

Civil Military Relations in, Bangladesh: A Perspective

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Introduction

David Segal identifies two basic approaches to civil-military relations: the political approach - enunciated by Huntington, is based on laws, regulations, formal chains of command, parliament, elected officials, president, civilian legislature - that make the military responsible to society. And the sociological approach -enunciated by Morris Janowitz is based on anchoring civil-military relations into broader social fabrics.¹ The key question in civil-military relations is the extent to which military men and their interests are differentiated from non-military men and interests. These differences, according to the Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences may take place at three levels: the relations between the armed forces and the society, the relation between the armed forces elite group and other elite groups and the relations between the commanders of the armed forces and the top political leaders of the society². Two central and potentially conflicting principles can be deduced from the civil-military problematique. First, the military should be strong enough to protect a society; it should be sufficiently strong and properly oriented to meet any threat that a nation may face. Second, the military should conduct its affairs so as not to destroy the society it is intended to protect³. On the formal level, the civil military relations codifies a set of laws showing the position of the military in the society and the mechanisms of control imposed by society. In democracy, the civilian control, that is control of the military

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¹ David Segal quoted in Otto Pick, Stefan Sarvas, Stanivlav Stach, ", Democratic Control over Security Policy and Armed Forces", Zurcher Heitrag Zur Sicherheitspolitik and Konfliktforschung, No.41; Zurich 1997 (Introduction)

² "Civil-Military Relations", International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences Vol. 2", p.487

³ Peter D. Feaver," The Civil- Military Problematique: Huntington, Janowitz and the Question Civilian of Control", Armed Forces and Society, winter 1996, pp.151-152

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by civilian officials elected by the people, is fundamental. It should also be appreciated that the modern warfare has become too complex - the preparations too elaborate, the weapons too sophisticated, command too arduous, operations too intricate - to leave the waging of the combat to the non-professionals.⁴ In anyway, the ultimate objective of healthy civil - military relations is "the harmonisation of values and beliefs, consensus about the proper place of armed services in society and agreement on security policy and its cost to the state"⁵.

It is an acknowledged fact that the poor nations have many insurmountable economic problems, which need 'scarce' resources that such a nation can ill afford. From this point of view, one may argue that standing military is a luxury for a poor nation like Bangladesh, Pakistan or India. A standing army, apart from its being considered a symbol of sovereignty and national pride and dignity, also contributes in peace making at the national, regional and global level. This peace is indeed, vital for the social, political and economic development of a nation. However, the fine balancing has to be done as to how much of the pie should go to the civil sectors compared to what will be needed to ensure military preparedness. In the context of a nation's economic growth or development, it has a direct bearing on sparing enough resources in traditional military development. Civil-military sectors should develop in a coherent and balanced way so that they make two very important elements that go to make a nation better institutionalised internally and better acclaimed internationally.

Given this logic, civil-military relations have come to occupy an important area of study in a nation's life as brought out by such doyen on the subject like Huntington, Finer, Nordingler, Janowitz, Talukder Maniruzzaman etc. Civil-military relations can be said to be an interaction of political institutions with the organisation of the armed forces in the management of state affairs. Huntington sees 'civil-military relations as one aspect of national security policy. It involves a complex balancing of power and attitudes between civilian and military groups. Nations that have developed a balanced pattern of civil- military relations have a great advantage in national security; on the other hand, the nations that failed squander their resources and run

⁴ Richard H. Kohn, " An Essay on Civilian Control of the Military", *American Diplomacy*, 17 April 1997, p 2 Of 6

⁵ Otto pick, Stefan Sarvas, Stanislav Stach, op. cit. in Introduction.

uncalculated risks. The fine balancing between the social values and the functional imperatives by the military is the nub of the problem of civil-military relations.⁶ Civil-military relation is a multi faceted complex subject, which may be seen more critically. There may be functional contradictions between these two pillars as there can be between the executive and the legislature or between the legislature and the judiciary in a modern democracy. There are more than academic imperatives to pursue a modality that ensures better cooperation between the civil and the military. This paper would attempt to show the context of the civil-military relations and then show how it fits into democratic dispensation of Bangladesh. The paper would eventually show how national security and development efforts could be geared up by involving both the military and the civilian agencies, as and when found feasible and appropriate by the Government. The study would basically be confined to traditional military (security) scenario while the imperatives of non-traditional security environment would also be duly acknowledged. The study would generally follow the Huntington model i.e. the political approach.

Context of Civil-Military Relations

It goes without saying that military had been always an essential and integral part of any civilization one may talk about. Without military no civilization could be built or sustained. "Conquest by force of arms has had more to do with the spread of civilization than any other single agency".⁷ If geography, resources, value system are the essential ingredients of national power, military also definitely contributes rather immensely in solidifying and crystallising the national power. If we talk about Roman Empire, British Empire, Mughal Empire, Chinese Empire or the present day. democracies, military is an essential element that sustains and nourishes that system. The tendency to see the military as a separate entity of any civilization is not logical. . If we look at the earlier history we find the same person

⁶ Samuel P. Huntington *The Soldier and the State: the Theory and Politics of Civil- Military Relations*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass,1957, pp.1-3

⁷ Bertrand Russel, *Power- A Nell) Social Analysis-* Unwin Books London, 1967, pp. 27-28.