



Pakistan Peoples Party Government and Military Relations during Zardari Era (2008-2013): An Analysis

Shaista Gohar¹, Safia Jawad², Hasnain Sajid³, Muhammad Ayaz Khan⁴, Sumayya⁵, Nida Zahid⁶, Usman Ullah⁷, ^{1,2}Lecturer, Department of Pakistan Studies, Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan, KP, Pakistan, ^{3,5}Visiting Lecturer, Department of Pakistan Studies, Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan, KP, Pakistan, ⁴Ph.D Scholar, Pakistan Study Centre, University of Peshawar, ⁶PhD Scholar, Department of Political Science, Qurtuba University of Science and Information Technology Peshawar, KP, Pakistan, ⁷BS Student, Department of Pakistan Studies, AWKUM, KP, Pakistan, Email: ¹shaistagohar@awkum.edu.pk, ²safiabahadur@awkum.edu.pk, ³hussyhd@gmail.com, ⁴m.a.mohammadzai@gmail.com, ⁵Summaykhan1995@gmail.com, ⁶nidazahidkhan@gmail.com, ⁷usmanusafzai6@gmail.com

After assuming power, the PPP governments have consistently attempted to subordinate the military on the grounds that the constitution is supreme and that all branches of government, including the military, must do so. The primary goal of this paper is to reframe the relationship between the PPP government and military from 2008 to 2013 under Zardari. The major argument of this paper is that PPP-military ties in Pakistan under the Zardari government were incident and circumstances based. The incidents and events that caused pleasantness and unpleasantness between the PPP and military leadership from 2008 to 2013 are also included in this study.

Key Words: *Pakistan Peoples Party, Military Relations, Zardari Era, Kerry-Lugar Bill, Salala Check Post Incident, Memo Gate Scandal*



Historical Background: A Glimpse of Various PPP Governments-Military Relations

Pakistan had experienced civilian governments in the past, but after the first military takeover in 1958, Bhutto's government marked the start of the nation's first prolonged civilian supremacy. Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto worked to improve civilian control over the armed forces. To monitor his rivals, military officials, and even the leaders of his own party, he started creating paramilitary and intelligence services. To lessen the military's reliance and capacity for coercion, the Federal Security Force (FSF) was set up. He was momentarily successful in establishing civilian rule because he had the support of the majority during the early phases of his government, which was also favorably appreciated by the military officers (Cohen, 1984). The expulsion of the chiefs of the then-Army (General Gul Hasan Khan) and Air Force (Air Martial Rahim Khan) in March 1972 on the grounds that they had attempted to obstruct the investigations of the Hamoodur Rahman Commission was the paradigmatic instance of civilian supremacy and its assertion. Major adjustments were made to the military's high command's administrative structure by Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto (Rizvi, 2013). The three services were placed under the direction of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, with the President of Pakistan serving as Commander in Chief. The title "Chief of Army, Navy, and Air Force Staff" was changed to "Chief of Army, Navy, and Air Force Staff." The periods of office for each Chief were also shortened from four to two years. In the 1973 Constitution, the "High Treason" phrase under Article 6 was included in reference to constitutional violations; this was done primarily to deter military invasions. Bhutto's claim of civil primacy did not prove to be tenable. As time went on, the Bhutto administration grew intolerably violent and oppressive (Kaleem, 2015). Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto attempted to manage the military with the following four measures, which may be determined by analyzing the civil-military ties during his presidency:

1. Placing constitutional restrictions on the military's public role.
2. Geopolitical element manipulation
3. Making adjustments to the Army's command organization.
4. Establishment of a paramilitary force (FSF) to lessen reliance on the military

