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**Civil-Military Relations and  
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## **Civil-Military Relations and Democracy in Bangladesh<sup>i</sup>**

Civilian control of the armed forces is a *sine qua non* for democracy. In Bangladesh, the military has played a crucial role during several authoritarian setbacks on its path to democratic consolidation. Civilian control is understood as the distribution of decision-making power between civilians and the armed forces. This article sheds light on the successes and failures in the efforts of civilian governments to establish supremacy over the country's armed forces in order to consolidate democratic rule. The analysis derives from a conceptualization of civilian control that distinguishes five areas of political decision-making: elite-recruitment, public policy, internal security, national defence, and internal security. In order to establish control in these various areas civilians have a choice between different strategies for which they need certain resources. In this context, the study shows that civil-military relations in Bangladesh have tended to be affected by historical legacies. Civilian polarisation as well as military factionalism and politicisation have not only hampered the institutionalization of civilian control but also led to the predominance of informality.

### **Introduction**

In 1991, Bangladesh experienced a transition to democracy after two decades of unstable authoritarian regimes including periods of military rule. Three elected governments ruled the country until the military intervened in 2007a political crisis and established a non-party caretaker government. Until power was ceded to a newly elected government in 2009 the armed forces influenced political decision-making. Today, in a highly participative political environment Bangladesh has returned to parliamentary democracy that is characterised by a 'quasi-two-party-system'. Even though this democratic system is stable, it is far from

being consolidated. A major reason thereof, is the unrestricted struggle between the two leading political parties, Awami League (AL) and Bangladesh National Party (BNP), which polarise civilians<sup>ii</sup> into two antagonistic camps. As a result, partisan politics affected political institution building which remained fragile and insufficient<sup>iii</sup>. In addition, this led to a forcibly and illicitly politicization of state institutions<sup>iv</sup>, in particular the armed forces. This had far-reaching impacts on the country's civil-military relations. It is argued that until now no government institutionalized civilian control over the armed forces. Despite that prime ministers were able to increase their power in decision-making in general over time, civilian administrations were not able to avoid military interventions. The high degree of polarisation and politicization among the relevant agents has stunted the process of institutionalization of civilian control. Especially, the conflict between the BNP and the AL have polarized and politicized the armed forces. In order to instrumentalize the military for its partisan interests, civilians refrained from establishing an institutionalized civilian control, but rather preferred an informal, personalized style of managing and monitoring of the armed forces. In this context one can state that the politicisation of the armed forces was made possible and enforced by historical factionalism, a legacy of the war of independence, which led to a lack of cohesiveness within the military. In consequence, the military was either drawn into politics by civilians or the army was reluctant to accept efforts to introduce civilian control, because these were often regarded as attempts to dominate the armed in support of partisan political purposes. Consequently, neither civilians nor military are interested in the institutionalizing of civilian control. Subsequently soldiers felt confident and encouraged to intervene in politics in order to solve serious crisis situations among civilians, as happened in 2007. Therefore, the armed forces will continue to play an important but antithetical political role; claiming to protect Bangladesh's democracy.

## Analytical Framework<sup>v</sup>

This study refers to “a consensus in democratization literature that civilian control of the military is a *conditio sine qua non* for democratic consolidation”<sup>vi</sup>. “Only if democratically elected political leaders and their appointed officials control the armed forces can democratic rules and processes persist”<sup>vii</sup>. In line with this argument civil-military relations are here understood as the distribution of decision-making power between civilians, defined as democratically elected representatives of the people as supreme power, and the armed forces<sup>viii</sup>.

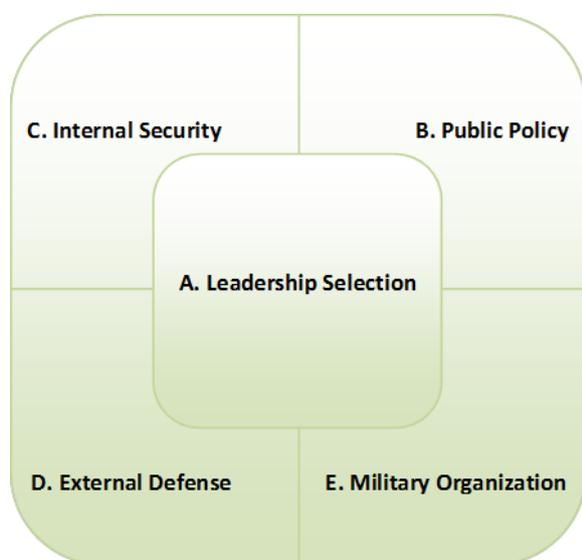
In this concept, civilian control marks one pole of a decision-making power continuum, the situation in which ‘civilians make all the rules and can change them at any time’<sup>ix</sup>. Aurel Croissant et al. (2010, 2011) define civilian control as that the continuous distribution of decision-making power in which civilians alone have the authority to decide on national political issues, politics as well as their implementation. Under civilian control, civilians can freely choose to delegate decision-making power and the implementation of certain policies to the military while the military has no autonomous decision-making power outside those areas specifically defined by civilians. In this context, only civilians determine which respective policies, or certain policy dimensions, the military implements, and civilians alone define the boundaries between policy-making and policy-implementation. In addition, civilian authorities control sanctioning power vis-à-vis the military, and they can—in principle—revise their delegations at any time<sup>x,xi</sup>.

On the other pole of the continuum is the military regime, in which the military controls all decisions concerning political structures, processes, and policies and the civilians do not possess any autonomous political decision-making power. In this sense, civilian control is a relative condition, i.e. it is possible to distinguish various degrees of civilian control (e.g., strong or weak, ubiquitous or limited). Challenges to civilian decision-making power can

take two analytically distinct shapes: formally institutionalized prerogatives or informal contestation. Institutionalized prerogatives describe formal rights by which the military is able ‘to exercise effective control over its internal governance, to play a role within extra-military areas within the state-apparatus, or even to structure relationships between the state and political or social society’<sup>xii</sup>.<sup>xiii</sup>

The continuum between civilian and military dominance over decision-making authority can be analyzed in five areas: elite recruitment, public policy, internal security, national defence, and military organization.

**Figure 1: Decision-making areas of civil-military relations**



Source: Croissant/Kühn/Chambers/Völkel/Wolf (2011, 78).

The area of *elite recruitment* refers to the core defining aspects of the political regime, namely the rules, criteria and processes of recruiting, selecting and legitimizing the holders of political office. Any actor that controls this area is able to define “who rules and who decides who rules”<sup>xiv</sup>. Civilian control over elite recruitment means that the military is proscribed from establishing an alternative channel for access to political office, and, simultaneously, the processes of elite selection in terms of the formation, working, and end

of political leadership are not subject to the explicit consent or implicit acquiescence of the military.<sup>xv</sup> “Civilian control over rules of competition is undermined when public offices are excluded from open competition and if the military influences electoral procedures. Civilian control over the rules of participation is constrained if active military personnel are eligible for public office and soldiers influence the formation and dissolution of government”<sup>xvi</sup>.

**Table 1: Dimensions and indicators of civilian control in the area of elite recruitment**

Dimension	Indicator	Degree of civilian control	
		High	Low
Competition for public office	Reserved representation for military personnel	No formal or informal guarantees for military representation in political bodies	Majority of decisive political positions are reserved for the military
	Military influence on the rules of political competition	Military influence on the rules of political competition	Military dominates rule setting, process and outcomes of elite selection
Political participation	Eligibility of active duty military officer	Non-eligibility of active duty military officers (legally and de facto)	Eligibility of military officers or rules of non-eligibility are regularly ignored
	Military veto power over formation/dissolution of governments	No military influence on the making and breaking of governments	Formal regulations establish military as veto actor or military systematically demands a tutelary role

Source: Croissant/Kühn/Chambers/Wolf (2010, 957), table is modified by the author. In the original table there is a third degree of civilian control – Medium – included.

Meanwhile, the area of public policy focuses on all policy fields except the narrowly understood aspects of security and defence policy. This includes (1) all phases of the political decision-making processes, including the identification of political problems to be addressed and their transfer into the political system (agenda-setting); the definition of policy goals and the elaboration of alternative policies to address these problems (policy formulation), and the selection of a concrete policy out of these alternatives (policy adoption); and (2) the implementation of these decisions by the administrative agencies of the state bureaucracy. “Civilian control over this area means that civilians alone decide on the contents, scope, and duration of policy decisions and possess effective means to

control and supervise the administrative implementation of these decisions”<sup>xvii</sup>. However, “while all policy issues are important to gauge the degree of civilian control over this area, it is particularly relevant if the military has any influence, formal or informal, on the national budget”<sup>xviii</sup>.

**Table 2: Dimensions and Indicators of civilian control in the area of Public Policy**

Dimension	Indicator	Degree of civilian control	
		High	Low
Policy-making	Military influence on state budget	Neither institutionalized nor contestable participation in the allocation of state expenditure (including defence/military)	Military dominance over budgetary process
	Military influence on public policymaking (except defence and security policy)	No institutionalized prerogatives or informal intervention	Systematic exclusion of civilians from at least one policy field
Policy implementation	Military authority over public administration	No military dominated state-in-state structures and no military oversight of civilian administrative authorities	Civilian administrative authorities are under military oversight (legally, or de facto), or significant militarized parallel structures

Source: Croissant/Kühn/Chambers/Wolf (2010, 972-975), table is modified by the author. In the original table there is a third degree of civilian control – Medium – included.

Internal security constitutes a third area of civil-military relations and can be defined in terms of two elements. First, it has a geographic element, focusing on the threats originating within the realm of one’s states own territory; and second, there is an element which is derived from the role and duties of the various state agencies.<sup>xix</sup> In other words, it involves the use of armed forces in a purely domestic environment, which includes public order in emergency situations (including disaster relief), preparation for counterinsurgency

warfare and terrorism, domestic intelligence gathering, daily policing and border controlling<sup>xx</sup>. “These activities are compatible with civilian control only if civilians have the right to make the decisions on the range, duration and frequency of all internal military operations as well as the civilian institutions, and are able to monitor their implementation<sup>xxi</sup>”.

**Table 3: Dimensions and Indicators of civilian control in the area of Internal Security**

Dimension	Indicator	Degree of civilian control	
		High	Low
Policy-making	Military influence in internal security policymaking	No institutionalized prerogatives or informal intervention	Systematic exclusion of civilians from at least one policy field
Control over security agents	Separation of police/other security agents and military	Strict separation; no military command over internal security agents except clearly defined (by civilians) emergencies	Police or other security agents subordinate to military command or no separate police
	Civilian oversight of military internal security operations	Institutional framework in place for comprehensive monitor and punish military operations; military accepts civilian oversight	No civilian effective oversight or sanctioning; military de facto autonomous in the conduct of operations

Source: Croissant/Kühn/Chambers/Wolf (2010, 972-975), table is modified by the author. In the original table there is a third degree of civilian control – Medium – included.

National Defence remains the core function of any military and includes all aspects of defence policy, ranging from the development of security doctrines to the deployment of troops abroad and conduct of war<sup>xxii</sup>. Soldiers, as experts in security matters, are often involved in the formulation and implementation of national defence policies, even in established democracies. Since such policies, especially their implementation, can determine the security of the nation, it is crucial that they remain under civilian jurisdiction and oversight. Furthermore, all national defence activities can only be compatible with civilian supremacy where civilians control the range, duration and frequency of these missions and related activities. Additionally, the civilian institutions must be able to effectively oversee the armed forces’ implementation of national defence and security policies and to monitor the military’s external security missions.<sup>xxiii</sup>

**Table 4: Dimensions and Indicators of civilian control in the area of National Defence**

Dimension	Indicator	Degree of civilian control	
		High	Low
Policy-making	Civilian influence on defence policing	Institutionalized civilian dominance over defence policy and active day-to-day participation of civilians in defence policy-making; military accepts civilian's policy prerogative	Civilians are systematically excluded from decision-making
Policy implementation	Civilian oversight of military defence activities	Civilians of all branches of government are able to monitor military activities	Military is not subject to civilian monitoring and sanctioning

Source: Croissant/Kühn/Chambers/Wolf (2010, 972-975), table is modified by the author. In the original table there is a third degree of civilian control – Medium – included.

