was not able to bear these sanctions and had to restore democracy as soon as possible. George Speight and his supporters were arrested by the military immediately after the release of all hostages. The action of Speight was not appreciated by anybody. Everybody criticized him, even the ethnic Fijians.

The other main reason for the successful intervention of the Commonwealth is that Fiji is a small country. Commonwealth membership matters for Fiji in its security perspective. Fiji cannot spend too much on its defence forces. Due to the absence of modernization and advanced technology, Fiji cannot survive for a long time if the Commonwealth countries do not help it. The membership of Fiji in the Commonwealth was restored as a reward for the Pacific nation's progress to

democracy. The Commonwealth countries now have lifted all political, sporting, and military sanctions.

## Conclusion

The Commonwealth initiated various actions in the context of the restoration of democracy in Pakistan and Fiji. However, despite its efforts, it was not successful in Pakistan. On the other hand, in Fiji, it achieved relative success.

Musharraf said that he was not in favour of democracy. According to him, the democratic system is not useful for Pakistan. He wanted military rule in Pakistan for a long time to clean up the country's politics, to develop the country economically, and to introduce democracy from the grassroots level. How Musharraf intends to clean up his country is not yet clear. There is still considerable uncertainty about restoring democracy despite the LB polls and the current referendum. Though Musharraf acted decisively in ousting Sharif, how he intends to tackle Pakistan's various problems, is not clear. After the referendum, it now seems that Pakistan is on the way to a military controlled democracy. Despite the holding of elections at a nationwide level, the Army is unlikely to abdicate the reins of power.<sup>42</sup> It may be a disappointing result in Pakistan for the Commonwealth, but it is not surprising, because

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<sup>42</sup> "The Trouble With Fiji". *Tribune* (Chandigarh), August 25, 2001.

Pakistan does not hold the Commonwealth in great regard. It has been less dependent on the goodwill of the Commonwealth countries and more on the US. The Commonwealth had warned Pakistan in 1999 to restore democracy within two years. The deadline was extended to three years. The year 2002 is coming to an end and there is still no sign of the return of democracy. Musharraf has announced the general elections for national and provincial assemblies in October 2002. Whether these will be held or not remains to be seen.

In September 2001, Fiji got a democratically elected government. The Commonwealth did well to reestablish democracy in Fiji. The membership of the Commonwealth matters more for Fiji. This is why Fiji could not ignore the Commonwealth's demands. Another reason was that the Fijian peoples actually wanted democracy in Fiji. The Commonwealth, in effect, successfully created a favourable environment for democracy. Not everything worked as the Commonwealth would have wanted. Though the High Court declared the government of Mahendra Chaudhry and the 1997 constitution legal, it was not possible to reinstall them. As a consequence, a new constitution was written and, on its base, new elections were held. The new constitution provided more rights to ethnic Fijians than to ethnic Indians. It seems impossible to get Fijians to give full rights to all ethnic groups in Fiji. This will probably take time. The Commonwealth could continue to play a role here. The efforts of the Commonwealth brought about an early end to the political crisis in Fiji. The pressures of the Commonwealth speeded up the process of democratic recovery. Fijians were forced to give an assurance by the now-defunct military government of Bainimarama to restore Fiji's plural identity.

In sum, Fiji has come back to democracy. A democratically elected government is working in Fiji. On the other hand, the military still remains in power in Pakistan, and there is a very little hope for the return of democracy despite the efforts of the Commonwealth.

## CONCLUSION

This study is based on the recent suspensions of democracy in Pakistan and Fiji and the Commonwealth reaction towards the crises. We have seen that the Commonwealth played an enthusiastic and major role in the context of the restoration of democracy in Fiji, but it failed in Pakistan despite its efforts. In Pakistan, the crisis took place due to the military takeover by General Pervez Musharraf, ousting the elected government of Nawaz Sharif. This was followed by another case of suspension of democracy in Fiji when George Speight, a failed businessman, took over the democratic government of Mahendra Chaudhry, the first ethnic Indian Prime Minister of Fiji. The crises led to significant responses from the Commonwealth.

The finding of the study is that in the perception of both states, national strength counts for a lot. Thus, the Commonwealth was not so influential in the case of Pakistan because Pakistan is fairly large in size and economically powerful. On the other hand, the Commonwealth was successful in re-establishing democracy in Fiji because it is a smaller and economically weaker country.

The study is based on the Commonwealth's reaction towards the suspension of democracy in Pakistan and Fiji. The Commonwealth is an international organization. The study summarized the history, principles, aims and methods of the Commonwealth. It briefly noted some important previous cases of suspension of

democracy amongst Commonwealth countries such as Nigeria, Ghana and Uganda and explained the Commonwealth reaction towards these cases.

