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ROLE OF ELITES IN NATION-BUILDING THE CASE OF BANGLADESH

KHUNDKER NADIRA PARVEEN
Associate Professor
Department of Political Science
Dhaka University, Dhaka, Bangladesh

In the newly independent states of Asia, Africa and Latin America political elites play a very crucial role in nation-building. The role of the elites in nation building in Pakistan during 1947- 1971 period is analysed.

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Rupert Emerson rightly pointed out that "many of the new states of Asia and Africa are not yet nations in being but only nations in hope. Nationalism in these countries came as a movement against western colonialism rather than a movement for a positive, coherent national identity[1]". In their move towards independence the national political elites had to struggle for a long time for achieving freedom from foreign control and domination.

The political elite which plays a crucial role in nation-building has been epitomised in the writings of different scholars in the field. Amongst these scholars Maurice Duverger, Lucian Pye, Carl J. Friedrich, Harold D. Lasswell are the most prominent. All of them have emphasised that political elites are those who occupy important government positions having authority for political decision-making.

Conceptualization of Political Elite and Nation-building:

The concept of political elite has been elaborated by different writers in different ways. According to Vilfredo pareto, "-- so let us make a class of the people who have the highest indices in their branch of activity and to that class have the highest indices in their branch of activity and to that class give the nameelite"[2]. In the words of Gaetano Mosca, "it is inevitable that an organized minority class will spread out its dominance over an unorganized minority/the organized minority is called the elite[3]".

Joseph La Palombara says that "the political elite consists of those persons who occupy formal government positions and endowed with official authority to make political decisions[4]". Robert Michels clearly points out that "the path of the new aspirants to power is always beset with difficulties ... which can be overcome only by the favour of the masses. According to C. Wright Mills, "the group who decide whatever is decided of major consequence[5]". However, by far the most celebrated definition of elite has been given by Harold D. Lasswell. According to him, "the study of politics is the study of the influence and the influencial. The influencial are those who get the most of what there is to get. Available values may be classified as difference, income and safety. Those who get the most are elite, the rest are mass[6]". Besides these writers there are others like, T.B. Battomore and Ortega Y. Gasset who also developed their theories and ideas about elites and their role in the society from their own standpoints[6].

An analysis of the views put forward by Rupert Emerson about the growth and development of nationalism and the task of national integration suggest that the new states of Asia and Africa are to wrestle with the problem of transforming primordial sentiments into civil sentiments for the task of nation-building and creating national identity. The term nation-building as Professor Rounaq Jahan says has both a 'mechanistic' and a 'voluntaristic' aspect[8]. She has quoted Karl Deutsch as saying, "... an architectural or mechanical model. As a house can be built from timber, bricks and mortar in different patterns, quickly or slowly, through different sequences of assembly, in partial independence from its setting, and according to the choice, will and power of its builders, so a nation can be built according to different plans, from various materials, rapidly or gradually, by different sequences or steps, and in partial independence from its environment"[9].

Although nation-building is a problem of both the developing and developed countries but a distinction is noticeable in both these two types of countries. In developed countries as there exists already well established national ideology, a national elite and national institutions the problem is to find out ways and means to integrate one or more alienated groups into the established political system. But in the developing countries there is hardly any pre-existing or pre-established system and as such the problem of nation-building becomes two-fold. Firstly, to create a national ideology, a national elite and national institutions that is, to build a nation where there was no nation. Secondly, to integrate the various groups into a newly created national system[10].

Myron weiner has used the term nation-building interchangeably with national integration as he has identified a number of important tasks with it. These are the creation of a sense of territorial nationality, the establishing of a national authority, the bridging of the elite-mass division, the creation of a minimum value consensus, and the devising of integrative institutions and behaviour[11].

In the newly independent states of Asia, Africa and Latin America the problems of nation-building are compounded by the fact that the ruling elites are to perform both the tasks of state-building and nation-building simultaneously. In the developed political on the other hand, the ruling elites face the task of nation-building only after having built the state[12]. Pakistan as a new state and new nation in 1947 was no exception to this.