Finally, the area of military organization comprises decisions on all organizational aspects of the military as an institution, which can be organized into two dimensions. The first dimension refers to the material aspects or “hardware” of military organization: force, size and structure, procurement and production of military equipment, as well as other institutional, financial and technological resources of the military. The second dimension (“software”), includes the ideational aspects of military organization (e.g. doctrine and education); and decisions on personnel selection such as recruitment, appointment and retirement<sup>xxiv</sup>. Measures of the level of civilian control over this area relate to the extent of civilians’ power to decide on the ‘hardware’ and ‘software’ of armed forces organization, and the extent to which civilians can set the boundaries of military autonomy in deciding on these armed forces-internal affairs<sup>xxv</sup>.

**Table 5: Dimensions and Indicators of civilian control in the area of Military Organization**

Dimension	Indicator	Degree of civilian control	
		High	Low
'Hardware' of military organization	Civilian influence in decisions on military 'hardware'	Civilians have full authority about decisions of military organization; the military implements civilian decisions	Military hardware is under military control; military draws the line between civilian and military decision-making authority
'Software' of military organization	Civilian influence on military 'software'	Civilians set the rules of conduct, the limits of military autonomy and provide the guidelines for 'corporate identity' of the armed forces	Military defines the limits of military autonomy and ignores civilian guidelines; the corporate culture is distinct from the civilian society and the military aims to preserve its distinctiveness

Source: Croissant/Kühn/Chambers/Wolf (2010, 972-975), table is modified by the author. In the original table there is a third degree of civilian control – Medium – included.

Keeping this five dimensional framework in mind, one can state that establishing civilian control of the military is a significant challenge for many new democracies in which it remains contested. In this context this study argues “that establishing civilian control during processes of democratic transition and consolidation implies a change in the institutional setup which governs civil-military relations”<sup>xxvi</sup>. Such an “institutional change and entrenchment of civilian control can only be achieved if civilians (change agents) are capable of neutralizing and reversing the mechanisms which keep the existing institutional structure stable (Croissant/Kühn/Chambers/Völkel/Wolf, 2011, 85). To do so, they can choose between the following strategies ranging from robust (coercive) to weak (non-intrusive) on a gliding scale.

**Table 6: Mechanisms and strategies of civil-military change**

<b>Robust</b>		<b>Weak</b>
Sanctioning	Ascriptive Selection	Appeasement
Counterbalancing	Political Socialization	Acquiescence
Monitoring		Appreciation

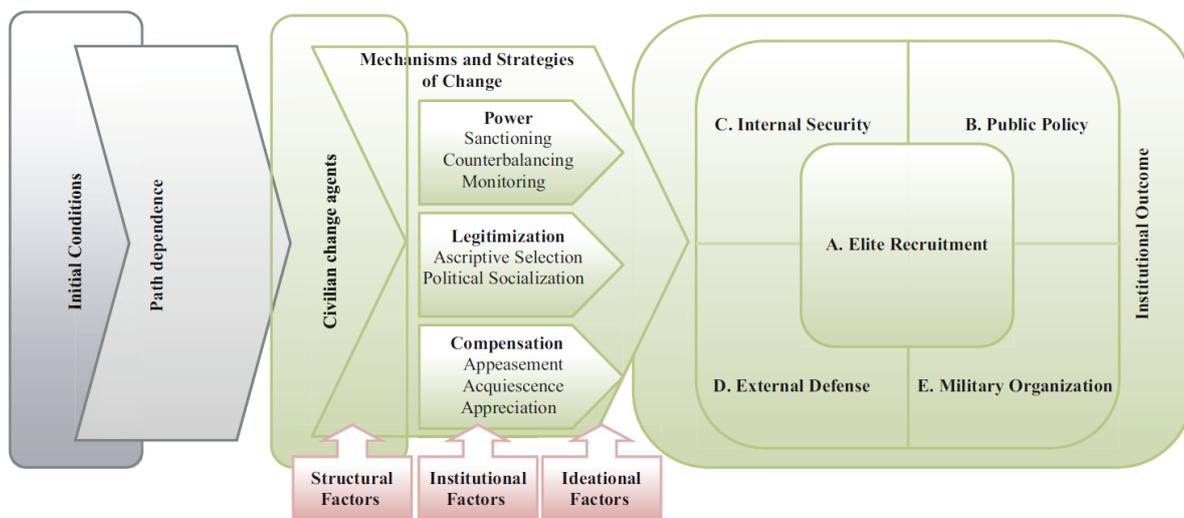
Source: Croissant/Kühn/Chambers/Völkel/Wolf (2011, 85). The table is modified by the author. The original table contains a categorization of the strategies according to three mechanisms of change – compensation (weak strategies), legitimization and power (robust strategies).

It is important to note that in order for civilians to be able to successfully implement specific strategies of control over the armed forces, they must have sufficient resources: more robust strategies are more demanding in terms of available resources than weaker strategies. Furthermore, civilians deploy ‘resources’ and modify their behavior in response to changing situations and access of resources. Simultaneously, civilian choices and strategies, by affecting the status quo in civil-military relations, may also change structures, thereby creating new resources, improving or wasting available resources and transforming the repertoire of strategies for future action by the same or following generations of agents (actors).

In line with the conceptual and theoretical framework of Croissant et al. (2011, 2010, 2009) (see figure 2), this paper “[delineates] three sets of factors that provide resources for civilian action and which either enable or limit the use of certain strategies: (1) macro-structural factors, including levels of socioeconomic modernization, the internal ‘threat environment,’ and structures of international politics. The establishment of civilian control is more likely to take root when democracy has achieved broad and deep legitimacy among both the mass public and civilian elite, favoring social and economic conditions and the absence of internal threats, unrest which is threatening the integrity of state and nation (2). Cultural variables/factors, especially (1) the military’s self-identity and (2) political culture.

“They shape the understanding of civilians and soldiers regarding what is legitimate and acceptable behavior; provide a resource for civilians to legitimize their approach to gain control over the military; or enable the military to justify its political role and influence. (3) Institutional factors, e.g. the cohesiveness of civilian and military actors affects the ability of civilians to change the status quo of civil-military relations”.

**Figure 2:**



Source: Croissant/Kühn/Chambers/Völkel/Wolf (2011, 91)

To sum up, when democratically elected civilian governments want to establish control over the armed forces, they can choose from a menu of different control strategies. Their success, in other words the degree of achieved institutional change, depends on the adequacy of the chosen set of robust and/or weak strategies in the context of the availability of necessary, sufficient resources. However, no key actor in civil-military relations in a historical or social vacuum<sup>xxvii</sup>, therefore the choices and strategies of the civilians depend on concrete contextual circumstances that condition and influence the possibilities for action<sup>xxviii</sup>.

## Civil-Military Relations during authoritarian regimes 1972-1990

The history of civil-military relations in Bangladesh (former East-Pakistan) has been determined by the way in which the country came into existence. The war of liberation, especially its guerrilla style, and the induction of the whole society into the armed struggle against West Pakistan led to an intermingling of civilian and military spheres. This liaison had far reaching consequences for the armed forces. The 'Bangladeshi regular forces'<sup>xxxix</sup>, drawn into a highly politicized environment of a civil war, started to absorb socio-political conflicts, creating factions within the military. Therefore, after independence was achieved in 1971 Bangladesh did not inherit a united military<sup>xxx</sup>- a phenomenon which got further entrenched during the first civilian administration from 1972 until 1975.

Most significant was the confrontation between the 'freedom fighters' and those which joined Bangladesh as 'repatriates' from West Pakistan after the struggle<sup>xxxi</sup>. This societal conflict gained momentum in the formation of the new Bangladesh Armed Forces (BAF). Being aware of the tensions between both sections within the society, the civilian government tried to utilise this by granting the 'freedom fighters' more favourable treatments, benefits and privileges than to the 'repatriates' in the military. They also became entrusted with senior posts within the military<sup>xxxii</sup>. Nevertheless, at the same time civilians made sure that there was a numerical superiority of the 'repatriates'<sup>xxxiii</sup> to balance the 'freedom fighters' in the armed forces. Consequently, military cohesiveness became further disturbed which led to a permanent struggle to outbid the rival faction.

However, several other societal cleavages resonated in the armed forces, which only further deepened factionalism among the soldiers and challenged the self-identity of the armed forces. These issues included, for example, the questions about what kind of economic system was to be adopted, which attitude towards China or Moscow in the Cold War, what role religion should play, which led to the appearance of some militant rightist

groups, as well as to the emergence of numerous socialist and communist segments. A trend that also became apparent in military affairs, for example through the appearance of numerous leftists' cells within the armed forces. Subsequently, conservative soldiers (especially the repatriates) were challenging leftist soldiers' notion that the military should take part in economic and development activities. This would also include a political role for the soldiers<sup>xxxiv</sup>. Instead, the conservative soldiers promoted the concept of an apolitical standing army, focusing exclusively on defence and security matters<sup>xxxv</sup>. Despite the fact that these leftists' elements got literally eliminated in the following years, the underlying socio-political conflicts got gripped by the confrontation between 'freedom fighters' and 'repatriates', creating increasingly debates over the role of the army in politics.

Having this as well as the experience of the military rules during the Pakistani period (1947-1971) in mind, the major aim of civilians was to keep the army weak and factionalised. In order to gain control, the first government tried to counterbalance the military in two ways: directly through the creation of paramilitary forces<sup>xxxvi</sup> to such an extent that the regular forces were outnumbered by them. Indirectly, by neglecting military needs and reducing the defence budget<sup>xxxvii</sup> that gained momentum because the military was hindered by insufficient equipment and war-torn infrastructure. In order to make the military subservient, civilians appointed loyal officers in senior positions by ignoring military hierarchies. However, the attempt to gain leverage over the military failed because of several factors, e.g. worsening of internal security, socio-economic deterioration, corruption, and natural catastrophes. Most important is that it became obvious that factors favouring civilians, especially an electoral mandate<sup>xxxviii</sup> and the image as father of the nation of its first Prime Minister Mujibur Rahman, lost their momentum. Initially they helped to maintain cohesiveness among civilians by bridging the various factions emerging from the increasing polarisation. Subsequently civilians were able to instrumentalize socio-political cleavages imposed on the armed forces and to enforce factionalism among the

soldiers. But due to maladministration and an emerging authoritarian style, like the creation of a one-party-system<sup>xxxix</sup>, militant resistance among the people against the government was growing. To ensure law and order in the entire country, the government deployed not only the paramilitary but the regular forces too. The successful aid-to-civil-authorities missions improved the military's esprit de corps and created in it a self-perception as sole saviour of the nation<sup>xl</sup>. The armed forces appeared to sections of the general public, especially to the rising middle class, and soldiers as an alternative to the government<sup>xli</sup>, polarising the country for or against Mujibur.

In consequence, in August, 1975 a group of young officers felt confident to take over direct power. The subsequent assassination of Mujibur further increased tensions between the pro-Mujibur 'freedom fighters' and the anti-Mujibur 'repatriates'<sup>xlii</sup> and their supporters among the armed forces as well as the civilians. Additionally, this deepened conflict between the respective, diametric civilian and military camps (i.e. pro-Mujibur civilians against anti-Mujibur soldiers). As a result, coups and countercoups occurred, carried out by the antagonistic factions within the armed forces<sup>xliii</sup> and encouraged by their respective civilian counterparts.