The study summarized the political developments in both countries. This helped to identify the causes of the recent suspension of democracy. The study attempted to shed light on the causes of previous coups. It also explained how the Commonwealth reacted towards the suspension of democracy. The study looked at the role of external factors in the domestic politics of Pakistan and Fiji. Especially, it looked at the US, India, Britain and Afghanistan, which, directly or indirectly, sowed the seeds of military rule in Pakistan. The interests of the US in South Asia, the recent Kargil war between India and Pakistan, and Afghanistan's influence in Pakistani affairs played a significant role in removing democracy. In Fiji, India's overall relationship with Fiji and the commercial interest of the US contributed to the military coup. One important finding of the study is the role of the US and India. In both crises, the US has been interested in military rule for its own interest. India also played an important role in both countries. Indirectly or directly, it has been a major element, which contributed in bringing about the military coup in both countries.

In the domestic sphere, the study analysed the economic and political conditions. The role of Islamic fundamentalism, as well as the influence of religious parties, played a significant role in establishing military rule in Pakistan. In Fiji, the self-interest of ethnic Fijians, ethnic problems between ethnic Fijians and ethnic Indians, political disturbances and economic and social conditions led to the coup. The

ambitions of George Speight and the growing influence of ethnic Indians in all field of Fiji played a key role in the collapse of the government of Mahendra Chaudhry.

Another important finding of the study relates to the role of the Commonwealth and its members regarding the restoration of democracy. The Commonwealth organised meetings in this regard. The CMAG held several special meetings and review meetings following the coup in Pakistan in 1999 and in Fiji in 2000. The CHOGM visited Pakistan and Fiji to restore democracy as early as possible. The Commonwealth suspended the membership of Pakistan and Fiji pending their return to democracy. It banned all technical as well as financial assistance and aid to them. The Commonwealth delegation pressurized both countries to set a timeframe for the return of democracy and reinstallation of a new democratic government. It announced the time of two years after the coups for both Pakistan and Fiji to restore democracy, which was extended to three years in the case of Pakistan only.

Australia, Britain, Canada, India and New Zealand also took initiatives in this context. They followed the Commonwealth announcements and suspended all financial aid and assistance. The important finding of the study is the different levels of pressure by the Commonwealth countries against Pakistan and Fiji. The protests were not so strong against Pakistan against Fiji. The world was surprised when India did not take any action against Pakistan's military regime, when New Delhi did not even condemn Pakistan openly. On the other hand, India strongly demanded the suspension of Fiji's membership from the Commonwealth. It also urged the other



member countries to take action against the hostage takers in Fiji and the removal of the elected government of Mahendra Chaudhry. Even, Australia and New Zealand did not take strong steps against Pakistan. Britain was also not an exception.

Another finding of the study relates to the process of the restoration of democracy in Pakistan and Fiji since the Commonwealth started its efforts in this context. It also explains the response of Pakistan and Fiji to the Commonwealth efforts. Fiji has returned to democracy within the time of two years given by the Commonwealth, but Pakistan still has military rule. Fiji itself asked the Commonwealth to help restore normalcy, but Pakistan considered these efforts as interference in its internal matters. People in Pakistan did not show any great interest in restoring democracy. The masses celebrated when Musharraf took over the democratic government of Nawaz Sharif. On the other hand, the rebels in Fiji could not get the support of people. Even when the military took over, political leaders, intellectuals and citizens, all strongly demanded the return of democracy. Many times it happened that Pakistan openly refused to restore democracy and to hold general elections. General Musharraf banned all political parties. Musharraf exiled the political leaders, Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto. Nothing so drastic occurred in Fiji.

Finally, this study tried to explain why and how the Commonwealth has been successful in Fiji but not in Pakistan. The study concluded that the size and economic strength of countries do matter a lot. The Commonwealth could not be effective in

Pakistan because it is much larger and economically stronger than Fiji. Fiji very much depends on the Commonwealth countries for its security and safety. If Fiji does not work according to the wishes of the Commonwealth, then in case of any insecurity, Fiji will not be able to protect itself without the help of the Commonwealth. Pakistan is much larger. It has a strong military force. It has nuclear weapons. It can look after its own security. It is less dependent on the Commonwealth.

Fiji was not able to face its economic problems due to the ban on economic and financial assistance. After the suspension of membership, all important Commonwealth countries banned economic interactions with Fiji. As mentioned in Chapter Three, Australia and New Zealand have been the key trading partners of Fiji. They stopped all aid and broke all trading treaties. In this situation, Fiji could not survive for long. Its economy had become poorer since the May coup. On the other hand, Pakistan is economically stronger than Fiji. It does not depend on the Commonwealth for economic resources but more on the US and Saudi Arabia. In the absence of economic assistance from the Commonwealth, the US and Saudi Arabia were in a position to provide economic aid to Pakistan. Thereafter, Pakistan was able to resist the Commonwealth.

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