21.1 **INTRODUCTION**

The unit deals with the study of intervention of military into politics and in recent years the signs of withdrawal from active politics. The relationship between military and civil structures of a political regime has been a subject of intense academic discourse. The participation of the military in politics is not seen as a positive phenomenon, as if the other democratic institutions are weak or dysfunctional. The crucial question in the relationship between armed forces and political systems is as to why some states are dominated by their armed forces while some are not. But, according to Blondel, the history of military intervention in politics shows that military men everywhere had the tendency to intervene actively in the conduct of affairs of the state. It has been observed that there was a tendency during 1960s and 1970s towards an active intervention of military into politics in a number of countries. But by 1970s and 1980s there emerged a trend towards withdrawal of military from politics in a number of Caribbean, Central and South American, Asian, African, Mediterranean European and Middle eastern political regimes. The reasons for withdrawal as highlighted by Samuel P Huntington are as follows: the declining legitimacy of authoritarian systems, unprecedented global economic growth of the 1960s, changes in the doctrine and activities of the Catholic Church and transformation of national churches, changes in the policies of external actors toward the promotion of human rights and democracy in other countries, snowballing enhanced by new means of communication.
21.2 MILITARY AND DEMOCRATIC REGIMES

Constitutions and other forms of the law of the land in many countries do provide for the role of the armed forces. Most of the democracies tend to clearly restrict their missions for the military to the provision of national security as well as to other secondary roles in case of emergency only. A number of states in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, for example, have adopted legal structures which protect democracy by providing for the right of presidents, the police, and military officers to exercise “extraordinary powers” on a temporary basis, for the suspension of civil liberties, and for the armed forces to play a specified role in defending (and, by definition, defining) the permanent interests of the nation. The relationship between civil society and military in any democratic society is determined on the basis of the following principles:

a) There should be a leadership of the civilian executive branch of government, which is accountable to a popular majority through frequent and regular elections. Military is subject to the control and supervision by all the three organs of the government.

b) The appointments of the personnel of the armed forces are done on behalf of the civilian head of the state. Civilian leadership is superior to the military services and departments. The professional military heads of the army, the navy and the air force are subordinate to civilian departmental heads.

c) Elected legislative representatives of the people enact laws that define the defence organisation and policies of the nation. The chief executive enforces these directives.

d) The judiciary prevents the military from compromising civil liberties, including those of the members of the armed services

21.2 CAUSES OF MILITARY INTERVENTION

21.2.1 Nature of the Military

The reasons for the military intervention in politics are not far to seek. Firstly, military intervention in active politics takes place owing to the basic dissatisfaction or ‘pessimism’ the military tends to entertain about civilian society and the high values it places on order and discipline. Armed forces are known for their discipline, sense of duty. “If one adds the fact that the army can contrast its own discipline and alleged sense of duty to the selfishness and lack of effort they often see in civilian life – particularly among politicians – and the critical fact that the army has the necessary weapons to overthrow a regime and silence opposition, one can understand why members of the armed forces have the mood to intervene in politics on a much broader plane than technicians and managers of the public sector may have.” The lack of discipline of the civil service and its laziness only add to the likelihood of military intervention.

The correlation between the level of professionalism in the military and its chances of intervention into politics has been a subject of intense academic debate. Some writers hold the view that military professionalism induced civilian control. Samuel P Huntington
[Soldier and the State, 1957] says that more professional the military personnel were in terms of education, sophistication and specialisation, the more apolitical they were likely to be. On the other hand we have scholars like Janowitz [The Political Soldier: A Social and Political Portrait, 1960] who opine that the very professionalism enhanced the chances of military’s involvement into politics, especially in those cases where the civilian institutions were found to be locale or underdeveloped and civil culture lacking. Blondel further says that the military will tend to intervene where the legitimacy of the regime is low. The general discontent and dissatisfaction of the masses would lead military to conclude that the system is unable to run the country properly and it is the military that can provide a stable political system.

The armed forces are well placed to take advantage of the difficulties of their governments and, because it does not require complete agreement within the army to take this action, coups can take place when only a section of the forces utilises the army’s advantage.

21.3.2 Nature of the Civil Society and Military Rule

Military intervention in politics is dependent on the norms and values upheld by a particular political regime. The military is unlikely to object to the liberal and democratic norms while it may be inimical to the radical norms. Thus we find that in the nineteenth-century Europe many regimes slowly became more liberal and democratic on the basis of the maintenance of a monarchy to which the military remained loyal, rather than to the new values. These regimes rested on “dual legitimacy” (e.g. the German Empire after 1871), in which links between the military and the rest of the political system were limited and tended to pass through the monarch. In some societies, the military is the ultimate storehouse of effective deadly force. Militias, or police, to say nothing of armed citizens, are seldom capable of sustaining direct resistance to an army whose generals are determined to suppress that resistance. Countries whose other socio-political institutions are ineffective (as in contemporary sub-Saharan Africa) or participate only to a limited degree in the political culture (as in post-Independence Latin America) are correspondingly susceptible to military intervention. In both of these regions, armies which are seldom capable of waging war against external opponents have regularly exercised formidable influence over political leaders afraid to challenge the generals directly.

Appeasement in such a context frequently seems preferable to confrontation. The French Republic in the late nineteenth century conceded a high degree of autonomy to its armed forces in good part because of fear of the man on the white horse, epitomised by General Georges Boulanger. Although his comic-opera attempt to seize the reins of government in 1888-1889 ended in ridicule and he eventually committed suicide on the grave of his mistress, a most astute, better-balanced candidate might have succeeded—or, even in failing, might have destabilised the Republic and threatened its survival.