However, in November 1975 Gen. Ziaur Rahman was able to assert power during this political imbroglio. To be able to consolidate his regime, he had to make the soldiers less vulnerable towards politicization and polarisation, e.g. through enforcing cohesiveness by dislodging the leftist elements and granting soldiers socio-economic benefits. As a freedom fighter, enhancing the professionalism of the Bangladesh military he was respected by the repatriates. As such, he bridged the two factions ('freedom fighters'/'repatriates') and provided a stable military government, at least temporarily. Furthermore, to strengthen the military vis-a-vis civilians, he excluded the latter from political decision-making, especially by the induction of soldiers into the administrative structure<sup>xliv</sup>. Subsequently, military command structure became the most significant mechanism in decision-making<sup>xlv</sup>, not only

in public policy<sup>xlvi</sup>. To ensure armed forces dominance in internal security and national defence, he disbanded civilian paramilitary forces. To gain control over elite recruitment, Rahman founded the Bangladesh National Party (BNP). The conflict between 'freedom fighters' and 'repatriates', which divided the civilians as well as the soldiers founded, had now become institutionalised in a highly diametrical two-party-dominance-system, the AL vs. BNP. In this context, President General Ziaur Rahman's policies alienated the AL and the 'freedom fighters', one of whom eventually assassinated him in May 1981. However, the 'repatriates' were able to gain control under General Hussain Muhammad Ershad. To avoid reluctance against his rule he tried to minimize the role of freedom fighters within the armed forces. Under his rule, the military further entrenched its dominance in all decision-making areas. He not only continued Ziaur's policy of systematic deployment of military officials in the civilian administration<sup>xlvii</sup> but also enforced the institutionalization of the army's political role. For example, he introduced a quota-system for military officers in civilian posts<sup>xlviii</sup>. More importantly, the reduction of factionalism helped the military to maintain control over all decision making-areas. However, due to increasing civilian resistance and the loss of foreign support, General Ershad was forced to resign in December 1990.

### **Civil-Military Relations after the Re-introduction of Parliamentary Democracy in 1991**

Generally the post 1990 phase can be divided into three periods: First, the phase of three civilian governments, 1996-2006<sup>xlix</sup>; second, military-backed non-party caretaker governments, 2006-2008; third, the AL-government from 2009-until today.

## ***Civilian Governments between 1991 and 2006: Emergence of Civilian Control***

Confronted with a mass upheaval, General Ershad gave up power. Subsequently elections without military interference were held and democratic rule was restored. To achieve this, civilians immediately started several measures to gain control over the armed forces<sup>i</sup>. The presidential form of government was transformed into a parliamentary system<sup>ii</sup>. This strengthened not only the parliament but also the prime minister vis-à-vis the president which until then helped to operationalize direct influence and formal role in politics for the military. Additionally the prime minister, being the *real* chief executive, turned into the *de facto* supreme commander. In contrast, the office of the president, still the formal head of the armed forces, lost its control over military affairs and carried out only *ceremonial* functions<sup>iii</sup>. As such, civilians were able to subordinate the important Armed Forces Division (AFD) under the office of the prime minister<sup>iiii</sup>. This has gained momentum, since the AFD (originated from the Supreme Command Division) is the primary body to coordinate all three services (navy, army and air force) and provides assistance to governments regarding all matters of military affairs like strategic initiatives, the posting and promotion of senior officers, procurements, movements and mobilization of units and etc. (Pattaniak 2008, 981, 994). Furthermore, during the former authoritarian era, the AFD, staffed with armed forces personnel, was not only used by General Ziar and General Ershad to manage the armed forces but also to monitor factionalism among soldiers and subsequently to detect potential coups threats<sup>liv</sup>. The civilians of post-1990 were able to use the AFD effectively for similar purposes. For example, the then interim-government detected a coup attempt in 1996 of Lieutenant General Nasim and was able to mobilize enough loyal troops to isolate the rebellious military faction and maintain civilian control. Thus, the Chief of Army Staff (COAS), Nasim, was replaced. In addition, all prime ministers during this period asserted the portfolio of defence and took charge of the Ministry of

Defence (MoD). This offered the governments another instrument of oversight, at least, regarding civilian-administrative aspects of military hardware<sup>iv</sup>. In this context one has to state, that the power and role of the MoD -lacking also sufficient funds, personnel and expertise- has been substantively reduced during military rule. This trend continued under civilian administrations. Nevertheless, given that the prime minister, as de facto supreme commander and acting defence minister who asserted power over the AFD (as leading authority for higher defence organisation)<sup>vi</sup>, civilians were able to establish formal civilian control in military organisation and national defence. As an outcome of this, the Defence Committee actively made efforts to establish civilian authority over defence matters by questioning and evaluating defence policies and purchases.<sup>vii</sup> Also, for the first time, defence expenditures were discussed and investigations were carried out which led to the detection of several misappropriations of the defence budget, particularly regarding inconsistencies in the purchase procedures (D. Choudhury, 2009).<sup>viii</sup> Furthermore, the Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI) started to report directly to the defence minister. Since the defence portfolio was asserted by the prime minister, the civilian governments were able to control the DGFI. The fact that the DGFI became active against military personnel is an important indication of the increase in civilian control<sup>lix</sup>. But two major challenges towards the institutionalization of civilian control still remained.

First, due to the lack of civilian efforts to formulate a defence policy and expertise, the governments depended exclusively on military proposals. Because of this, soldiers succeeded in influencing all relevant matters regarding military organization and national defence and related policy fields through the AFD. For example, the military resisted security ties with India and its axis with the Soviets<sup>lx</sup>. Consequently, civilians adopted an anti-India bias and voiced objections against security and military cooperation with India, e.g. defence purchases<sup>lxi</sup>. This marks a significant limitation of the government's authority in foreign policy. Furthermore, due to the way in which the police and paramilitary forces

are organized (e.g. Rapid Action Battalion/RAB and Bangladesh Border Rifles/BDR), substantial parts of officers and rank and files are recruited from the regular military. Although these units must formally follow the directives of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), they came under the influence of the armed forces. This occurred because the deployed soldiers in the respective security forces maintained a relationship with the armed forces, which was derived from loyalty and dependence. As a result, the effectiveness of the AFD and the MHA to exercise civilian control was reduced. This had serious implications for civil-military relations regarding internal security. Although the armed forces have been less assertive after the restoration of democracy in the context of law and order situations,<sup>lxii</sup> they tended to act autonomously and challenge civilian supremacy. For example, as the civilian government signed a peace agreement in 1997 with rebels in the Chittagong Hill Tracts to end the country's greatest internal armed conflict since its existence<sup>lxiii</sup>, the military still maintained total control and sidelined civilians from decision making in that region. Also, the government's inability to monitor military activities (especially human rights abuses) during Operation Clean-Heart<sup>lxiv</sup> or the foundation of RAB (2004) and the subsequent recruitment policy shows that civilians made decisions but were unable to exert control over policy implementation. Therefore, civilian control in internal security was only partly established.

Second, an institutional set-up was created which allowed the prime minister to act independently from other civilian authorities<sup>lxv</sup> and directly with the COAS.<sup>lxvi</sup> How far the military can exercise influence depends heavily on personal relationships favouring the position of the prime minister. Nevertheless, this civil-military interaction is featured by a lack of transparency and accountability. In this context, one can state that neither the AL nor the BNP administrations attempted to challenge the exclusive position of the 'militarised' AFD, disadvantaging the civilian MoD.<sup>lxvii</sup>

In order to create a channel to instrumentalize the military for partisan purposes, the

respective government preferred to enforce a personalised mechanism to oversee the military. Therefore, the inherited institutional structure based on the imbalance between the AFD and MoD seemed to be favourable to civilians. Subsequently, the AFD further asserted the power of the MoD. In this context, it became apparent that civilian governments were willing to accept the status quo and are not pushing the process of further institutionalization. In other words, civilians preferred centralization instead of diversification and extension of the institutional structure to entrench individual control mechanism. For example, there are allegations that prime ministers influenced the monitoring activities of the Defence Committee in order to achieve personal leverage over military affairs. Subsequently the achievements of this body appeared to some observers to be limited<sup>lxviii</sup>.

To sum up, all the steps undertaken by the civilian governments have marked a shift of power from the military to the civilians. But the lacunae in institutionalization of civilian control, created through concerns to personalise control mechanism in order to instrumentalize them for partisan interests, had a significant impact on the chosen strategies to establish civilian control.

### *Strategies*

In order to use the AFD as an instrument of control, civilians applied sanctioning, ascriptive selection, appeasement, and acquiescence. The focal point of all measures was the appointment process of the top brass, especially army chief, principal staff officer (PSO) and the director general of the field intelligence (DGFI)<sup>lxix</sup>. In this context, officers critical of the government were sanctioned by being pressured into retirement, (illegally) dismissed or deployed in remote areas and/or at insignificant posts. For example, due to political grievances in 2001 all three service chiefs were retired without reason and new ones

appointed<sup>lxx</sup>. In contrast, politically loyal and trusted senior officers were selected and received promotions (e.g. General Moeen U Ahmed, identified as an AL supporter, was made COAS), and were placed in lucrative key positions.<sup>lxxi</sup> Loyalty was not interpreted as subordination to civilian authority but as allegiance to a certain political party and its respective leader. In consequence, political preferences led to promotion and immediately after a change in government to dismissal or unfavourable postings.

In avoiding resistance by the military, which felt provoked by such actions, civilians tried to appease soldiers by keeping certain military interests satisfied<sup>lxxii</sup>. This appeared in the following forms: (1) substantial measures to modernize the military<sup>lxxiii</sup>; (2) persistent increase of defence expenditures; (3) granting officers (retired or active<sup>lxxiv</sup>) key positions in administration, and (semi) governmental organizations<sup>lxxv</sup>; (3) extraordinary promotions within the military structure; (4) safeguarding military's corporate interests, e.g. promoting peacekeeping operations or accommodating military business activities (or self-financing).

To win the support from the army, they appreciated the role of military forces in restoring democracy in 1990 and helping civil administration in crisis periods<sup>lxxvi</sup>. They also attended exercises and military ceremonies on a regular base<sup>lxxvii</sup>.

To strengthen its position in internal security, civilians try to counterbalance the Army by forming the RAB in 2004, subordinated to the Ministry of Home Affairs. However, since the most of them were recruited from the army, the government did not gain much independence from soldiers.

However, the chosen strategy mix proved to be only partly effective since it provoked at least two times military reluctance towards civilian control. Indeed, in the context of the abortive coup attempt in 1996, this was launched because the CAS<sup>lxxviii</sup>/COAS was not willing to follow the order to sack two top ranking officers because of the involvement with the AL. However, civilians continued this pollicisation of the military and Nasim was replaced by a BNP supporter--General Mahbubur Rahman<sup>lxxix</sup>.

## Resources

Generally, the 1990 democratic transition was made possible by two factors: First of all, the political awareness and pro-democratic attitude among the general public<sup>lxxx</sup>. Despite deep polarisation of society and rivalry between the leading political parties, the Bengali people, most notably students, labour unions, media etc., forced the political parties' leadership to build a national consensus and to form an alliance against military rule. Second, the deterioration of the economy created a demand for a change in government: from military to civilian. Facing economic decline and a series of austerity measures that were unequally divided over the population, coupled with the allegation of widespread corruption and incessant patron-client relationships, the depressed popular majority turned against the ruling military establishment. The combination of these two factors paved the way for the 12<sup>th</sup> constitutional amendment, which re-introduced of a parliamentary system of governance<sup>lxxxii</sup>, and included the prime minister's formal control over the military.