Elites in Pakistan - The Backdrop:

The first important event in the history of the development of Muslim political elite in British India was the partition of Bengal by Lord Curzon. It is said that this decision was dominated by political consideration as his intention was to curb the national aspirations of the Bengali political elites on the one hand, and to develop an alternative centre of Bengal politics to be controlled by the Bengali Muslims on the other hand[13]. The British ruling elite were frightened seeing that the Bengali Muslim youths were about to wage a revolutionary movement in the Muslim majority province of East Bengal. Sensing this the British Government at best annuled the partition in 1911. As a result, the Muslim of Bengal suffered a serious set back. It is to be mentioned that the British Government took recourse to this annulments to woe the sentiments of the Hindu political leaders. The Muslim League (ML) which was formed in 1906 under the leadership of Sir Salimullah gradually became the sole political platform of the Muslim community not only of Bengal but also of the rest of India. By 1920 the Muslim political elites participated in the Khilafat and the non co-operation movement under the sole leadership of M.K. Gandhi - It was not before 1930 that Muhammad Ali Jinnah joined the Muslim League and directed it for mitigating the rights and interests of the muslim community in India. It was under his dynamic leadership that the historic two -nation theory was propounded. That the Muslims and Hindus were two separate nations were emphatically put forward by him. One can find the germs of a separate homeland for the Muslims in this theory which later on assumed a concrete shape in the historic Lahore Resolution of 1940[14]. The subsequent political developments witnessed both constitutional and agitational politics in which the important political elites were involved. The Britishers were willing under the force of

circumstances to grant independence not later than February 1948. The Muslims were willing to work with the cabinet mission plan. The Congress also expressed its willingness to work with the plan but according to their own formula. Its so happened that there arose a bitter conflict with regard to the interim government which was created by the plan. Because of the nitransigence mainly of the Congress leaders the plan ultimately came to a failure. In the wake of the failure of the plan the whole of the Sub-continent was engulfed by political violence and communal riots. The leaders of the Congress and the Muslim League failed miserably to quell the situation. The British Government had no other alternative but to go for partition in India and create two Dominions - the Dominion of Pakistan and Dominion of India much against the will of the Congress leaders.

Role of Elites in Pakistan during the First Decade:

During the British rule, the Bengal political elites played their due role in the Pakistan movement side by side with the Muslim League elite at the centre. These Bengali political elites were mainly concentrated in East Bengal (The Eastern part of Pakistan). Soon after the creation of Pakistan, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the father of the nation, and first Governor General of Pakistan, very rightly observed that Pakistan began "mutilated, motheaten and truncated" and he tried to instil spirit of nationalism in the minds of the Pakistanis. He said "in course of time Hindus would cease to be Hindus, Muslim would cease to be Muslims, not in the religious sense, because that is the personal faith of each individual, but in the political sense as citizens of the state". This showed clearly that Jinnah was secular and modernist in his outlook and so long he was alive he managed to keep the unity of the state in right earnest but after his death problem arose with regard to the conception of the nature of the state to be created and the creation of sub-nationalistic feelings and tendencies giving rise to various regional forces. The Punjabis, Pathans, Baluchis and Bengalis were imbued with a sense of distinct identity. The provinces of the West Pakistan feared Punjabi domination and the people of East Bengal from the beginning felt alienated primarily because of the one eyed policies pursued by the Central Government of Pakistan. It so happened that in the debates of the constituent assembly of Pakistan from the side of the East Pakistani members question of the neglecting and treating East Bengal as a colony of West Pakistan was pointed out in clear and categorical terms. Pakistan and Muslim League at that time seem to be equivalent terms and there was no difference between the state and party. No wonder the Muslim League soon started to decline and Jinnah's slogan of Unity, Faith, Discipline, was relegated to the background and was no more heard. The internal squablings within the Muslim League gave rise to the

feeling in the minds of the Bengali leaders that the Muslim League had virtually ceased to be a mass party and they soon realized the necessity and importance of a new political party. The formation of the Awami Muslim League (AML) in June 1949 was mainly a result of that feeling[15].

The foundation of the AML was based on two conflicting forces. On the one hand, there were the frustrated and dissident Muslim League leaders and workers whose political philosophy and ideology were not fundamentally different from the ML. On the other hand, there were a large number of young followers who were secular in their attitudes anxious to establish true democracy in the country. This group opposed the communal nomenclature and demanded the removal of the word 'Muslim' for the AML[16]. Maulana Bhasani, however, gave his ruling against the secular group as he argued that switching over to the secularism at that time would make the party unpopular as the people were still steeped in communal thinking. It was at about that time Hussain Shahid Suhrawardy arrived in Pakistan and undertook the task of reorganizing the AML into All Pakistan party and with his untiring efforts he managed to spread the ideology and programme of the party through out Pakistan.