When the PPP won the majority in the 1988 general elections for a second time, there was a climate of mistrust between Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and the military hierarchy. Therefore, Benazir Bhutto's first priority as prime minister was to build a relationship based on mutual respect and confidence with the army. It was also necessary for the scenario to force the military's ruling class to accept her as Prime Minister. Consequently, the relationship was addressed cautiously by both parties. The military's relationship with the Benazir administration got off to a good start. She showed her adaptability and pragmatism in this area by making three key concessions. She first gave her approval for General Mirza Aslam Baig to remain as COAS. Second, once General (Rtd) Sahibzada Yaqub Ali Khan was elected a senator on the IJI ticket,



she accepted and kept him in his position as Foreign Minister. Third, she consented to continue serving as the Defense Committee's nominal chair while refraining from inter. Additionally, Benazir Bhutto did not alter the ANP choice for governor of the NWFP (now KPK), a former brigadier (Shafqat, 1997). However, Benazir was deposed from office by Pakistan's president on August 6, 1990, as a result of his combative style. Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto irritated the military over four key topics, and as a result, the gap between civil leadership and military high command grew. In February 1989, Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto created a committee to examine how intelligence organizations fit within a democratic system of government. She made the decision to assume charge of the ISI's operations in order to effectively put it under civilian control based on the suggestions. She achieved this by replacing Lieutenant General Hamid Gul, the present head of the ISI, with retired Lieutenant General Shams ur Rehman Kallu, against the advice of General Aslam Beg, the COAS. Even when they felt it interfered with their professional work, the military followed the orders (Gohar, 2015). The government of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto experienced another constitutional dispute; this time, it involved the President (Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces) and the armed forces. Because Admiral Iftikhar Ahmed Sarohi was ready to leave office after serving the CJCS for three years, the nomination was in doubt. President Ghulam Ishaq asserts that the 1985 change to the constitution's Article 243(c) granted him the power to appoint the CJCS and three service chiefs. Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto used the executive orders issued by the late Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in the 1970s to consolidate her power (Kaleem, 2015). The Prime Minister, however, was forced to resign due to the eighth amendment, which gave the President the authority. However, her claim infuriated the military and presidential elite.

With permission from the federal government, the Sindh government began a police operation in Pucca Qila, a historic neighbourhood in Hyderabad. The Mohajir community made up the majority of the locals. While the mohajirs alleged that the provincial government had ordered the police to terrify the children and women in their community, the Sindh government believed that the community was involved in terrorist activities against Sindhis. Whatever the cause, fighting led in the deaths of hundreds of bystanders in Karachi and Hyderabad. It effectively demonstrated the lack of coordination between the military and the police, particularly when the operation's scope exceeded the power and skills of the police (Akhtar, 2017). In June 1990, Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto made an effort to influence the Army Selection Board's choices, much as her father had in the 1970s. She asked the Army Selection Board to prolong Lieutenant General Alam Jan Mehsud's term as Corps Commander for Lahore, but they turned it down and named Lieutenant General Ashraf Janjua in his place. The military command was compelled to draw the conclusion that Benazir Bhutto was breaching her vow not to interfere with Army concerns about professionalism as a result (Gohar, 2015).



Benazir avoided meddling in the Army's internal matters during her second term and respected military sovereignty, which allowed the troika to work effectively. Some of the essential traits of civil-military relations include the following: - The process of choosing and appointing service chiefs went off without too many problems. Additionally, the Admiral Sarohi issue was handled more effectively than the retirement of General Shamim Ahmed, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee. Following General Abdul Waheed Kakar, General Jehangir Karamat, the senior-most Lieutenant General, was named Chief of Army Staff for the first time in Pakistani Army history. Every political leader and influential voice in the country applauded this appointment (Shafqat, 1997). In spite of the provincial government's objections, Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto agreed when the army decided to halt security operations in Sindh in November 1994. In exchange, the military helped the civil government in Sindh develop its paramilitary forces; as a result, rangers became a potent force throughout Sindh, but especially in Karachi (Kaleem, 2015).

The government of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto handled military-related foreign policy matters, particularly the Afghanistan situation, with the necessary decorum. Her government was also hampered by poor economic management, allegations of corruption in higher levels of government, the misappropriation of public funds, a decline in international law and order, and conflicts with the country's superior judiciary. President Farooq Laghari felt dissatisfied with the country's poor economic and security conditions. Politically affiliated judges were appointed, which enraged the higher judiciary. The Chief of the Army Staff, General Jehangir Keramat, unsuccessfully attempted to settle their quarrel before the President dismissed the Prime Minister from office (Haqqani, 2005).

PPP Government-Military Relations during Zardari Era: Problems and Prospects

The following were some of the incidents/events which upon the relations between the PPP and military leadership remained pleasant or unpleasant accordingly.