However, over time the resources turned against civilians. Despite the fact that the governments achieved respectable economic growth (ca. 5-6 per cent annually), socio-economic inequalities (e.g. gender, region, minorities) were further deepened and the majority did not benefit from this boom<sup>lxxxiii</sup>. This phenomenon enforced a major obstacle which hindered the government from establishing civilian control.. Besides basic 'democratic enthusiasm', this factor can be described as (1) a lack of tolerance; (2) a reciprocal mistrust between the major political actors, not only between civilians and military but especially between leading political parties and their respective sympathizers among the armed forces<sup>lxxxiii</sup>; (3) an unrestricted political struggle to undermine the political opponent, either in government or in opposition; (4) the use of violence to express and suppress political protests; (5) no political parties' acceptance of parliamentarianism, e.g. boycott of the parliament and street politics resulting in nationwide strikes and non-

cooperation movements (*hartal/bandhs*). As such, civilians were unable to establish and consolidate an effective and functioning democratic order, resulting in a crisis and civil-war-like scenario. Additionally, the perceived incompetence of politicians to deliver good governance convinced the military that it was the only organization that could effectively guard the nation. This created the notion that the armed forces had to undertake a political role to protect the 'idea of democracy' which was discredited by corrupt and incompetent civilians. This development found its peak in late 2006 as the army decided to seize control. However, international actors intervened to demonstrate their disapproval of any direct military takeover and this appeared to have some positive ramifications in maintaining some sort of civilian rule in the country. Foreign donors were increasingly linking financial aid and participation in lucrative peacekeeping with democratization. This threat proved effective, since the armed forces preferred to be a subservient agent of civilian governments in order not to lose UN missions. This apparently convinced the armed forces not to assert direct power<sup>lxxxiv</sup> but establish a form of power sharing between themselves and the civilians, leading to the establishment of the caretaker government of 2007-2009.

To sum up, initially—at the beginning of the post-1991 democratisation period—civilians succeeded in establishing formal control over the military, although informal influence by the armed forces remained. However, civilian governments were unable to totally enforce civilian supremacy and in consequence failed to consolidate the democratic process. The politicization of promotions and appointments led to increasing reluctance towards civilian control among the officers. Therefore the centralization of decision-making through the AFD has not resulted in effective civilian control over the armed forces. “Rather it has politicized the military”<sup>lxxxv</sup>. In consequence, due to the enforced factionalism, civilians were able to repel the 1996 coup attempt. Nevertheless, at the end of this period in 2007, the armed forces asserted its former dominant role in politics. Ultimately, one of the major aims

of the 2007-2009 military involvement in politics was to vanquish undue civilian interference into internal military affairs.

### ***The caretaker government of 2007-2009: Military Dominance***

Although there was no direct military takeover, during the period from 11 January 2006 until 6 January 2009, when an AL administration held power, there was no civilian control. This is because of the absence of an elected government or its legally/constitutionally acting substitute. A peculiarity of the Constitution of Bangladesh is the provision of holding general elections under a neutral, non-party caretaker government<sup>lxxxvi</sup>. Regarding the 13<sup>th</sup> amendment, the government, at the end of its tenure, rather than going into a caretaker mode ('full empowered interim government') have to hand over power to a non-party caretaker government to assist the Bangladesh Elections Commission (BEC) in ensuring free and fair national elections within 90 days<sup>lxxxvii</sup>. However, since its introduction<sup>lxxxviii</sup>, political parties, due to the excessive politicisation of the country's institutions, have recurrently been in conflict with each other over the formation of these caretaker governments<sup>lxxxix</sup>. In 2006 this led to extra-ordinary violent confrontation between AL and BNP supporters paralyzing the political system<sup>xc</sup>. Consequently, under the directives of the military,<sup>xc<sup>i</sup></sup> the first caretaker government of 2006 (Iajuddin Ahmed) which faced harsh political resistance, was forced to resign, the scheduled elections were postponed indefinitely, and a second caretaker government under Chief Adviser<sup>xc<sup>ii</sup></sup> Fakhruddin Ahmed was installed<sup>xc<sup>iii</sup></sup>. These two facts, that this government was set up under a state of emergency - which continued until briefly before the national elections were held in December 2008<sup>xc<sup>iv</sup></sup> - and that the almost two-year tenure royally exceeded the constitutional limit of 90 days, provided Ahmed's administration with significant powers. This was especially gaining momentum since Fakhruddin was not acting like the head of a

caretaker government, taking key decisions concerning all kinds of crucial policy matters<sup>xcv</sup> which were beyond the constitutional mandate. The reality that the armed forces formed this government proves that there was no institutionalized control over the military in elite recruitment and that this government was dependent on the support of the armed forces which was given significant powers in all decision-making areas. Therefore, Bangladesh became “a de-facto military controlled state”<sup>xcvi</sup>. This became evident in several measures and proposals by the top brass. Most notably has been COAS Moeen U. Ahamed’s understanding on why the Westminster parliamentary type of democracy in Bangladesh failed resulting in his suggested solution of forming a new political leadership. According to Moeen, Bangladesh’s democracy has to be reviewed and the constitution has to be revised (Rahman, 2008, 15). Therefore, he promoted the idea of a balanced power-sharing arrangement between the president and prime minister which included the notion that the president reserves the right to dismiss the elected prime minister and his cabinet as well as to dissolve the government. In consequence, this would revoke the achievements regarding formal civilian control realised after the fall of Ershad, e.g. the establishment of a parliamentary system.

Moeen proclaimed that Bangladesh has to develop its own brand of democracy to overcome the country’s poor governance: “We cannot go back to an elective democracy where corruption in society becomes pervasive, government suffers in terms of security and violation of rights and where political criminalisation flattens the very survival and integrity of the state”<sup>xcvii</sup>. Therefore the country has not only to build a new democratic system but also it needs a “new leadership at all levels”<sup>xcviii</sup>. To make a new leadership emerge, “power must be balanced, not tilted towards any family and dynasty”<sup>xcix</sup>.

In order to operationalize COAS Moeen’s vision, it was vital that the military gained decision-making power in internal security. Subsequently, special acts were passed, e.g. Emergency Powers Ordinance 2007 (EPO) and Emergency Powers Rules (EPR), which

granted the military extraordinary powers and impunity and led to the suspension of numerous fundamental rights as freedom of movement, association, expression and assembly<sup>c</sup>. In consequence, normal political activities were criminalized and public access to information became limited<sup>ci</sup>. Furthermore, the armed forces gained control over all security forces, since all other security forces, e.g. BDR, RAB, Police, as well as the intelligence agencies operated as joint forces under the leadership of the military. These are clear indications that, with Fakhruddin's assumption of office, the "military was given power and responsibility for maintaining law and order in the country"<sup>cii</sup>, leading to military dominance in internal security.

Regarding Military Organisation and National Defence one has to note, though the defence ministry under the constitution became subordinated to the president, real power over it remained with the caretaker government. Given its dependence on the military's good will to remain in office<sup>ciii</sup>, the president did not exercise his powers to challenge the support of the caretaker government for the armed forces<sup>civ</sup>. Thus, the armed forces regained its influence over the DGFI, which functioned as a proxy for the armed forces in decision-making and in cooperating with the caretaker government. As such, the DGFI became not only the main driving force behind the government but also the prime decision-maker with almost the "final say on anything the CTG does"<sup>cv</sup>. Both, COAS Moeen and DGFI chief Major General Golam Mohammed did not hesitate to take a public stance on national issues and policies<sup>cvi</sup>. Furthermore, the strong influence of the army in decision-making in these areas can be seen in the extraordinary growth of the defence budget for 2008-09. With close to a billion dollar (Tk 64.08 billion or US\$ 934 million), it was not only 10 billion Takas more than in 2007 and 2008 but it marked also the highest defence allocation in the entire history of the country<sup>cvi</sup>. At the same time this ignored necessary allocations for other state institutions like the judiciary<sup>cvi</sup>. Another hint for strong soldiers' influence in military organisation is the upgrade of the post of the CAS/COAS from a three-star to a four-star

general, and the subsequent promotion of subordinate officers<sup>cxix</sup>.<sup>cx</sup> Furthermore, several retired and active officers were appointed to higher offices in the government and in various public sector institutions<sup>cxii</sup>.

However, the use of the DGFI indicates that the military preferred not to become directly involved in politics. But the armed forces still tried to establish an institutional role for themselves, ensuring that they would have an effective political voice. Therefore, the DGFI facilitated the creation of new institutions, e.g. in March 2007 'National Coordination Committee to Combat Corruption and Serious Crimes' (NCC), in order to build a new political leadership. To ensure the influence of the army, the DGFI placed active-duty and retired military officers in senior posts. For example, all general officers commanding (GOCs) were members of the NCC which was headed by a Major General of the Armed Forces. Furthermore the NCC office was set up at the army's headquarters<sup>cxiii</sup>. In fact this can be seen as an indicator for the strong influence of the armed forces on the NCC and the imbalance of power between military and caretaker government. Similar processes happened not only in the NCC but in other eminent political bodies too, like the Election Commission and the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC). The latter was headed by a retired army chief.

In the absence of an elected prime minister, a dysfunctional presidency, and the fact that the military-controlled NCC supervised (and commanding) all law-enforcing agencies and was entrusted with special powers over other state agencies, civilian control over the military and security-related public policy issues has appeared to be a total misnomer. This includes non-security related public policy. For example, the caretaker government granted the military increased influence over business activities compared to previous civilian governments, e.g. in 2007 the military took over management of Bangladesh Diesel Plant Ltd and 2008 the state-owned enterprise North Bengal Paper Mill. Furthermore, the army gained leverage in certain lucrative civilian sectors such as the distribution of basic victuals

at 'fair prices' (*daal bhaat*) or the Biman Bangladesh Airlines Limited<sup>cxiii</sup>.

There is no doubt that the activities of the NCC, ACC and Election Commission under the guidance of the DGFI aimed to prepare the ground for a civilian leadership change in the context of the elections in preparation. Therefore, they attempted the following strategy: First, to expel the two leaders Begum Khaleda Zia and Sheikh Hasina Wajed from the country, described as Minus-Two-Formula; second, to replace the senior leadership of their respective parties by a second or more junior generation. Third, to replace "old" political parties by creating new ones, e.g. with the help of Nobel Laureate Dr. Mohammed Yunus it was intended to build the *Nagorik Sakti* (Citizens Power). However, due to the lack of support from society for an uncertain third force and the strong linkages of the well-established BNP and AL with their supporters at the grassroots level, the military failed<sup>cxiv</sup>. Fourth, via the Election Commission, several electoral regulations were issued. For example, a new system for registering of political parties was introduced, which had a significant impact on the ability of political parties to take part in electoral competition. Due to various requirements like the improvement of intra-party democracy and transparency, the number of parties able to take part was reduced from around one hundred to thirty-eight. Another measure was the redrawing of boundaries of close to 45% of the electoral constituencies affecting the electoral prospects of parties. The most crucial activity, carried out directly by the military, was the producing of a reliable voters' list (which included the elimination of 12 million fake voters) and the introduction of a national identity card to avoid electoral fraud<sup>cxv, cxvi</sup>. Fifth, an anti-corruption drive was inaugurated. Due to the fact that plans to exile Hasina and Zia did not work out, the NCC used corruption charges to remove them from the political landscape<sup>cxvii</sup>. Therefore, the joint forces launched a clean-up operation against the party organisation of both, the AL and the BNP. The plan was to break down the power base of Hasina and Zia in order to marginalise them in the political landscape of Bangladesh<sup>cxviii</sup>.

To sum up, when the military intervened at a time of the deepest political crisis after 1990 to “protect democratic norms” it was initially welcomed by civil society<sup>cxix</sup>. In order to avoid isolation and condemnation<sup>cxx</sup> by Bangladesh’s donors, a power-sharing agreement between the military and technocrats (non-elected civilians) was arranged and negotiated with the international community, including an extra-constitutional two-year window. However, besides some positively perceived achievements (e.g. ID cards and fixed voters lists) the caretaker government failed to achieve most of its major aims. This was because of consumer price inflation<sup>cxxi</sup>, national catastrophes, and external shocks like the economic crisis of 2008 which put pressure on the regime. In consequence, the society, political parties and their support bases (especially associated student, youth and labor organizations) were increasingly demanding the return to electoral democracy and the restoration of civilian rule<sup>cxxii</sup>. This was an essential change, since until then no one really opposed the caretakers<sup>cxxiii</sup>. Additionally, the judiciary felt encouraged to start challenging the caretakers’ legitimacy. The frequent outbursts of popular anger furthermore forced external actors to promote elections without any further delays, the withdrawal of the state of emergency and to distance themselves from the military-backed government<sup>cxxiv</sup>. Also, the soldiers’ co-opted sections of society (like business people/industrialist or media) were withdrawing their support. Differences between the election commission and the army were emerging, e.g. about the scheduling of the elections. Ultimately, it was increasingly difficult to implement reforms, most obvious in the failed attempt to create a National Security Council<sup>cxxv</sup>. A successful implementation would define the most far-reaching institutional role in the country’s decision-making process for the military. But serious concerns among politicians, civil society and media about potential ambitions of the COAS to assume the office of president and as such be in charge of the most significant decision-making body for all security-related issues, raised vehement resistance against this proposal. The fact that the caretaker government supported this idea aggravated such criticism.