To the ruling elites of Pakistan this was a matter of great concern both of the centre and provinces. Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan bitterly criticized the organizers of the new party and characterized them as 'Indian agents'[17]. In the meanwhile the ruling elite of Pakistan deliberately pursued a policy of cultural assimilation and its pressure was most deeply felt in East Bengal (East Pakistan) than in West Pakistan. The ruling elite of Pakistan were very much insistent about adopting Urdu as the single national language of the country inspite of the fact that only 6.0 percent of the people spoke Urdu, while 54.6 percent spoke Bengali[18]. The intention of the Pakistan ruling elite became all the more clear from a reply to a question for permitting the use of Bengali in the Constituent Assembly when Liaquat Ali Khan said; "(the mover) should realize that Pakistan has been created because of the demand of one hundred million Muslims in the sub-continent and the language of a hundred million Muslims is Urdu[19]". The same sentiment was expressed by Muhammad Ali Jinnah when he first visited East Bengal and declared in a public meeting at the Ramna Race Course that "Urdu, and only Urdu, should be the state language of Pakistan[20]". After three days, when he repeated the same at the Convocation Ceremony of the University of Dhaka in the Curzon Hall, the student community vehemently opposed it and went on strike demanding that Bengali be recognized as one of state languages of Pakistan[21]. The ruling elite resorted to repressive policies with a view to

crushing the Bengali language and put its supporters behind the bars. Later in 1950 when the Interim Report of the Basic Principles Committee (BPS) stated flatly that "Urdu should be the national language of the state" an All-Party Action Committee was formed on 30 January 1952 for strengthening the language movement. The language issue, however, reached its peak on 21 February, 1952 as Prime Minister Khawaja Nazimuddin spoke again in favour of Urdu. This resulted in a riot situation and a quick reprisal by the ruling elite claiming the lives of a number of students[22]. Thus, the Bengali language assumed the status of one of the state languages of Pakistan but with a heavy price.

The main significance of the language movement lay in this that it brought about an unprecedented unity amongsts the Bengalis which became manifest in the 1954 East Pakistan provincial Assembly Elections and gave birth to a counter elite called the 'Vernacular elite' in East Bengal. This 'Vernacular elite' essentially differed from the Pakistani ruling elite not only from the point of view of the languages but also from their respective socio-economic backgrounds, socialization process, philosophy of life and the policies pursued by them[23]. During the first decade of Pakistan this 'Vernacular elite' gained tremendous strength with the language movement, anti-BPO movement and the United Front providing political issue of full regional autonomy for East Bengal. The failure of the first constituent Assembly of Pakistan to give the country a constitution, however, led to the formation of the second Constituent Assembly by the Governor General in July 1955. With the constiutional hurdle being somehow over, Pakistan witnessed during her first decade two important developments; centralization of governmental powers and the demand for the autonomy of East Pakistan. The period also saw ministerial instability both at the centre and in the provinces. To the ruling civil and military elites of Pakistan this situation was so congenial for their ascendency in the rein of the government what actually happened was that the military establishment in coalition with the civil bureaucracy, organized to establish a new government to overcome the unstable political situation obtaining in the country.

President Iskandar Mirza acted very quickly and invited the military to intervene. The military bureaucracy developed a close working link with the civil bureaucracy and put top most priority to nation-building tasks and pursued a policy of centralization. They considered the political elite especially the rising 'Vernacular elite' to be a disruptive force. It seemed that Mirza was used as a mere figurehead by the military for the military coup of October 7, 1958 as General Muhammad Ayub Khan, the CMLA very soon

removed him from office and became the President of Pakistan[24]. Ayub Khan ruled Pakistan for a decade and during the decade the military virtually acted as the ruling elite of Pakistan.

Role of Elites in Pakistan During Ayub Regime:

Soon after assuming power Ayub Khan undertook the task of nation-building through economic development and proceeded to minimize the elite-Mass division. This attempt on his part again brought in the old question of economic disparity. Ayub Khan thought that the problems of Pakistan would be solved if the leadership was properly organized. He also realized the people could not be ruled for long by the sword and that the leaders should have followers. With this realization Ayub began to legitimise his vision for the future of Pakistan. The Basic Democracies Order was promulgated in 1959 according to which the electors of the President of Pakistan would be elected indirectly taking 40,000 from East Pakistan and 40,000 from west Pakistan. These Basic Democrats were also to act as agents of local government[25]. The constitution was promulgated in 1962 and it was characterized as the brain-child of Ayub Khan himself. The most striking feature of the constitution was that it was structurally centralized with vertical power linkages. It favoured the centre and the Presidency. The Presidency was the hallmark of the constitution. The Office of the Prime Minister was non-existent and the National Assembly was quite weak. The same trend was also noticeable in the provincial Government and administration[26].