Kerry-Lugar Bill, 2009

Relationships between the PPP government and the military high command deteriorated following the Kerry-Lugar Bill of 2009. The 2009 Enhanced Partnership Act is another name for the legislation. It was written and given by American Senators John Kerry and Richard Lugar. On September 24 and October 1, 2009, respectively, the US Senate and US House of Representatives approved the plan. On October 5, 2009, the US President gave his approval and signed it. The legislation gave non-military spending totaling \$1.55 billion each year for the following five years (Kaleem, 2015). The funds obtained would be used to build roads, hospitals, and schools. The military viewed this bill as an attempt by the US to weaken the nation's



security apparatus, while the PPP government hailed it as a success for democratic forces. The main objective of the measure, which gave financial support subject to rigorous conditions, was to lessen the influence of the military (Akhtar, 2017). The legislation required the PPP government to abide by the following conditions:

- a. Refuse to support terrorists and radicals in any way, and eliminate their covert infrastructure.
- b. The political administration exercising firm command over the Pakistan Army
- c. The help won't be utilized to support Pakistan's nuclear weapons research and development.

The Kerry-Lugar law aroused controversy due to the unclear language that was used to draft it. Since Lashkar-i-Taiba and Jaish-i-Muhammadi were mentioned in connection with terrorism and militancy, the bill's provisions highlighted the efforts of the Indian Embassy and parliamentarians in Washington, DC, working for Indian goals against Pakistan. As a result, the National Assembly gave the bill significant thought. The media, civil society, political leaders of the opposition, and the United States' policy towards Pakistan have all been condemned for the contents of the bill. Despite the fact that the Information Minister, Qamar Zaman Kaira, defended the bill's provisions (Kanwal, 2017).

At General Headquarters, the provisions of the bill were also discussed, but they were rejected after a well produced press release claimed that they would unquestionably jeopardize national security. General Ashfaq Parvez Kayani, the chief of the Army Staff, was able to quietly persuade both Parliament and the PPP Government to oppose the measure. Last but not least, the PPP government refused to receive assistance with a condition attached (Kaleem, 2015).

Extension in Services of Chief of Army Staff, 2010

General Parvez Kayani began a three-year term as COAS on November 29, 2007. He called back 300 army officers from their civilian positions in an effort to restore the military's standing as a force that upholds democracy (Kanwal, 2017). The Kerry-Lugar Bill had made things challenging, despite the fact that the PPP government loved him as well. In this context, General Parvez Kayani discussed the military's preference for bureaucrats over political executives at a strategic conference with the Federal Secretaries of various ministries in March 2010, just before his official travel to the United States (Jaffrelot, 2015). The military had an effect on the PPP Government and increased its institutional control through a technical nexus. Numerous rumors have been spread as a result of the PPP and military relationship's nature. In 2009, Time Magazine described to Kayani as "the most powerful general in the world". He has the Obama administration's cooperation to ensure the continuance of the war on terror (Kanwal, 2017). His stint as COAS was extended by the PPP government for an additional three years in order to mend fences with the military. The extension from November 29, 2007 to November 29, 2013



was announced on national television by Prime Minister Gillani on July 21, 2010 (Dawn, 2010, July 23). The military's successful operation against extremists, according to Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gillani, was largely due to General Kayani. In order to secure the continued nature of the anti-terrorist fight, he was given a three-year extension. According to him, Kayani's administration up until 2013 had safeguarded the safety of all influential figures, including the President, Prime Minister, Chief Justice, and Military Chief (Kanwal, 2017). It was predicted that all four of Pakistan's prominent political personalities will complete their sentences at separate points in 2013. The tenure has already been extended because the PPP government had declared it four months earlier. Without support from the military, the PPP government struggled to deal with both internal and global issues while also battling terrorism and extremism in Pakistan. In a series of statements, political parties quietly indicated their support for the PPP government's choice. Because of this, General Parvez Kayani was prevented from taking over the military during the PPP government (Akhtar, 2017). General Kayani had a substantial impact on the PPP government's internal and foreign security policies when he was granted a three-year extension. In other words, General Kayani will indirectly or covertly rule Pakistan for an extra six years after eight years of military rule under General Musharraf. It was unfair from the standpoint of the Army's organizational hierarchy and hurt the merit system. Additionally, it was alleged that the General Staff could not be replaced by a qualified candidate in the sixth-largest army in the world (Talbot, 2012). Even if General Kayani did a fantastic job, there were other generals ready to step up and assume the reins. It's also conceivable that the new COAS came up with fresh and original solutions to the issue. But during those three years, General Kayani worked hard to keep the army out of Pakistani politics, which increased confidence between the PPP government and the military (Kanwal, 2017).