Consequently, the COAS had to give up this idea. Realizing that the caretaker administration was not, following its initial period in power, able to attract any real domestic and international appeal, at the end of 2008, the armed forces reluctantly gave in to new elections.

### ***Post 2008: Re-Emergence of Civilian Control***

In early 2009, it appeared that the 'pre-caretaker government political situation' of 1991-2006 had resurrected. Civilian rule with an elected prime minister as head of government was again established. Obviously, the 2008 elections showed that the political parties turned towards the old patterns of their intense rivalry, especially regarding their attempts to seek the support of the armed forces in their competition for power. For example, political parties continued to induct retired army officers into their parties for campaigning<sup>cxxvi</sup> and to build-up informal networks with the soldiers.<sup>cxxvii</sup> Subsequently, this increased the involvement of the armed forces in party politics as well as electoral matters<sup>cxxviii</sup>, e.g. manipulating the media through the DGFI in order to support preferred candidates<sup>cxxix</sup>. However, the majority of the electoral candidates were from civilian interest groups like businessmen, industrialists, lawyers or landlords, and only 5 per cent were former officers in the 2008 elections<sup>cxxx</sup>. Furthermore, because of the very personalized and dynastic political party structures, the armed forces did not gain much leverage over political parties through retired military candidates and the nomination process. But more important is that it seems that there has been a fundamental change in the relationship between the military and political parties. Besides the respective political preferences among officers and rank and file, the armed forces as an institution at least initially attempted to stay neutral within the political rivalry between the AL and BNP after 1991. This became increasingly difficult and resulted in the politicisation of the entire military

institution. Consequently, the armed forces, in the most recent caretaker government, tried to set conditions which would make it impossible for political parties to utilize or build up military internal factions for future political purposes. This attempt failed. The armed forces were not able to break the power of civilians and establish sustainable military dominance, and withdraw. As a result, besides the fact that the rules and procedures for the 2008 election were yet set by a military-backed government, according to international observers, the elections were free and fair. However, since 2008, in the context of the absolute electoral mandate for one party, it appears that the military has been giving up its institutional neutrality in favor of the ruling party. This is understood as the most viable option to protect the military from undue interference for partisan purposes but not as the expression of a certain party preference. This helped to improve civil-military relations, at least between the ruling party and the armed forces, since the relationship between civilians and soldiers in general became increasingly tense because of the critical military activities against politicians between 2007 and 2008. Since the elections, there has no longer been any indication of formal or informal military influence in elite recruitment. It seems that there is also a change in the degree of civilian control in internal security. On 25 and 26 February 2009 at Philkhana (Dhaka) a mutiny of the Para-military Bangladesh Border Rifles (BRD) was staged. During the violent clashes, numerous commanding officers (including their families) of the armed forces deployed at the BDR were killed. The “Philkhana crisis” must not only be seen as an indication that civilians are in charge of the decision-making process regarding internal security<sup>cxxxix</sup> but also as a pacesetter for future civil-military relations. Most remarkably for civil-military relations is the fact that the military followed the decision of the prime minister not to intervene (besides some limited exchange of gunfire). It was the first time in the history of the country that the armed forces were not allowed to take control in a serious internal law and order situation. The soldiers who were seriously looking for revenge and to oppress the mutiny violently also accepted

the initial civilian offer of general amnesty for the mutineers if they surrendered. The solution was primarily negotiated by the home minister following the directives of the prime minister with the BDR rebels<sup>cxxxii</sup>. The fact that it was made possible that the rebels were allowed to surrender to the police underlines the powerful position of civilians during the BDR crisis. Also, that the BDR members who were accused of crimes against civilians in the mutiny were taken to trial--a separate civilian court--indicates that civilians were in control of the situation.

This has helped to institutionalize civilian control in various ways: First, it will restore the authority of the MHA over the Para-military BDR. To emphasize the subordination under MHA, the BDR was subsequently renamed the Border Guards Bangladesh and endowed with new symbols. Second, the inclusion of the MHA in the decision-making process will not only improve transparency but also broaden the civilian control mechanism which was before limited to the exclusive position of the PM and its interaction with the COAS. However, besides this decentralization of decision-making, the prime minister will remain at the centre of decision-making since the MHA is under his/her control. Third, the cause of the mutiny was not only about payment but also to express resentment by “the paramilitaries over the practice of appointing army officers to head the BDR”<sup>cxxxiii</sup>. This would weaken the possibility of the military to influence other security forces (e.g. RAB, police) through deployed army personnel in future.

Additionally, civilians established control over public policy. For example they were able to remove the 5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> amendments, enforced by military rules, to legalize their actions. In consequence, there will be no more constitutional cover for any military takeover in the future. Moreover, civilians restored the secular principle of the 1972 constitution, which was diluted by military rulers to carry out the Islamization of the country (especially via the 8<sup>th</sup> Amendment). Most important is to mention that the civilian government was already planning to remove the respective amendments before the last caretaker government. The

fact that they are now able (via the Supreme Court) to implement this, e.g. the High Court verdict from 2005 which declared the 5<sup>th</sup> Amendment illegal to the constitution, also proved that there is a significant growth in civilian power vis-à-vis the military.

In order to gain this control, the current government has basically focused on four strategies: appeasement, appreciation, ascriptive selection and acquiescence. First, the prime minister successfully chose and installed Lieutenant General Mohammad Abdul Mubeen in June 2009 as new COAS. Mubeen proved himself to be loyal to the prime minister in convincing soldiers to follow the orders of the prime minister not to intervene and thus allow civilians to negotiate the end of the rebellion. However, to appease the armed forces, the government announced that the rebels who were not part of the army were still likely to be prosecuted under military law<sup>cxxxiv</sup>. Furthermore, in order to avoid a confrontation with the armed forces, which were still grumbling over their losses during the BDR mutiny, the civilian government increased the defence budget. Additionally, the government spent substantial efforts to buy sophisticated weapons and modernize the military. As a means of regaining control over the Chittagong Hill Tracts region, civilians appreciated the role of the armed forces in order to implement the 1997 peace accord as well as hand over the management of Chittagong seaport to the military. To maintain the fine balance between keeping the army content as well as subordinated to the government, the prime minister has used almost every opportunity to speak favorably about the armed forces and appreciate their contribution to safeguard democracy, the welfare of the people, and independence and sovereignty of the country.

### **Civil-Military Relations and the Quality of Democracy**

Generally, Bangladesh's democratic institutions perform their functions<sup>cxxxv</sup>, but have been hampered by various political-cultural factors. This is exemplified by the arch-rivalry

between the major parties, a de-constructive relationship between government and opposition, boycott of the parliament as a forum for political debates and decision-making, and political parties under autocratic leadership<sup>cxxxvi</sup>. Consequently political institutions remain weak, institutionalization of civilian controls remains low, and the military has asserted an eminent role in politics which was particularly entrenched during the last caretaker government (2007-2008). Therefore, the armed forces remain as a major stakeholder in the political system of Bangladesh<sup>cxxxvii</sup> which led among other reasons to the state of emergency during the recent caretaker government. Nevertheless, Bangladesh has maintained its status as an electoral democracy, as proved in the free and fair elections of 2008<sup>cxxxviii</sup>. In this context one can state that military support for various caretaker governments in holding elections had some significant impacts on the stability of the political system and in preventing chaos and anarchy produced by the self-interest of civilian leadership and a dysfunctional political party system. However until now it did not help to strengthen civilian institutions. In other words, the military created a situation in which the civilian institutions were able to carry out their basic function but remained weak. Having this in mind, one can argue that the role of the military in the electoral process has provided, in the short run, some kind of systemic stability. Nevertheless, the creation of loosely-institutionalized political parties by military rulers also enforced the entrenchment of dynastic rule, nepotism and personal loyalty within political parties in the long term perspective. In this context, one can also argue that the democratic process was hindered due to the inability of many political parties to generate qualified leadership. There are two main reasons for this. First, the armed forces frequently interfered into politics and there were long periods of military rule which prevented continuity in the exercise of democratic norms and procedures; second, the dysfunctional political party system, which is a derivate from non-democratic structures and poor party organization. Generally one can state that the political system of Bangladesh is characterized by a lack of checks-and-balances and

that the level of armed forces accountability remains low. This led to a situation in which the misuse of power was rather the norm than the exception, marked by a growing nexus of military interference in law and order situations combined with ignorance towards human rights and weak democratic institutions<sup>cxix</sup>. Also, civil liberties were seriously constricted during the last caretaker government through various provisions which gave far-reaching powers to law enforcement agencies<sup>cxl</sup>. The suspension of all political activities had a deep impact on the democratic development of the country<sup>cxli</sup>. Even until today, rules and restrictions on freedom of expression, assembly and association in combination with its random and selective application have created an atmosphere of uncertainty and fear among politicians of all political colors. Nevertheless, the situation is gradually improving “due to the installation of a new elected civilian government and related gains in government functioning and accountability”<sup>cxlii</sup>. In the context of the military-organized ‘clean-up’ of the political landscape, around 200,000 people were arrested on charges of political or financial corruption<sup>cxliii</sup>. At the same time, extraordinary human rights violations by the security forces were reported. However, the persistent and widespread use of preventive detention without charge or trial, numbers of extra-judicial killings and tortures etc. is not new for Bangladeshis. But the fact that immunity for violation of civil rights through the law enforcement personnel was granted by an elected civilian government has been a serious aberration in the process of democratic consolidation<sup>cxliv</sup>. Hence, today Bangladesh remains a fragile democracy.

## Conclusion

In the final analysis, civil-military relations in Bangladesh have tended to be affected by historical, mutually-affecting legacies of civilian polarisation as well as military factionalism and politicisation, which have contributed to only a rudimentary level of institutionalization and a predominance of informality. Significantly, the increase of civilian control in the last two decades has not necessarily derived from the use of civilian strategies directed to institutionalize control. Instead, civilians preferred to establish mechanisms of personal control over the military. Nevertheless, the first process of decentralization, e.g. including the MHA, the demand of external donors for democratic reforms, as well as the concerns of the military about its international reputation as a loyal agent of the state made civilian control in general possible.

To sum up, until the recent return to democracy in 2008, Bangladesh's political culture ensured that any attempts to establish civilian control were personalized in nature rather than institutionalized. However, one can contend that at the very beginning of the initial period in 1971 the military did not act as an agent which was necessarily against the establishment of civilian control. However, this changed dramatically after soldiers experienced control efforts during the first period of civilian rule in 1971-1972. The rigorous application of robust strategies was seen as an essential threat towards the corporate interests of the armed forces. As a consequence, the military resisted any notion of civilian supremacy until the re-introduction of parliamentary democracy in 1990. However, as a result of a vibrant and politically aware civil society, democratic rule as well as another change for the institutionalization of civilian control is made possible again in 1990. All governments since then have carried out various attempts to gain control over the military. Several institutions regarding the establishment of civilian control were discussed and proposed in this regard. However, civilians' preference for personalized supremacy, as well

as the high degree of politicization and polarization between the civilian leaders in establishing any change in civil-military relations led to a partial failure in institutionalizing civilian control in Bangladesh.