The people of East Pakistan, who had for a long time demanded a federal parlimanentary government with full regional autonomy, found the 1962 Constitution virtually establishing a 'Constitutional Autocracy'. No wonder it was opposed and resisted by the people of East Pakistan and a three point demand was put forward to the regime. These demands were repeal of the Constitution, establishment of democracy and the release of all political prisoners including Suhrawardy and Sheikh Mujib. The government soon took action and arrested hundreds of students and political workers. As pressure was mounting on the government for their release it was until 18th June 1962 that Mujib and other prominent leaders and students were freed from detention. Soon after his release Mujib had talked with several other leaders including Ataur Rahman Khan and started united struggle against the regime. They issued statement in the press which was signed by nine prominent leaders came to be known as the famous Nine Leaders statement. The statement vehemently criticized the Constitution and called for United Movement to repeal it and restore democracy[27]. Suhrawardy, who was at that time under detention. put his support to the movement from jail. The leaders

demanded the withdrawal of all Black Laws including EBDO and release of Shurawardy, Maulana Bhashani and other political leaders.

With the release of Suhrawardy, most of the opposition parties thronged around him for directions. Suhrawardy soon formed a united front known as the National Democratic Front (NDF). The purpose was to revive democracy in Pakistan[28]. NDF demanded democratization of the 1962 Constitution. However, with the passage of time, it was found that the NDF could not work well and divisive tendencies within it raised their heads and the political parties which came under its umbrella began to leave NDF one after another. This provided President Ayub the golden opportunity to crush the opposition and, in fact, he promulgated two Ordinances for further restriction on political activities[29].

President Ayub could no longer remain aloof from politics and in 1963 he formally joined the Pakistan Muslim League (PML). Meanwhile, by the end of the year, with Suhrawardy's demise, the AL left the NDF and reiterated its stand to continue relentless struggle against the ruling elite of Pakistan for establishing democracy and people's right. This action on the part of the AL was followed by the NAP led by Maulana Bhashani. By 1964, most of the opposition parties were demanding the holding of elections on the basis of universal adult suffrage. But as the government was not willing to grant adult franchise and direct election, the All-Parties Action Committee called a public meeting at the Paltan Maidan in which they declared that no taxes would be paid to the government without voting rights[30]. However, the government announced that the presidential election would be held on 2nd January, 1965 and Ayub decided to contest the same. All the opposition parties decided to form a Combined Opposition parties (COP) and put Miss Fatima Jinnah as their candidate to fight Ayub Khan, on the basis of a 'Nine-point programme' described as a 'programme for national survival'[31]. The election result, however, went in favour of President Ayub. The following National Assembly Election also favoured the PML and the President[32].

The political leaders of East Pakistan soon realized that it would be difficult to oust the military rulers from power in view of the persecutive and repressive policies pursued by them. Finding no other alternative the opposition party leaders particularly the AL and the NAP brought the question of full regional autonomy with a greater speed in East Pakistan. They called public meetings and press conferences where they put forward the question of growing economic disparity between the two wings of Pakistan. That economic disparity existed in reality was even admitted by

some of the central ministers and members of the Planning Commission of the Government of Pakistan. To the East Pakistan politicians, journalist, lawyers, business people, teachers, intelligentsia and people of all walks of life, East Pakistan was lagging far behind their counter parts in all national endeavours. A number of data was put forward to show the extent of disparity in the representation in armed forces, defence expenditure, central civil expenditure, developments in agricultural and industrial fields, inter-wing trade, annual imports of capital good, regional savings, road transport, railways and other social welfare services[33].

The question of continued economic disparity ultimately brought forth the concept of two-economy one for East Pakistan and other for West Pakistan which was propounded by some East Pakistani economists. This idea was readily accepted by the politicians and inteligensia of East Pakistan. It assumed greater significance with its inclusion in the historic Six Point programme of the AL launched in 1966. As the movement for full regional autonomy gained increasing support the regime considered it to be a prelude to the disintegration of Pakistan. Meanwhile to divert the attention of the politicians and the people of the country the central government of Pakistan brought forth the question of Kashmir Dispute which errupted into open hostilities between Pakistan and India. The issue was soon taken up by the Security Council and it ordered for a cease fire on 20th September and 'No War pact' was signed at Tashkent in the Soviet Union. The real problem however, arose with regard to the interpretation of the course of War and the way how it was tackled. Immediately after the War West Pakistan reacted against the Tashkent Declaration very sharply. To the people of East Pakistan the War acted as an eye opener as during the war they were left completely defenseless, by the central government. This view was also shared by the political leaders of East Pakistan.