Raymond Davis Allen Case, 2011

The Raymond Davis Allen incident had a negative impact on PPP government and military relations in addition to Pak-U.S. relations. US Army veteran Raymond Davis worked for the CIA as a contractor and was a part of a private security company. On January 27, 2011, in the Mozang neighbourhood of Lahore, Punjab, he had slain two Pakistanis (Dawn, 2011, Febuary4). A road accident on the way also claimed the life of another person. After the incident, there was widespread unrest, and Davis faced harsh punishment (Mahmood, Rathore, Ejaz & Zaheer, 2019).

On February 1, 2011, President Zardari declared that Pakistan will decide Raymond's fate, and the Lahore High Court likewise ruled that Raymond was not allowed to leave the country. As a result of Davis' membership in the US consulate in Lahore, the US argued Davis was covered by diplomatic immunity and sought ambassadorial immunity under the "Vienna Convention of Diplomatic Relations". Raymond Davis was given a safe exit from the country by the military



leadership and courts as a result of US pressure. He was released by the Lahore High Court on March 16, 2011, after the families of the victims received 2.4 million dollars in “diyya,” or “blood money” (Akhter, 2017).

Abbottabad Incident, 2011

American SEALs launched a unilateral operation on Pakistani soil to assassinate Osama bin Laden on May 2, 2011. He was reportedly hidden in Abbottabad, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, close to the “Pakistan Military Academy”. Americans have been searching for him since September 11, 2001, as it is thought that he planned the 9/11 attacks on the Pentagon and the World Trade Center. Two US Navy SEAL helicopters carried out the raid on Osama bin Laden's compound; one of the helicopters was lost in the course of the operation when its tail collided with the perimeter wall due to a mechanical issue; this was the only loss they suffered (Kaleem, 2015). Based on information given by Shakeel Afridi, a doctor with access to the house's grounds, they carried out the raid. An important failure on the part of Pakistan's political and military leadership was the fact that American forces infiltrated Pakistan discreetly, carried out the operation, and then escaped without being discovered.

In front of the National Assembly, the Pakistani military admitted defeat, alleging that American forces' superior military power and stealth technology had outclassed them (Akhtar, 2017). The "Abbottabad Commission" was established by the PPP administration on June 21, 2011, to look into the incident and discover who was responsible for allowing Osama bin Laden, the leader of Al Qaeda, to remain in Abbottabad for six years. Justice Javed Iqbal presided over the commission, which also included Senior Justice Fakhruddin Ibrahim, Lieutenant-General Nadeem Ahmad, a retired army general, Senator Ashraf Jehangir Qazi, a former police officer, and Inspector-Commander Abbas Khan. The PPP government has allocated Rs 50 million to research this matter (Kaleem, 2015). Over the course of a year, the Abbottabad Commission interviewed over 200 people, including members of Osama Bin Laden's family, the head of the ISI, ministers, and representatives from the military, bureaucracy, and intelligence organizations. More than 3,000 documents were analyzed to produce a 337-page report. The study was finished and sent to the PPP Government in October 2012. According to the Commission, Osama bin Laden entered Pakistan in 2002 and remained there for more than nine years, including time spent in South Waziristan and Swat. Khalid Shiekh Muhammad, the alleged mastermind of the 9/11 attacks, and his family were moved to Abbottabad after he and his group were apprehended in Rawalpindi in 2003. After 2005, the ISI stopped pursuing Osam's arrest. The Commission did take some direct or indirect assistance from intelligence agencies. The Commission had also criticized both military and civilian leaders, but had not expressed regret for doing so (Mahmood et al, 2019). Despite its flaws, the Commission's investigation nonetheless marked a significant advancement in Pakistan's efforts to create a vibrant democracy. Despite being a huge victory for



the US, the Abbottabad Incident was Pakistan's worst humiliation since the end of the war with India in 1971. However, the incident did help the military and PPP government's relationship, and the PPP government stood up for the army's interests (Kaleem, 2015).

