**Brazen assault on the state**

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Of late, and especially in the past six months, political parties have deflected people’s perceptions of their failures towards an orchestrated assault on state institutions. Every pot broken in the potter’s house has been blamed on one institution, the Pakistan Army. While the perception of meddling in the political domain may hold some water, the government and opposition both have played to the gallery and ensured that no stone is left unturned to malign the army and its leadership.

Democracies are noisy and volatile; change of power can take many forms and shapes. Two recent examples are worth quoting. Rishi Sunak’s elevation as Prime Minister of the UK went through a cutthroat battle within the Tory party, we saw the fall of Boris Johnson, followed by Liz Truss, and then the emergence of Rishi Sunak. Was it the establishment or the King meddling in the politics of Conservatives or the result of an archaic democratic system that lost its moral ground?

[Nawaz’s love is source of confidence and inspiration for me: PM Shehbaz](https://www.nation.com.pk/12-Nov-2022/nawaz-s-love-is-source-of-confidence-and-inspiration-for-me-pm-shehbaz)

Similarly, India witnessed the two state governments of Maharashtra and Bihar change guards in a bizarre fashion. Yadav Thakray’s Shiv Sena stabbed him in the back and formed a coalition with the BJP, where a sitting CM of Bihar switched sides and left the BJP in a lurch to form a government with the collaboration of the opposition. Referring to our previously published piece in the Nation, Nitish Kumar has become a symbol of changing sides and playing power politics with no holds barred. Despite being a socialist, he has made alliances with the left, right, and centre. In 2015, Nitish Kumar left the alliance with the BJP and joined hands with Lalu Prasad Yadav’s Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) and the Congress. This ensured that the JD(U)-RJD-Congress ‘Mahagathbandhan’ won the state of Bihar in 2015, Nitish Kumar became the chief minister and RJD’s Tejashwi Yadav was his deputy. Like a chameleon, Nitish Kumar defected to the BJP and brought down the Mahagathbandhan government in 2017. He remained a coalition Chief Minister till 2020 and contested elections in 2020 to get another term. He has again switched sides to join the opposition.

[PTI long march to resume from Jhang today](https://www.nation.com.pk/12-Nov-2022/pti-long-march-to-resume-from-jhang-today)

Pakistan’s democratic journey is passing through an evolutionary process, backstabbing, switching sides and intra-party coups will become a norm in the coming days. After all, the Chaudhrys of Gujarat are enjoying unprecedented power at the centre and Punjab through astute positioning and exploitation of the numbers game.

Are Ch Shujaat and Ch Pervaiz Elahi two faces of the same coin or tools of some unknown forces? Are these signs of the emergence of the Nitish Kumar phenomenon in Pakistani politics, and can we term it as a natural evolutionary process?

PTI and the ‘Mahagathbandhan’ of PDM should realise that there are no angels in their rank and file. Post-truth politics have turned the political environment into a fish market where defamation, mudslinging, muckraking, and disparagement have become the new tools of political point-scoring.

Taking cue from another piece published in one of the English dailies in Pakistan, we will try to throw some light on post-truth politics and why Pakistani state institutions remain under constant assault. Pakistan shares a challenging neighbourhood with giants—a geographical factor that keeps impacting Pakistan’s relations with neighbours and its internal polity. Even though the past two years remained chaotic for many countries, Pakistan’s neighbourhood has witnessed some positive developments, where the entire gambit of chaos woven around Pakistan seems to be coming apart.

[Governor Sindh calls on former president Asif Zardari](https://www.nation.com.pk/12-Nov-2022/governor-sindh-calls-on-former-president-asif-zardari)

Pakistan had been staring at a two-front war scenario in the past two decades—India on one side and a destabilised Afghanistan on the other. International security pundits and their surrogates in Pakistan were talking of a bleak future for Pakistan with a map projecting its fragmentation by 2015. Internally a complete chaos brigade, hell-bent on spreading despondency, was busy targeting the military and the people through a doomsday campaign, and it appeared as if the fall of Pakistan was inevitable.