In such a situation prevailing in the country, opposition leaders mainly from West Pakistan called an All-Pakistan National Conference on February 5, 1966 to make a review of the Post-War political situation. All the opposition parties from East Pakistan were invited to attend the Conference. In that Conference from AL side Sheikh Mujib put forward his demand in the form of a Six-Point formula but unfortunately it was not accepted. Coming back to Dhaka, Mujib declared at a press Conference that "The question of autonomy appears to be more important after the War. Time has come for making East Pakistan self-sufficient in all respects[34]".

The Six-Point programme of the AL came at a very opportune moment

when the whole of East Pakistan was looking for a formula to put forward their demand for survival. In fact, it was a 'blue print for Bengali right to live' which envisaged the establishment of a federal parliamentary type of government on the basis of Lahore Resolution with supremacy of the Legislature, two subject centre- defence and foreign affairs, two separate but freely convertible currencies for the two wings or alternatively one currency for the whole of the country with effective constitutional provisions for stopping the flight of capital from East Pakistan to West Pakistan, the power of taxation and revenue collection to be vested in the federating units and to separate accounts for foreign exchange earnings for the two wings and setting up of a Militia or Paramilitary force for East Pakistan[35].

It is to be noted that the Six-Point demand was accepted with utmost enthusiasm by the people of East Pakistan. The student community of East Pakistan popularized the programme throughout the nook and corner of the province. Seeing the popularity of the programme the Ayub regime was taken aback and resorted to force and intimidation. A number of Awami League leaders and student league workers were arrested. Meanwhile, the other moderate autonomists of the province like the Pakistan Democratic Movement (DMP) also took a little more radical stand on regional autonomy. The regime did not sit idle and soon instituted the Agartala Conspiracy Case against Sheikh Mujib and some other civil and military officials[36]. At this, the people of East Pakistan resented and it reached the climax when the cross-examination of those convicted in the case began. Sheikh Mujib defended himself by saying that the Pakistani rulers had hatched out Conspiracy Case with a view to defame him and his supporters[37]. The whole of East Pakistan virtually came under the grip of popular resentment. People's resentment reached its peak with the spread of the news of the killing of sgt. Zahurul Huq, one of the defendants in the case, inside the Dhaka Cantonment by the army. The reaction of the student community and the people at large was very sharp and immediate. They started to move in a body towards the Cantonment chanting slogans against the government and demanding release of all the political prisoners including those of the Agartala Conspiracy Case. The Student Action Committee (SAC) formed in early December 1968 chalked out an Eleven-Point Programme which included in addition to the Six-Points of the AL, nationalization of banks, insurance companies, all big industries, and reduction of taxes[38]. These demands of the SAC were immediately supported by people of all walks of life. With Sheikh Mujib still under detention, the programmes undertaken by the SAC aroused massive popular support and the whole of the province revolted against the Ayub regime.

Meanwhile, the moderate opposition political parties responded to the agitation carried on by the SAC and they formed an alliance called the Democratic Action Committee (DAC) for carrying on the agitation against the Ayub regime[39]. As the DAC started to go ahead with its programme, Asad-uzzaman, a student of the Law Department of Dacca University, was killed by police firing. This added fuel to the fire and the movement reached new heights of violence. The wrath of the violence was felt not only in East Pakistan but also in West Pakistan. The Central Government of Pakistan deployed army to patrol the streets of Dacca and curfew was imposed in all major cities and towns. The people were so resentful that they did not hesitate to defy the curfew. It seemed that an entirely new mood was prevailing in the country. This situation ultimately compelled President Ayub to invite the DAC and other political parties to a Round Table Conference (RTC) but this could not be held without the release of Sheikh Mujib and others who were still under detention. At last, Ayub had to withdraw the Agartala Conspiracy Case to ensure the participation of Sheikh Mujib in the RTC. The RTC however could not be successful as it failed to accommodate the demands put forward by the AL and other political parties of East Pakistan. The popular movement continued with greater speed and took a more violent turn in mid-February as a result of which president Ayub relinquished his power in March 1969. It may be said that the fall of Ayub Khan was a victory of the Bengali Political elite.