In retrospect, internal factionalism allowed the armed forces to again become vulnerable to the partisan interests of politicians. However, one most crucial alteration can be identified in the context of the applied civilian strategies. With the causal conditions of the first period of military rule in mind, civilians today have realised that the application of strategies which tend to be overly robust has provoked military backlashes (as in 1975 or more recently in the context of the military backed caretaker government). As such, civilians have been inclined to increasingly choose a mixture of robust and weak strategies. But civilians have been more clearly focused upon weaker strategies, which have meant that these civilians have sought to manipulate the military for their political goals, and simultaneously, to avoid military backlashes, have tried to appease as well as acquiesce to soldiers' autonomous activities. Ultimately, as long as civil-military relations are interpreted by certain civilians in the context their partisan interests, the institutionalization of civilian control and the consolidation of democracy in Bangladesh will remain in crisis.

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<sup>ii</sup> Civilians are defined as democratically elected representatives of the people as supreme power, see also paragraph 2 (Analytical Framework).

<sup>iii</sup> Al Masud Hasanuzzaman, Bangladesh, Crisis of Political Development, Department of Government and Politics Jahangirnagar University, Dhaka, p. 35.

<sup>iv</sup> BRAC (Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee), The State of Governance in Bangladesh 2006: Knowledge, Perceptions, Reality. Centre for Governance Studies, Dhaka: BRAC University, 2006, p. 5, p. 11. [http://www.brac.net/oldsite/downloads\\_files/BRAC\\_Annual\\_Report\\_2006.pdf](http://www.brac.net/oldsite/downloads_files/BRAC_Annual_Report_2006.pdf)

<sup>v</sup> Regarding theory and concepts this paper draws on following articles: Aurel Croissant; David Kuehn; Paul Chambers; Siegfried O .Wolf, "Beyond the fallacy of coup-ism: conceptualizing civilian control of the military in emerging democracies", in Democratization, Vol. 17, No. 5, October 2010, pp. 950–975 / Aurel Croissant; David Kuehn; Paul Chambers; Siegfried O .Wolf, "Conceptualising civil-military relations in emerging democracies", in European Political Science, 10, (2011), pp. 137-145 / und Aurel Croissant; David Kuehn; Paul Chambers; Philip Voelkel; Siegfried O. Wolf, "Theorizing civilian control of the military in emerging

democracies: agency, structure and institutional change”, *Zeitschrift für Vergleichende Politikwissenschaft*, (2011) 5, pp. 75–98, which outlines a new approach to analyses civil-military relations and is an outcome results from the research project “Democratic Transformation and Civilian Control of the Military: Comparing New Democracies in Northeast, Southeast, and South Asia” conducted from 2008 to 2011 at Heidelberg University with funding by the German Research Foundation (DFG).

<sup>vi</sup> Aurel Croissant; David Kuehn; Paul Chambers; Siegfried O. Wolf, “Beyond the fallacy of coup-ism: conceptualizing civilian control of the military in emerging democracies”, *Democratization*, 17 (5), October 2010, p. 950.

<sup>vii</sup> See also Robert A. Dahl, *Democracy and Its Critics*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989 / Aurel Croissant; David Kuehn; Paul Chambers; Siegfried O. Wolf, “Beyond the fallacy of coup-ism: conceptualizing civilian control of the military in emerging democracies”, *Democratization*, 17 (5), October 2010, p. 950.

<sup>viii</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>ix</sup> Richard Kohn, “How Democracies Control the Military”, *Journal of Democracy*, 8 (4), p. 142.

<sup>x</sup> See also Kenneth W. Kemp; Charles Hudlin. ‘Civil Supremacy over the Military: Its Nature and Limits’. *Armed Forces & Society* 19, no. 1 (1992), pp. 7–26 / David Pion-Berlin, *Military autonomy and emerging democracies in South America*. *Comparative Politics* 25 (1), (1992), pp. 83–102 / Richard H. Kohn, ‘How Democracies Control the Military’, *Journal of Democracy* 8, no. 4, (1997), pp. 140–53 / Douglas L. Bland, ‘A Unified Theory of Civil–Military Relations’. *Armed Forces & Society* 26, no. 1 (1999), pp. 7–25 / Peter D. Feaver, ‘Civil–Military Relations’. *Annual Review of Political Science* 2, no.1 (1999), pp. 211–41; Claude E. Welch, *Civilian control of the military: myth and reality*, in *Civilian control of the military: Theory and cases from developing countries*, ed. Claude E. Welch. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1976, pp. 1–42.

<sup>xi</sup> Aurel Croissant; David Kuehn; Paul Chambers; Siegfried O. Wolf, “Beyond the fallacy of coup-ism: conceptualizing civilian control of the military in emerging democracies”, *Democratization*, 17 (5), October 2010, p. 955.

<sup>xii</sup> Alfred Stepan, *Rethinking military politics: Brazil and the Southern Cone*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1988, p. 93.

<sup>xiii</sup> Aurel Croissant; David Kuehn; Paul Chambers; Siegfried O. Wolf, “Beyond the fallacy of coup-ism: conceptualizing civilian control of the military in emerging democracies”, *Democratization*, 17 (5), October 2010, p. 955. / Aurel Croissant; David Kuehn; Paul Chambers; Siegfried O. Wolf, “Conceptualising civil-military relations in emerging democracies”, in *European Political Science*, 10, (2011), pp. 142.

<sup>xiv</sup> Brian D. Taylor, *Politics and the Russian Army: Civil-Military Relations, 1689-2000*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2003, p. 7.

<sup>xv</sup> See also Paul W. Chambers, “Understanding Civil-Military Relations Today: The Case of Thailand with Implications for Emerging Democracies in Asia” *Asia-Pacific Social Science Review* 10:2, (2010), pp. 1-24.

<sup>xvi</sup> Aurel Croissant; David Kuehn; Paul Chambers; Siegfried O. Wolf, “Beyond the fallacy of coup-ism: conceptualizing civilian control of the military in emerging democracies”, *Democratization*, 17 (5), October 2010, p. 957 / Aurel Croissant; David Kuehn; Paul Chambers; Siegfried O. Wolf, “Conceptualizing civil-military relations in emerging democracies”, *European Political Science*, 10, 2011, pp. 139-140.

<sup>xvii</sup> Aurel Croissant; David Kuehn; Paul Chambers; Siegfried O. Wolf, “Beyond the fallacy of coup-ism: conceptualizing civilian control of the military in emerging democracies”, *Democratization*, 17 (5), October 2010, p. 957.

<sup>xviii</sup> Aurel Croissant; David Kuehn; Paul Chambers; Siegfried O. Wolf, “Conceptualizing civil-military relations in emerging democracies”, *European Political Science*, 10, 2011, p. 140.

<sup>xix</sup> See also Paul W. Chambers, “Understanding Civil-Military Relations Today: The Case of Thailand with Implications for Emerging Democracies in Asia” *Asia-Pacific Social Science Review* 10:2, (2010), pp. 1-24.

<sup>xx</sup> See also Kit Collier, *The armed forces and internal security in Asia: Preventing the abuse of power*. East-West Center Occasional Papers. Politics and Security Series, No. 2, 1999 / Harold A. Trinkunas, *Crafting civilian control of the military in Venezuela: A comparative perspective*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005.

<sup>xxi</sup> Aurel Croissant; David Kuehn; Paul Chambers; Siegfried O. Wolf, “Beyond the fallacy of coup-ism: conceptualizing civilian control of the military in emerging democracies”, *Democratization*, 17 (5), October 2010, p. 958 / Aurel Croissant; David Kuehn; Paul Chambers; Siegfried O. Wolf, “Conceptualizing civil-military relations in emerging democracies”, *European Political Science*, 10, 2011, p. 140.

<sup>xxii</sup> See also Muthiah Alagappa, *Investigating and explaining change: An analytical framework*, in Muthiah Alagappa (ed.), *Coercion and governance: The declining political role of the military in Asia*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001, pp. 29–68 / Harold A. Trinkunas, *Crafting civilian control of the military in Venezuela: A comparative perspective*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005.

<sup>xxiii</sup> Aurel Croissant; David Kuehn; Paul Chambers; Siegfried O. Wolf “Beyond the fallacy of coup-ism: conceptualizing civilian control of the military in emerging democracies”, *Democratization*, 17 (5), October

2010, pp. 958-959 / Aurel Croissant; David Kuehn; Paul Chambers; Siegfried O. Wolf, "Conceptualizing civil-military relations in emerging democracies", *European Political Science*, 10, 2011, p. 140.

<sup>xxiv</sup> Aurel Croissant; David Kuehn; Paul Chambers; Siegfried O. Wolf, "Beyond the fallacy of coup-ism: conceptualizing civilian control of the military in emerging democracies", *Democratization*, 17 (5), October 2010, pp. 958-959 / Aurel Croissant; David Kuehn; Paul Chambers; Siegfried O. Wolf, "Conceptualizing civil-military relations in emerging democracies", *European Political Science*, 10, 2011, p. 140.

<sup>xxv</sup> Aurel Croissant; David Kuehn; Paul Chambers; Siegfried O. Wolf, "Beyond the fallacy of coup-ism: conceptualizing civilian control of the military in emerging democracies", *Democratization*, 17 (5), October 2010, pp. 958-959 / Aurel Croissant; David Kuehn; Paul Chambers; Siegfried O. Wolf, "Conceptualizing civil-military relations in emerging democracies", *European Political Science*, 10, 2011, p. 140.

<sup>xxvi</sup> Aurel Croissant; David Kuehn; Paul Chambers; Philip Voelkel; Siegfried O. Wolf, "Theorizing civilian control of the military in emerging democracies: agency, structure and institutional change", *Zeitschrift für Vergleichende Politikwissenschaft*, 2011, 5, p. 77.

<sup>xxvii</sup> A.J. Bacevich, *Knives, tanks and missiles: Israel's security revolution*, Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Washington D.C., 1998, p. 52.

<sup>xxviii</sup> Aurel Croissant; David Kuehn; Paul Chambers; Philip Voelkel; Siegfried O. Wolf, "Theorizing civilian control of the military in emerging democracies: agency, structure and institutional change", *Zeitschrift für Vergleichende Politikwissenschaft*, 2011, 5, p. 92.

<sup>xxix</sup> A term to describe the deserting East Bengali units from West Pakistan Armed Forces, representing a main building bloc of the post-independence Bangladesh Armed Forces (BAF).

<sup>xxx</sup> Gowher Rizvi, "Riding the Tiger: institutionalizing the military regimes in Pakistan and Bangladesh", in Christopher Clapham; George Philip (eds.), *Political Dilemmas of Military Regimes*, Croom Helm, London, 1985, p. 223.

<sup>xxxi</sup> Molla Gyasuddin, "Interminable Conflict in Developing: Bangladesh's Model of Military Rule-An Alternative to Peace-Making and Conflict Resolution", *Bangladesh Political Science Review (BPSR)*, 5 (1), 2007, p. 24.

<sup>xxxii</sup> Nizam Ahmed, "Limits of Parliamentary Control: Public Spending in Bangladesh", The University Press Dhaka, Dhaka, 2006, p. 286.

<sup>xxxiii</sup> Which were far outnumbered by the 'freedom fighters'.

<sup>xxxiv</sup> Abdul Latif Masum, "Dilemmas of a military ruler: a political study of the Zia regime", Asfar Brothers, Dhaka, 2000, p. 31.

<sup>xxxv</sup> Lawrence Lifschultz, "Bangladesh, the unfinished revolution", Zed Press, London, 1979, p. 85 ff.

<sup>xxxvi</sup> See also Anthony Mascarenhas, *Bangladesh. a legacy of blood*. Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1986.

<sup>xxxvii</sup> Emajuddin Ahamed, "Military rule and the myth of democracy", University Press, Dhaka, 1988, p. 54.

<sup>xxxviii</sup> Mujibur Rahman achieved an absolute majority in the 1970 general elections in still-united Pakistan.

<sup>xxxix</sup> Shamsul I.Khan; S. Aminul Islam; M.Imadul Haque, "Political Culture, Political Parties and the Democratic transition in Bangladesh", University Press, Dhaka, 2008, p. 23.

<sup>xl</sup> Emajuddin Ahamed, "Military rule and the myth of democracy", University Press, Dhaka, 1988, p. 66.