The past three years witnessed a reversal of this trend as the US realised that its longest war was unable to settle the Afghan question through military means. Thus, Pakistan emerged as a pivotal player in the Afghan peace process and helped the international community in bringing the warring sides onto the negotiating table and the subsequent exit of the US from Afghanistan.

Another strategic shift in the region happened in May 2020 along the Indo-China LAC in Ladakh. China reclaimed approximately 1,200 square kilometres of its perceived territory and the Indian military, the third largest in the world, could not mount any worthwhile response. Earlier in February 2019, the Pakistan military re-established nuclear deterrence in South Asia through Operation Swift Retort and displayed to the entire world that India was a paper tiger. Pakistan’s standing up to India and her military response in the hills of Nowshera Valley in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJ&K) had far-reaching consequences and it boosted Pakistan’s military’s prestige at home and abroad.

[Pakistan reports 48 coronavirus cases, no death in 24 hours](https://www.nation.com.pk/12-Nov-2022/pakistan-reports-48-coronavirus-cases-no-death-in-24-hours)

Coming back to the strategic landscape and how Pakistan has emerged stronger despite the chaos in the past two decades, why has the internal political debate been intensified against Pakistan Army and its intelligence agencies, and who is trying to reverse Pakistan’s gains in the international arena through an internal manoeuvre?

Looking around, one finds the fortunes of India and Pakistan reversed: Pakistan has emerged from diplomatic isolation and the spectre of a two-front war is receding whereas India is becoming isolated and her standoff with China has created a two-front war scenario.

We conducted a psychoanalysis of anti-state themes being generated by chaos generators and found that it is precisely targeting the bond between the Pakistan Army and the people of Pakistan. Some of the chaotic themes are enumerated below:

Reminding the people that the Pakistan Army is the albatross hanging in the neck of Pakistan since its inception, the time has come to get rid of this structure (Target Pakistan Army).

[Biden apologizes for US withdrawal from Paris climate pact](https://www.nation.com.pk/12-Nov-2022/biden-apologizes-for-us-withdrawal-from-paris-climate-pact)

Stigmatising the national development role played by the Army in the disturbed areas of KP, Balochistan, and even GB, where the soldiers and officers are sacrificing their blood to protect the development projects and guard the borders (Target Pakistan Army).

Blaming Pakistan Army for political engineering, and even turning the change of Army command into a controversy (Target Pakistan Army).

Provide fuel to the Indian media (read RAW-sponsored media) with dubious data and anti-Pakistan narrative. Interestingly, the Indian and anti-Army narrative being driven by some political parties has common strands (Target Pakistan Army).

Use a history of wars fought by the Pakistan Army to tarnish its image vis-a-vis the Indian Army and dilute the sacrifices rendered by soldiers and officers by trivialising the context through imaginary punch lines of post-truth—forgetting that Pakistan Army and her sister services were always outnumbered by Indian military forces, not even realising that the Indian Army suffered total defeat when confronted by a larger Army of China (Target Pakistan Army).

Instead of appreciating the sacrifices of officers and soldiers of the Pakistan Army in the war against terror—something that the entire world acknowledges as a big success story of our times—there is an effort of deflecting the discussion to imaginary and trivial aspects of ethno-fascist nationalism. Unfortunate statements by some leaders inciting their supporters to surround the houses of Corps Commanders point to the heinous propaganda being used against the military leadership. This is something that Indian intelligence would desire (Target Pakistan Army).

Christine Fair once said, “For Pakistan to collapse, it is the Pakistan Army which has to collapse. For better or worse, I do not see that happening.” The chaos generators and traitors attacking Pakistan must know that Pakistan is here to stay. The state and major stakeholders in Pakistan should have a wholesome view of the post-truth era and how it is impacting governance and state security. For that, we need an informed debate and a compatible strategy to make sure that the bond between the Pakistan Army and the people of Pakistan will not be dented.