The Yahya Regime and the Role of Elites

The abdication of president Ayub Khan and the assumption of power by General Yahya Khan quelled the situation in both the wings of Pakistan. This may be attributed to the conciliatory policies adapted by him[40]. Unlike other military rulers Yahya Khan recognized the importance of political parties, politics and politicians although political activities were restricted for sometime. Promising elections to be held within a short time he promulgated a Legal Framework Order (LFO) which set out the modalities for holding of elections. Most of the parties including the AL and the NAP (both the factions) criticized the various provisions of the LFO but ultimately decided to contest the 1970 election under the LFO[41].

Elections to both the national and provincial Assemblies of Pakistan were held in December, 1970. To the AL leaders and its supporters, the election was a referendum on the autonomy issue. AL stood for a weak centre and strong provinces while the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) stood for a strong centre and weak provinces. The other rightist parties like the Muslim League (all factions), Jamaat-i-Islami, Jamiat-i-Ulema-i-Pakistan and other smaller

parties favoured strong centre and weak provinces[42].

The results of 1970 elections were a massive victory for the Awami League both at the centre and in the provinces. The PPP led by Z.A. Bhutto stood to be the second majority party in West Pakistan. The election result, therefore, clearly showed that AL had the majority at the centre and the PPP could sit in the opposition in the national assembly[43].

The ruling elite of Pakistan was caught by surprise with the election results and it upset their plan concerning their post election alignments. They thought that the election would bring some of those parties which were mostly rightist Islamic parties and they could be able to negotiate or share powers with them very easily. But as the election results went to the contrary, the Pakistani rulers decided to act as a mediator between the AL and the PPP. In this effort Bhutto provided the necessary opening as he declined to sit in the opposition. He demanded a share of power in the formation of the government in the centre. He said that the force of majority was not enough to form the government and in the making of the constitution both the parties should equal share[44].

But so far as the AL was concerned it was highly optimistic of forming the government at the centre by the virtue of its majority and the people of East Pakistan were confident that the future constitution of Pakistan would be based on AL's Six-Point programme and the SAC's Eleven Point programme. Addressing the foundation day meeting of the EPSL in Dacca, 4th January 1971 Mujib described the electoral victory as only the beginning of the struggle and said that the election had demonstrated clearly that Bengalis would always live as Bengalis[45]. Meanwhile, in East Pakistan under the leadership of Maulana Bhashani some smaller rightist and leftist parties met at Santosh and threw a programme for a completely independent East Bengal and the establishment of 'Krishak Sramik Raj'. It seemed that their motive was to divert the attention of the people from the real political issue of transfer of power to the AL.

Such a situation was very congenial for Yahya Khan as he thought that he would be able to negotiate effectively for transfer of power but the military elite did not want to transfer power to the AL as they feared that might bring liquidation of Pakistan. Yahya Khan however still felt the necessity of holding talks with the AL team, the PPP team and the government team. Although the parleys had taken place and continued till 24th March 1971 yet could not bring out any political solution for the smooth transfer of power. This failure

on the part of the leaders of Pakistan may be attributed to the elite crisis that existed at that time. With the failure of this political dialogue, Yahya Khan in collusion with other military elites decided to go for a military solution of the political problem.

The Liberation War of 1971 and the Role of Elites:

With the failure of political negotiations between the AL and the PPP, the ruling elite of Pakistan proceeded to carry on an operation of genocide in East Pakistan. The democratic movement for realization of regional autonomy of East Pakistan received a death-blow but the Bengali elite with the direction of their undisputed leader, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, got ready for a liberation war with whatever they had. In this the East Bengal Regiment (EPR) and East Pakistan Rifle (EBR) joined with the Mukti Bahani raised for the purpose after initial resistance put against the Pakistan Army. Most of the AL leaders along with their supporters and activists managed within a few days to assemble together in some place near the Kushtia Border and constituted themselves into a Constituent assembly and made the Proclamation of Independence on 10th April 1971. This proclamation confirmed the Declaration of Independence made by Sheikh Mujib on the night of 25th March. This was followed by the announcement of the formation of regional commands throughout Bangladesh. Meanwhile recruitment to the Mukti Bahani began and it was not limited to only AL supporters and activists but covered the other political parties also. It was revealing that inspite of best efforts of the AL leaders, the composition of the Mukti Bahani remained to be left-oriented as most of the left parties groups joined the Mukti Bahani in great numbers.