Salala Check Post Incident, 2011

Another instance was the Salala Check Post Occurrence, which provoked hostilities between the US and the PPP government while also fostering stronger ties between the military and the PPP government. Salala is a mountain in the Mohmand Agency's Baizai district in the tribal region of Pakistan. In order to monitor terrorists' cross-border movements while fighting terrorism, Pakistan's military built two border checkpoints alongside the Pak-Afghan border. These "Boulder" and "Volcano" code-named check points were about a kilometer apart on either side of the mountain summit (Malik, 2012). On November 26, 2011, two NATO helicopters and two fighter jets were used by NATO fighters to attack these two checkpoints. It entered Pakistani territory up to 2.5 kilometers along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border at 2 a.m. local time and started shooting indiscriminately at checkpoints. As a result, fourteen more Pakistani military officials have been injured in addition to twenty-four deaths (Sadaf & Akhtar, 2021). The PPP government swiftly proceeded and implemented policies that were detrimental to the US-led NATO and ISAF exit strategies from Afghanistan by 2014 (Mahmood et al, 2019). The following safety measures were implemented:

- a. The Chamman and Torkham border crossings, which were crucial NATO supply routes for food, equipment, and weapons coming from Pakistan, were closed.
- b. The Defense Committee of Cabinet's decision to order US forces to leave the Shamsi airfield by December 11 of 2011 was reiterated, along with the deadline of fifteen days.
- c. Official remorse from the US administration for the incident that resulted in the deaths of its twenty-four servicemen (Akhtar, 2017).

The international community, in especially the Chinese government, backed the PPP government stance on the horrible incident by claiming that the operation should be conducted as a joint venture and that no sovereign country should be able to allow such activities to occur on its territory. The US government attempted to establish a different supply line through Central Asian nations, but it was too time- and money-consuming (Kaleem, 2015). Until the US apologized and made a commitment not to repeat the incident in the future, the PPP government and military refused to reopen NATO supplies. The PPP government and military had legitimate security concerns, the militants threatened retaliation if supplies were restored, and the Parliament had passed motions of its own to assess the situation. However, following intensive diplomatic efforts, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton apologized publicly for the unintended fatalities in the air raid on July 3, 2012, and the PPP administration reopened NATO supply



routes in response (Khan, 2017). However, there was a notable increase in drone attacks under the PPP government. The PPP government openly denounced drone attacks, but it secretly backed them as anti-terrorism measures. Drones were also asserted to be operating from Pakistani territory, but the PPP administration failed to take the US administration's concerns seriously enough. The PPP government did, however, shut down an American airbase in Pakistan, halted the NATO supply line in Afghanistan, and removed American advisers in response to the Salala checkpoints incident, demonstrating the military's faith in the PPP leadership (Mahmood et al, 2019).

Memo Gate Scandal or Mullen Memo Controversy, 2011

The Memo Gate Scandal, also known as the Mullen memo scandal, strained the PPP Government and military's ties once more. A memo that went unanswered and caused controversy in October 2011 was known as "Memo Gate" (Akhtar, 2017). The document was sent to former US military Chief Admiral Mike Mullen, who reportedly sought assistance from the Obama administration after directing the military to support the civilian government in Pakistan after the Osama bin Laden operation in order to prevent a military takeover (Mahmood, Rathore, Ejaz & Zaheer, 2019). On October 10, 2011, American-based businessman Mansoor Ijaz referred to a confidential Memo in a piece he had written for The Financial Times of London. He claimed that Hussain Haqqani, the Pakistani ambassador to Washington, had instructed him to hand Obama a sensitive paper requesting support for President Zardari. Hussain Haqqani penned the document at President Asif Zardari's request, and it was delivered to Admiral Michael Mullen by way of the US National Security Advisor to President Obama. One of the most difficult problems the PPP government had to handle was the Memo Gate affair, which revealed the strained connection between the PPP and the US government. On the other hand, the PPP government rejected the assertion, calling it a "total fiction" and malevolent (Kaleem, 2015).