<sup>xli</sup> Hasibur Rahaman, "Bangladesh politics and government", Mowla, Dhaka, 2009, p. 108.

<sup>xlii</sup> Smruti S. Pattanaik, "Re-emergence of the Military and the Future of Democracy in Bangladesh", *Strategic Analysis*, 32 (6), 2008, p. 979.

<sup>xliiii</sup> Ibid.

<sup>xliiv</sup> Ali Riaz, "State, Class & Military Rule. Political Economy of Martial Law in Bangladesh", Nadi News Press, Dhaka, 1994, p. 228.

<sup>xli v</sup> S. Mahmud Ali, "Civil-military relations in the soft state: the case of Bangladesh", *European Network of Bangladesh Studies (ENBS)*, 1 (6), 1994, p. 31.

<sup>xli vi</sup> The rise of the defence budget is an indicator therefore.

<sup>xli vii</sup> Stanley Kochanek, "Patron-client politics and business in Bangladesh", Thousand Oaks, California, 1993, pp. 58-63.

<sup>xli viii</sup> Francis Robinson, "The Cambridge encyclopedia of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan and the Maldives", Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1989, pp. 219-222.

<sup>xli x</sup> Khaleda Zia (BNP): 1991-1996; 2) Sheikh Hasina (AL) 1996-2001; 3) Khaleda Zia 2001-2006.

<sup>i</sup> Smruti S. Pattanaik, "Re-emergence of the Military and the Future of Democracy in Bangladesh", *Strategic Analysis*, 32 (6), 2008, p. 981.

<sup>ii</sup> Abdul Maleque, "Pressure Groups: Dynamics of Bangladesh Politics", Academic Press and Publishers Library, Dhaka, 2007, p. 216.

<sup>iii</sup> Karim, Aminul. *Contemporary Security Issues in the Asia-Pacific and Bangladesh*, Academic Press and Publishers Library, Dhaka, 2006, p. 229.

<sup>iiii</sup> Smruti S., Pattanaik, "Re-emergence of the Military and the Future of Democracy in Bangladesh", *Strategic Analysis*, 32 (6), 2008, p. 979.

- <sup>liv</sup> Amena Mohsin, "Bangladesh: An Uneasy Accommodation", in Alagappa, Muthiah (eds.), "Coercion and Governance: Declining Political Role of the Military in Asia, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 2001, p. 219.
- <sup>lv</sup> Aminul Karim, *Contemporary Security Issues in the Asia-Pacific and Bangladesh*, Academic Press and Publishers Library, Dhaka, 2006, p. 229 / Shafaat Ahmad, "Role of Civilians. Defence Policy formation in Bangladesh", Dhaka, Daily Star, Strategic Issues, February 17, 2006.
- <sup>lvi</sup> Abdul Latif Masum, "Armed Forces Management and Politics in Bangladesh", in Hasanuzzaman Al Masud; Shamsul Alam (eds.), *Political Management in Bangladesh*, A.H. Development Publishing House, Dhaka, 2010, p. 244.
- <sup>lvii</sup> See also Rahman (2008) / Nizam Ahmed, "Bangladesh: Era of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, University Press, Dhaka, 2006, p. 284 / K.M. Mahiuddin, "The parliamentary Committee System in Bangladesh. An Analysis of its Functioning", Heidelberg University (Online Dissertation), Heidelberg, 2009, p. 181-186.
- <sup>lviii</sup> The most significant issues were the challenging of the purchase of MiG-29 fighters from Russia (MiG-Mapo) negotiated in 1999 and the 2000 naval frigate deal with North Korea (Shafaat Ahmad, "Role of Civilians. Defence Policy formulation in Bangladesh", The Daily Star, Strategic Issues, 17.02.2006, p. 292 / K.M. Mahiuddin, "The parliamentary Committee System in Bangladesh. An Analysis of its Functioning", Heidelberg University (Online Dissertation), Heidelberg, 2009, pp. 181-186.
- <sup>lix</sup> ICG Policy Briefing: Asia Briefing no. 24, "Bangladesh: Elections and Beyond", 2008, p. 16 / Nizam Ahmed, "Bangladesh: Era of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, University Press, Dhaka, 2006, p. 291.
- <sup>lx</sup> Lawrence Ziring, "Bangladesh: From Mujib to Ershad : an interpretive study", Oxford University Press, London, 1992, p. 188.
- <sup>lxi</sup> See also Amena Mohsin, "Bangladesh: An Uneasy Accommodation", in Alagappa, Muthiah (eds.), "Coercion and Governance: Declining Political Role of the Military in Asia, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 2001.
- <sup>lxii</sup> Smruti S. Pattanaik, "Re-emergence of the Military and the Future of Democracy in Bangladesh", *Strategic Analysis*, 32 (6), 2008, p. 976.
- <sup>lxiii</sup> Abdul Maleque, "Pressure Groups: Dynamics of Bangladesh Politics", Academic Press and Publishers Library, Dhaka, 2007, p. 220.
- <sup>lxiv</sup> A major operation to tackle widespread corruption and criminal activities in 2002; the only which included the military.
- <sup>lxv</sup> Since no cabinet committee on defence exists, parliamentary committees are under tight control of the prime minister and the minister of MHA is due to party loyalties (personalism) subservient to the prime minister.
- <sup>lxvi</sup> Aminul Karim, *Contemporary Security Issues in the Asia-Pacific and Bangladesh*, Academic Press and Publishers Library, Dhaka, 2006, p. 229 / Fakhruddin Kazi Ahmed; Abu Taher Salahuddin Ahmed; M. Aynul Islam, "Traditional Security of Bangladesh", in Mufleh R. Osmany (ed.), *Whither National Security. Bangladesh 2007*, Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS), The University Press Limited, Dhaka, 2008, p. 89.
- <sup>lxvii</sup> A further challenge for the MoD is that there has never been a cabinet minister appointed as a Defence Minister which would strengthen its position.
- <sup>lxviii</sup> Afsan Chowdhury, "The rise and fall and rise of politics", in *Bangladesh Today*, 8 August 2009 / See also Syed Imtiaz Ahmed, "Civilian supremacy in democracies with 'fault lines': The role of the parliamentary standing committee on defence in Bangladesh", *Democratization*, Volume 13, Issue 2, April 2006, pp. 283-302.
- <sup>lxix</sup> Amena Mohsin, "Bangladesh: An Uneasy Accommodation", in Muthiah Alagappa (ed.), "Coercion and Governance: Declining Political Role of the Military in Asia, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 2001, p.219.
- <sup>lxx</sup> Jérémie Codron, "Putting Factions Back in the Civil-Military Relations Equation Genesis, Maturation and Distortion of the Bangladeshi Army", *South Asia Multidisciplinary Academic Journal*, 2007, p. 78.
- <sup>lxxi</sup> See also Gyasuddin A. Chowdhury, "Civil-Military relationship", in *The Daily Star*, Strategic Issues, 16 December 2006.
- <sup>lxxii</sup> Smruti S. Pattanaik, "Re-emergence of the Military and the Future of Democracy in Bangladesh", *Strategic Analysis*, 32 (6), 2008, p. 979 / See also Smruti S. Pattanaik, *India's Neighbourhood Policy: Perceptions from Bangladesh*, *Strategic Analysis*, Vol. 35, No. 1, January 2011, pp. 71-87 / Nizam Ahmed, "Limits of Parliamentary Control: Public Spending in Bangladesh, University Press, Dhaka, 2006, p. 290.
- <sup>lxxiii</sup> Abdul Latif Masum "Armed Forces Management and Politics in Bangladesh", in Hasanuzzaman Al Masud; Shamsul Alam (eds.). *Political Management in Bangladesh*, A.H. Development Publishing House, Dhaka, 2010, p. 240.
- <sup>lxxiv</sup> In such cases officers are temporarily exempted from their regular service in the Armed Forces.
- <sup>lxxv</sup> Nizam Ahmed, "Limits of Parliamentary Control: Public Spending in Bangladesh", *The University Press Dhaka*, Dhaka, 2006, p. 287.
- <sup>lxxvi</sup> *The Daily Star*, "PM Stressed Army's Role in Restoring Democracy", 13 October 2006.

<sup>lxxvii</sup> Abdul Latif Masum, "Armed Forces Management and Politics in Bangladesh", in Hasanuzzaman Al Masud; Shamsul Alam (eds.), *Political Management in Bangladesh*, A.H. Development Publishing House, Dhaka, 2010, p. 240.

<sup>lxxviii</sup> CAS (Chief of the Army Staff).

<sup>lxxix</sup> Smruti S. Pattanaik, "Re-emergence of the Military and the Future of Democracy in Bangladesh", *Strategic Analysis*, 32 (6), 2008, p. 981.

<sup>lxxx</sup> See also Harsh Sethi, (ed.), *State of Democracy in South Asia. A Report*. New Delhi: Centre for Study of Developing Societies (CSDS), 2008.

<sup>lxxxi</sup> See also Dilara Chowdhury, "The rise and fall and rise of politics", in *Bangladesh Today*, 8 August 2009.

<sup>lxxxii</sup> Bertelsmann Transformations Index (BTI), Bangladesh 2010,

[http://www.bertelsmann-transformation-index.de/fileadmin/pdf/Gutachten\\_BTI2010/ASO/Bangladesh.pdf](http://www.bertelsmann-transformation-index.de/fileadmin/pdf/Gutachten_BTI2010/ASO/Bangladesh.pdf)

<sup>lxxxiii</sup> Nizam Ahmed, "Limits of Parliamentary Control: Public Spending in Bangladesh", The University Press Dhaka, Dhaka, 2006, p. 289.

<sup>lxxxiv</sup> Ibid.

<sup>lxxxv</sup> See also Smruti S. Pattanaik, *India's Neighbourhood Policy: Perceptions from Bangladesh*, *Strategic Analysis*, Vol. 35, No. 1, January 2011, pp. 71–87.

<sup>lxxxvi</sup> Shamim Ahmad, "The Making of Caretaker Government and Present Crisis", *News Network*, Dhaka, 2005, p. 7.

<sup>lxxxvii</sup> Gyasuddin, Molla, "Democratic Institution Building Process in Bangladesh: South Asian Experience of a New Model of a Care-taker Government in a Parliamentary Framework", *Heidelberg Papers in South Asian and Comparative Politics*, 3 December 2000,

<http://archiv.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/volltextserver/volltexte/2003/4008/pdf/hpsacp3.pdf>.

<sup>lxxxviii</sup> In its present form the Caretaker Government was introduced in 1996. However, in 1990 Bangladesh witnessed its first caretaker government of Acting President Chief Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed (Shamim Ahmad, *The Making of Caretaker Government and Present Crisis*. Dhaka: News Network, 2005, pp. 15-16).

<sup>lxxxix</sup> Abdul Latif Masum, "Civil-Military Relations and Democracy in the US: A Role Model for Bangladesh", *Asian Studies, Journal of the Department of Government & Politics*, Jahangirnagar University, 28, June 2009, p. 4.

<sup>xc</sup> Sreeradha Data. "Bangladesh's Extended Continental Shelf: Navigating the Course with India and Myanmar", *Strategic Analysis*, 34 (5), September 2010, p. 2 / *Human Rights Report 2008: Odhikar Report on Bangladesh*, 2009,

[http://www.odhikar.org/report/pdf/Odhikar\\_Annual\\_Human\\_rights\\_Report\\_%202008.pdf](http://www.odhikar.org/report/pdf/Odhikar_Annual_Human_rights_Report_%202008.pdf).

<sup>xc</sup> The military clearly declined such allegations (A.T. Rafiqur Rahman, *Bangladesh Election 2008 and Beyond. Reforming Institutions and Political Culture for a Sustainable Democracy*, University Press, Dhaka, 2008, p. 14) and then COAS General Moeen U. Ahmed stated: "the present government is not a national government supported by the army. It is an independent, non-partisan caretaker administration" (Reuters, 28.08.2007). However, a statement of the Law and Information Adviser Mainul Hosein can be seen as a confirmation of the strong influence of the armed forces in politics: "our present government is a national government, army-backed government" (Hosein quoted in Says Mainul, *Govt to depart after restoring democracy*, *The Daily Star*, 28 August, 2007). See also (Rahman, 2008, 1; *The Economist*, 24.2.2007).