For the sake of carrying on the Liberation War effectively a Six- Member War Cabinet was formed on 13th April headed by Sheikh Mujib (in absentia) with Nazrul Islam and Tajuddin Ahmed as Vice- President and Prime Minister respectively. A few-days later, on 17th April, the Democratic Republic of Bangladesh was proclaimed as a formally constituted state[46]. This proclamation was hailed by almost all the progressive political parties of the country.

The activities of the Bangladesh Liberation War continued with support from the neighbouring India and some other foreign countries like the Soviet Union. This was continuing with greater speed although the situation within Bangladesh became worse day by day with increasing atrocities being committed by the Pakistan Army. The Yahya government had already banned the AL as a political party and described its leader and supporters as enemies

of Pakistan. It tried its best to win over a section of the members elected in the National Assembly as the nominees of AL and other Islam pasand parties having no popular support. It also tried to win over support of the international community but could not gain much.

The leaders of Bangladesh Government-in-Exile also sought the support of the international community with a view to strengthening the movement. With that end in view, it urged upon the representatives of the World Peace Conference held in Budapest on 14th May 1971 to render assistance to the fighting people of Bangladesh. Meanwhile, Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi made a visit to America and other European countries to convince their heads of states and governments to come to the rescue of the suffering of millions of Bangladesh people who took refuge in bordering states of India. But finding that the results of visit were not very hopeful, she banked upon Soviet Union to a great extent which readily supported the cause of Bangladesh Liberation Movement.

With the First Phase of the Liberation War over, the Indian government gave her open support to the Mukti Bahini and the Bangladesh government-in-exile. It was during this period it was found that the AL leadership might disintegrate and that the liberation movement might be transformed into an all Bengal regional nationalist movement or a guerrilla communist movement depending on Chinese support. It was out of this fear that the Indian government became very cautious and took all possible steps so that the leadership of liberation movement might not pass into the hands of other radicals. In the second phase of the movement the Mukti Bahini carried on successful operation at different sectors against the Pakistan Army. It was also feared by the Bangladesh government-in-exile and the Indian government that the liberation war might be a protracted one. At this both the governments depended on their own resources to fight the Pakistan Army from the Bangladesh soil. The Indian government entered into a Treaty of peace, Friendship and Co-operation on August 9, 1971 for strenghening its hands.

At this India-Pakistan relations reached almost to a breaking point and Indian government alerted its forces against any possible attack by Pakistan. In fact, the Bangladesh liberation war had entered a new phase with the signing of the Indo-Soviet- Treaty[47]. During this phase of the liberation movement an increasing amount of guerrilla attacks were made and lot of casualties were inflicted upon the Pakistan forces. Finding no other alternative the Yahya government which in earlier months were talking of

holding by-elections now thought of announcing general amnesty as a policy of reconciliation and many prisoners were also released. But this also could not improve the situation any way. On the contrary, the Bangladesh government-in-exile vehemently criticised this sort of stabilization more of the Pakistan government. Leaders like Maulana Bhashani and Muzaffar Ahmed criticised this plan of the government for resolving the crisis and stated that complete freedom for Bangladesh was the only solution acceptable to the Bengalis. The Bangladesh government-in-exile ridiculed Yahya plan for transfer of power and described it as a cruel joke perpetrated on the 75 million people of Bangladesh[48]. Thus, to the Bangali elite all the moves taken by the Pakistan government during the last phase of liberation war seemed to be merely eye wash to hoodwink the people.

The Bangladesh Government-in-Exile wanted to get recognition from the international community and for this purpose a high powered Bangladesh delegation was sent to the UNO in late September 1971[49]. To counter this move the Pakistan government also sent a team to the UNO to plead for Pakistan. At home the government formed a ten members Cabinet in East Pakistan headed by Dr. A. M. Malik. This however, could not improve the internal situation in any way and suddenly Pakistan government declared war with India in the Western Front on 4th December 1971. The issue was soon raised in the UNO where the Big powers got themselves involved and took positions according to their own stand points. The Soviet Union took the side of the Indian government and the Bangladesh Government-in-exile and vetoed three times in the Security Council. Evidently, the role of India and the Soviet Union in the liberation war and in the emergence of Bangladesh was highly crucial. With the emergence of Bangladesh the rule and exploitation of the power elite of Pakistan had ended and the Bengali elite came to assume political power.