After Mansoor Ijaz's article was published, the superior court received a large number of constitutional petitions. Nawaz Sharif, the head of the opposition, petitioned the Supreme Court in November 2011 to set up a judicial committee to look into the matter and resolve any ambiguity or doubt regarding the Memo Gate. As a result of this action, the court and the military attacked the PPP government (Akhtar, 2017). As a result, there is now less confidence between the military and the government after opposition leaders denounced the memo gate affair. The PPP government formed a parliamentary group to look into the matter, and Shameem Whyn, the head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, requested an independent investigation, which the Supreme Court allowed. This demonstrated the judiciary's skepticism of democratic institutions as the Supreme Court rejected the PPP government's request for a parliamentary commission to investigate the situation (Kaleem, 2015).



The COAS and ISI Chief filed affidavits and testimonies regarding the letter through the Defense Secretary, Lieutenant General Naeem Khalid Lodhi, without the Prime Minister's consent. In reaction, Prime Minister Gillani stated that by submitting an affidavit to the Supreme Court over the memo problem without the permission of the PPP government, the military and the ISI Chief engaged in "illegal and unconstitutional" behaviour. Relations between the two institutions were further strained as a result (Mahmood, Rathore, Ejaz & Zaheer, 2019). In this case, PM Gillani strongly advocated for parliamentary dominance in the NA and stated that the Parliament should have control over all state institutions. It did not exempt the military, and state inside state was not permitted. The prime minister, who serves as the executive head of the state, should also be held accountable. The military retaliated against the statements within days, and the Defense Secretary was fired for breaking norms and regulations. Since 2008, this is the first indication of a political shift in Pakistan. Prime Minister Gillani was obliged to recant his statement as a result of the military's disagreement with it. Gillani was made to pay for his wrong words and deeds. In the meantime, Prime Minister Gillani has received a contempt of court summons from the Supreme Court (Waseem, 2012). Everybody in the country was shocked when Prime Minister Gillani backtracked on his claim that "the army's filing before the supreme court about memo gate was not improper". The PPP government and politics were once more overthrown by military pressure. Due to a lawsuit for contempt of court, Prime Minister Gillani was compelled to resign since he had lost his credibility (Kaleem, 2015).

The Supreme Court-appointed judicial Commission produced evidence, studied all pertinent documentation, and then drafted an opinion that it provided to this court. The matter is still pending (Khan, 2017). However, the nation's democratic process was significantly impacted by the PPP government's disagreement with the military over this issue. The military had asked for Haqqani's dismissal in 2009 due to his active involvement in the Kerry-Lugar aid; yet, at the time, he had control over the circumstance (Akhtar, 2017). The PPP government was compelled to look into the issue and hold the ambassador responsible since the military was no longer prepared to put their trust in him in the wake of memo gate. Instead, Haqqani has asserted that "the target is not President Zardari and the democracy of Pakistan; the purpose is not me" and has denied any role in the Memo Gate controversy. On the other hand, after conferences with the PM, President, Chief of Army Staff, and DG of ISI, Haqqani announced his resignation in November 2011. Since it has expanded its control on the PPP government, the military has maintained more confidence in the national security narrative (Mahmood, Rathore, Ejaz & Zaheer, 2019).



Conclusion

The discussion can be summed up by saying that at this point, the PPP government under Zardari from 2008 to 2013 adopted a pragmatic stance toward many of the significant events covered above, including the NATO supply being cut off as a result of the Raymond Davis Allen case, the Salala check post incident, the Abbottabad incident, the Kerry Lugar Bill, or the extension of the army chief's service. The PPP government reluctantly fired PM Gillani after it was discovered that the military had secretly taken part in the Memo Gate Scandal. The PPP Government was under strain from the memogate Scandal and Kerry Lugar Bill, and the military was under a lot of criticism as a result of the Abbottabad incident in May 2011. NATO supply lines were shut down until the US issued a formal apology, but the Salala checkpoint incident united the PPP military and government. As a result, the PPP government's relationships with the military fluctuated between cordial and tense. The PPP government adopted a rational approach and made choices based on the specifics of each situation.



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