<sup>xcii</sup> Chief Adviser of a caretaker government is equivalent to the Prime Minister. However, one has to emphasize that he is not elected but appointed by an elected civilian, the President. A caretaker government consists of one Chief Adviser and 10 Advisors.

<sup>xciii</sup> Jérémie Codron, "Putting Factions Back in the Civil-Military Relations Equation Genesis, Maturation and Distortion of the Bangladeshi Army", *South Asia Multidisciplinary Academic Journal*, 2007, p. 93.

<sup>xciv</sup> Marc Livsey, "Bangladesh, ninth national parliament election", *Final report of the International election Observation Mission of the Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL)*, 2009,

<http://aceproject.org/ero-en/regions/asia/BD/bangladesh-final-report-general-elections-anfrel>.

<sup>xcv</sup> Sreeradha Datta, "Caretaking Democracy. Political Process in Bangladesh, 2006-2008", *Institute of Defence Studies and Analysis*, New Delhi, 2009, p. 18.

<sup>xcvi</sup> C. Christine Fair and Sumit Ganguly, *Bangladesh On the Brink*, *The Wall Street Journal*, 5.2.2007, p. 17.

<sup>xcvii</sup> *The Daily Star*, 2 April 2007.

<sup>xcviii</sup> A.T. Rafiqur Rahman, "Bangladesh Election 2008 and Beyond. Reforming Institutions and Political Culture for a Sustainable Democracy", University Press, Dhaka, 2008, p. 15.

<sup>xcix</sup> *The New Age*, 3.4.2007.

<sup>c</sup> *Human Rights Report 2008: Odhikar Report on Bangladesh*, 2009, p. 5.

<sup>ci</sup> Marc Livsey, "Bangladesh, ninth national parliament election", *Final report of the International election Observation Mission of the Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL)*, 2009, p. 21.

- <sup>cii</sup> Sreeradha, Datta, "Caretaking Democracy. Political Process in Bangladesh, 2006-2008", Institute of Defence Studies and Analysis, New Delhi, 2009, p. 16.
- <sup>ciii</sup> Its tenure expired in September 2007, but the army granted him the permission to stay on longer.
- <sup>civ</sup> International Crisis Group, Restoring Democracy in Bangladesh, Asia Report, N°151, 28 April 2008, pp. 16-17.
- <sup>cv</sup> Ibid, p. 16.
- <sup>cvi</sup> Jérémie Codron, "Putting Factions Back in the Civil-Military Relations Equation Genesis, Maturation and Distortion of the Bangladeshi Army", South Asia Multidisciplinary Academic Journal, 2007, p. 106.
- <sup>cvi</sup> See also Rater Zonaki [pseudonym], Secret deals, lawlessness and deception, UPI Asia Online, 10.06.2008 / Ishfaq Ilahi, Bangladesh defence budget 2008-09: An analysis, Strategic Issues, The Daily Star, 5.7.2008.
- <sup>cvi</sup> Rater Zonaki [pseudonym], Secret deals, lawlessness and deception, UPI Asia Online, 10.06.2008.
- <sup>cix</sup> E.g. Principal Staff Officer Major General became Lieutenant General, Commandant of National Defence Academy Major General Lieutenant General, and Deputy Director of DGFI, Brigadier General was promoted to Major General (Joyeeta Bhattacharjee, The Bangladesh Army: Documenting its Corporate Interests, ORF Occasional Paper #17, Observer Research Foundation, New Delhi, October 2010, p. 17, p. 28).
- <sup>cx</sup> Joyeeta Bhattacharjee, The Bangladesh Army: Documenting its Corporate Interests, ORF Occasional Paper #17, Observer Research Foundation, New Delhi, October 2010, p. 17.
- <sup>cx</sup> Ibid, p. 17, p. 28 / Sreeradha Datta, "Caretaking Democracy. Political Process in Bangladesh, 2006-2008", Institute of Defence Studies and Analysis, New Delhi, 2009, p. 56-57.
- <sup>cxii</sup> Jérémie Codron, "Putting Factions Back in the Civil-Military Relations Equation Genesis, Maturation and Distortion of the Bangladeshi Army", South Asia Multidisciplinary Academic Journal, 2007, p. 105 / See also Tasneem Khalil, NCC to meet in Army HQ, e-Bangladesh, online publication, September 26, 2007, <http://www.e-bangladesh.org/2007/09/26/ncc-to-meet-in-army-hq/>.
- <sup>cxiii</sup> Joyeeta Bhattacharjee, The Bangladesh Army: Documenting its Corporate Interests, ORF Occasional Paper #17, Observer Research Foundation, New Delhi, October 2010, p. 2.
- <sup>cxiv</sup> International Crisis Group, Restoring Democracy in Bangladesh, Asia Report, N°151, 28 April 2008, pp. 16-17.
- <sup>cxv</sup> See for more details Bangladesh Election Commission, Project: Preparation of Electoral Roll with Photographs and Facilitating the Issuance of National Identity (ID) Card, [http://www.ecs.gov.bd/English/MenuTemplate1.php?Parameter\\_MenuID=56&ByDate=0&Year=](http://www.ecs.gov.bd/English/MenuTemplate1.php?Parameter_MenuID=56&ByDate=0&Year=).
- <sup>cxvi</sup> Devin T. Hagerty, "Bangladesh in 2006: The beginning of the end of militarized politics?", Contemporary South Asia, 7 (3), 1998, p. 180.
- <sup>cxvii</sup> Sreeradha Datta, "Caretaking Democracy. Political Process in Bangladesh, 2006-2008", Institute of Defence Studies and Analysis, New Delhi, 2009, pp. 28-31.
- <sup>cxviii</sup> See also Haroon Habib, "Minus-two formula", in Frontline (The Hindu), Volume 24 - Issue 15: July 28-August. 10, 2007.
- <sup>cxix</sup> Smruti S. Pattanaik, "Bangladesh Army: In Search of a Role?", paper prepared for the workshop on "Addressing the Structure-Agency Divide in the Study of Civil-Military Relations in Democratising Asia", 14-15, October 2010, Institute of Political Science, Heidelberg University, p. 12.
- <sup>cx</sup> Sreeradha Data, "Bangladesh's Extended Continental Shelf: Navigating the Course with India and Myanmar", Strategic Analysis, 34 (5), September 2010, p. 3.
- <sup>cx</sup> Especially rice, which has soared 60-80% (Ishaan Tharoor, Moeen wants to be new leader of Bangladesh, bdfact, 20. June 2008.)
- <sup>cxii</sup> S. D. Muni, The New Democratic Wave and Regional Cooperation in South Asia, ISAS Working Paper, National University of Singapore, No. 58, 19 May 2009, p. 7.
- <sup>cxiii</sup> International Crisis Group, Restoring Democracy in Bangladesh, Asia Report, N°151, 28 April 2008 / See also International Crisis Group, Bangladesh: Elections and Beyond, Asia Briefing N°84, Dhaka/Brussels, 11 December 2008.
- <sup>cxiv</sup> Marc Livsey, "Bangladesh, ninth national parliament election", Final report of the International election Observation Mission of the Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL), 2009, p. 26 / Datta Sreeradha, "Caretaking Democracy. Political Process in Bangladesh, 2006-2008", Institute of Defence Studies and Analysis, New Delhi, 2009, p. 43.
- <sup>cxv</sup> See also Islam (2008)
- <sup>cxvi</sup> The three major political forces, AL, BNP and JP nominated 26 former military personnel for the 9<sup>th</sup> election, three more than for the 8<sup>th</sup> (K.M. Mahiuddin, "Candidate Selection Process in the Ninth Parliamentary Elections in Bangladesh", in Hasanuzzaman Al Masud; Shamsul Alam (eds.), Political Management in Bangladesh, A.H. Development Publishing House, Dhaka, 2010, p. 206).
- <sup>cxvii</sup> Ibid, pp. 205-206.
- <sup>cxviii</sup> Ibid.

- <sup>cxxix</sup> International Crisis Group, Bangladesh: Elections and Beyond, Asia Briefing N°84, 11 December 2008.
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- <sup>cxxxi</sup> See also Dilara Chowdhury, "The rise and fall and rise of politics", in Bangladesh Today, 8 August 2009.
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- <sup>cxli</sup> Mehnaaz Momen, "Bangladesh in 2008: Déjà Vu Again or a Return to Democracy?", Asian Survey, 49 (1), January/February 2009, p. 69.
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## **List of Interviews:**

**Emajuddin Ahamed**, Professor and Vice Chancellor at University of Development Alternative, Dhaka, 22 September 2010

**Cpt. (ret.) Oli Ahmad**, former Cabinet Minister and Minister for Communication, Dhaka, 14 September 2010

**Moudud Ahmed**, Member of Parliament and former Prime Minister and Vice President, Dhaka, 31 August 2010

**Shah M. Nazmul Alam**, Professor at Department of Public Administration, Jahangirnagar University, Savar/Dhaka, 24 August 2010

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**Dalem Ch. Barman**, Professor at Department of Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Dhaka, Savar/Dhaka, 9 September 2010

**AirCmdre. (ret.) Ishfaq Ilahi Choudhury**, Political Analyst and Registrar at BRAC University, Dhaka, 16 September 2010

**Brig. Gen. (ret.) M. Abdul Hafiz**, Former Director General of Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies, Dhaka, 15 September 2010

**Lt. Gen. (ret.) Harun-Ar-Rashid**, former Chief of Army Staff, Dhaka, 2 October 2010

**Dr. A.K.M. Hossain**, Professor in the Department of Government & Politics at Jahangirnagar University, Savar/Dhaka, 28 August 2010

**Dr. Md. Forhad Hossain**, Professor and Pro-Vice Chancellor of Jahangirnagar University, Savar/Dhaka, 29 August 2010

**Dr. Shawkat Ara Husain**, Professor at Department of Political Science, University of Dhaka, Savar/Dhaka, 7 October 2010

**Col. A.K.M. Nazrul Islam**, Research Director at the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies, Dhaka, 2 September 2010

**Shariful Islam**, Lecturer in the Department of Political Science at Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur, Bangladesh, Savar/Dhaka, 19 August 2010

**Anwar Kabir**, Editor, Islamic Foundation, Dhaka, 4 October 2010

**Lt. Gen. (ret.) Mohd Aminul Karim**, Dhaka, 15 September 2010

**Brig. Gen. (ret.) Shahedul Anam Khan**, Editor of Defence & Strategic Affairs, Dhaka, 21 September 2010

**Dr. K.M. Mahiuddin**, Professor and Head of the Department of Political Science, Jahangirnagar University, Savar/Dhaka, 21 August 2010

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**Dr. Talukdar Maniruzzaman**, Professor Emeritus, University of Dhaka, Dhaka, 15 September 2010

**Dr. Abdul Latif Masum**, Professor at Department of Government and Politics, Jahangirnagar University, Savar/Dhaka, 18 August 2010

**Maj. Gen. (ret.) Muhammed Firdaus Mian**, Chaiman Board of Governors, Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies, 2 September 2010

**Maj. Gen. (ret.) Golam Mohammad**, Director General, Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies, 2 September 2010

**Dr. Gyas Uddin Molla**, Professor in the Department of Political Science at University of Dhaka, Bangladesh, 6 October 2010

**A.K.M. Abdus Sabur**, Research Director and Head of International Studies Division at Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies, Dhaka, 19 August 2010

**Monaem Sarker**, Director General of the Bangladesh Foundation for Development Research, Dhaka, Bangladesh, 20 August 2010

**Dr. Quazi Abdus Samad**, Professor in the Department of Statistics at Jahangirnagar University, Savar/Dhaka, 29 September 2010

**Maj. Gen. (ret.) K. M. Shafiullah**, former Chief of Army Staff, Dhaka, 10 September 2010