A Summing Up

In the foregoing pages, an attempt was made to show the role of elites in nation-building in Pakistan from 1947-1971 in the historical context. In doing this, we have endeavored to highlight the elite formation in a developing polity like Pakistan. Although Pakistan inherited its elitist politics and administration from the British period, but it differed to a great extent from that during successive political and military regimes of Pakistan. This is revealing when we look at the political development and the nation-building tasks undertaken by the rulers of Pakistan during the 24-years history of its life. The first decade of Pakistan's rule witnessed the excessive centralization of powers by the power elite and the growth of a counter-elite i.e., the Bengali

elite. The Bengali elite stood against the ruling elite in 1948 and 1952 when they were out to crush the Bengali language and culture. Along with the language issue came the demand for the autonomy of East Pakistan. The 1956 Constitution could neither satisfy the Bengali political elites of East Pakistan nor the military elites. While the former was fighting for establishment of democracy in the country the latter, however, did not think seriously to take direct control of the government and administration. President Mirza, of course, was publicly advocating a controlled democracy. So long as president Mirza was in power, the civil-military bureaucratic elite preferred to remain in the background. But when they found that it was not possible for Mirza to keep the political forces under control and the national elections scheduled for 1959 would bring the Bengali elite to power, they directly intervened and brought Ayub Khan to power.

The Ayub regime witnessed massive political movements against the 1962 Constitution adopted by it and the political system envisaged by it. The demand for regional autonomy continued to be the major demand of the Bengali elite and this gradually gained momentum with the launching of the Six-Point programme by the AL and support given to it by all the opposition parties of East Pakistan. The institution of the Agartala Conspiracy Case and detention of Sheikh Mujib and others in 1966 by the central government of Pakistan could not provide any tangible results. Rather it made the political situation all the more volatile. The Ayub regime was forced to drop the Agartala Conspiracy Case, call a Round Table Conference of all political parties for solving the political and constitutional problems. The Conference was a failure as it could not accommodate the most crucial demands of the Bengalis. The popular movement still continued and assumed a violent turn which led to the overthrow of the Ayub regime in 1969.

With the overthrowing of the Ayub regime and the assumption of political power by Yahya Khan, the political situation in the country became a little stable at least for the time being mainly due to his conciliatory politics. But those concessions could not satisfy the Bengali elites. Yahya Khan's ambition to preserve his own position and the supremacy of the army led him to involve in a conspiracy for not transferring power to the elected representatives of the people through the 1970 elections which had altered all the calculations of the Pakistani rulers. As the political negotiations between Mujib, Bhutto and Yahya failed, the army under instructions of Yahya Khan started an operation of genocide in East Pakistan which in its turn compelled the Bengalist to plunge into a liberation war. The whole course of the liberation war was successfully guided and controlled by the Bangladesh

Government-in-Exile composed mainly of the members of the AL which received massive victory in the 1970 elections. The Mukti Bahini fought valiently and wrote the history of the emergence of Bangladesh with their blood. Thus, with the emergence of Bangladesh on the map of the world in 1971 a new ruling elite i.e., the Bengali elite came to power.

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16. Maulana Bhashani was the founder president, Ataur Rahman Khan, Abdus Salam Khan, Abul Mansur Ahmed were elected Vice-Presidents, Shamsul Haq was elected General Secretary, and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Rafiuqual Ahsan and Khandakar Mushtaque Ahmed were elected Joint Secretaries.

17. Mohammad Toaha and Oli Ahad, amongst others, lodged their protest against this nomenclature and demanded a secular organization. It may be noted that the word 'Muslim' was later on dropped from the AML later in October, 1955.
18. Kamruddin Ahmed, The Social History of East Pakistan, 1967, page 117.
19. The percent of people speaking Panjabi language was 6:1, Pushtoo 27.1; Sindhi 4.8 and English 1.4 percent. These figures are taken from the Census 1951, Government of Pakistan.
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21. Speeches by Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah from 3 June, 1947 to August 1948, Karachi, 1948 Edition, pages 60-61.
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38. Refer to Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's Defence Statement before the Special Tribunal of the Agartala Conspiracy Case published in all leading dailies of the country.
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43. See The Manifesto of All-Pakistan Awami League, Dacca, published by the publicity Secretary, 1970; Foundation Documents of the Pakistan peoples party, Lahore, November 1967; The Dawn, Karachi, January 8, 1970; The Azad, Dacca, October 7, 1970.
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45. The Pakistan Times, Lahore, December 22, 1970.
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