In most developing countries, military justified itself as a repository of more competent and stronger leadership—in both protecting and governing the country owing to its better establishment and better discipline. In Thailand for example, the military asserts itself as “the protector of the nation.” The common justification used by one military
regime after another has been “national security.” When the military developed a high level of professionalism and efficiency in the 1950s, considerably enabled by the U.S. aid, the Army under Sarit assumed the role of “the protector of the nation” which seemingly had limitless boundary. Entering the modern era, the military role expanded outside conventional military affairs. Besides using national security and national development as justifications, the military also cites the lack of legitimacy of civilian governments whenever it chooses to intervene in politics. Characterised by corruptions and personal rivalries, civilian governments are quoted to be generally short-lived and vulnerable to military interruption.

The complexity of the political, social and economic system tends to decrease the military intervention into politics. After the military overthrow of any regime, it is the bureaucracy which has to take care of the complex problems of the regime, hence military finds it constrained. Thus, we have examples of some charismatic military leaders (Ayub Khan in Pakistan), who had played crucial roles in strengthening the civilian institutions with the help of military. Force alone cannot sustain the authoritarian system. In South Korea we find that strongest defense against Park, a military ruler, had seen the high rate of economic growth achieved under his leadership. By 1978, however, the growth rate had begun to decline and inflation had become a serious problem. Park adopted a stabilisation plan to cool down the economy, but the plan caused a serious recession, leading to a succession of bankruptcies and increased unemployment.

Crises tend to aggravate concerns about the faithfulness and devotion of armed forces to the society. During the Great Depression, Franklin D. Roosevelt referred to army chief of the staff Douglas MacArthur as one of the most dangerous men in America. Although this fear had more to do with MacArthur’s showy personal style (which antagonised many New Dealers) than with any demonstrable evidence that MacArthur saw himself as a potential dictator, such concerns are not always imaginary. When Germany’s newly established Weimar Republic faced endemic revolts by right-wing paramilitary elements, Reichswehr Chief Hans von Keeckt declared himself the only man in Germany who could make a successful performance and promised that he would not do so. This reassurance was at best limited comfort to his civilian superiors.

Is the factor of socio-economic crisis sufficient to explain military intervention? However a study of Thailand throws some other experience. When the Thai military, led by Suchinda Kraprayoon, overthrew Chatichai’s government in early 1991, it was a surprise to most political observers of Thailand. During a decade-long parliamentary democracy since Prem’s administration in the 1980s, military coups were no longer thought to be a means of power transition in the country like Thailand where the economy was robust.

To a significant degree, military roles in politics are limited by force of habit. But should the stresses of war or domestic tension overstrain a system’s capacity to respond, the possibility exists that even armed forces may regard themselves as called upon to save state and people from themselves. During the American Civil War, General George McClellan saw himself as called by destiny to restore the Union inspite of the presence of Abraham Lincoln. Perhaps, however, the clearest case study of the military’s ability to influence politics involves Japan in the 1930s. The state did not face crises threatening
to its existence. The Japanese leaders of the Meiji era (1868-1912) had operated in a period when the masses were less politically conscious and authoritarian control was more easily accepted. Hence, a small number of low-ranking army officers were able to move their country toward an aggressive war by an explosive mixture of moral conviction and simple assassination. Mao Tse-tung aphorism that political power grows from the barrel of a gun remains an uncomfortable truth at century’s end—and a challenge to governments and societies.

### 21.4 CHARACTER AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MILITARY REGIME

The character of military regime depends upon the nature of control that the military has over the democratic political structures. It can be from the tolerant, specific and short-term forms of pressure on the state to the open overthrowing of the democratic institutions. The military may either “supplant” the old regime and install itself in power or participate in an operation that replaces one group of political leaders with another, occupying the sidelines and playing a general role of arbiter. Finer categorises the various military regimes into following five groups: open-direct rule, quasi-civilian direct rule, dual rule, continuous indirect rule, and intermittent indirect rule.

Basically, the army either controls the state directly or acts as the essential tool in a civilian regime. Depending upon the nature and degree of control, the military regimes can be classified as follows: Firstly, those states where the military has undertaken by coups and runs the affairs of the state directly or by being transformed into a presidential system where officers retain the balance of power (Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Algeria, Pakistan). Secondly, the traditional states where the military is the main support of the dynastic regime (Saudi-Arabia, Jordan, Morocco, Gulf States). Thirdly, the democratic states where the military is clearly controlled by the civilian authorities (Turkey, Israel). Presidential regimes headed by ex-military men who usually set up a one-party system relying on the army for support with power concentrated in the president’s hands. The army can act as a moderator, retaining the right to veto decisions it deems dangerous to the national welfare, but not getting involved in running civilian affairs. It can also act as a guardian, where it intervenes intermittently to put things in order, then returns to the barracks. Finally it can set up a ruler regime where it intervenes directly, assumes power, and runs the country indefinitely.

Military regimes can be best understood by contrasting them from the democratic form of government. Democracy as a form of government has been defined in terms of sources of authority for government, purposes served by government, and procedures for constituting government. A 20th Century political system is defined as democratic to the extent that its most powerful collective decision makers are selected through fair, honest, and periodic elections in which candidates freely compete for votes and in which virtually all the adult population is eligible to vote. Thus democratic regimes have a common institutional core viz. competitive election in which the bulk of the population participates, while the military-authoritarian regimes are defined simply by the absence of this core.
Thus military interventions in politics are seen as anti-democratic and repressive. However in the 1960s this perception tended to change and theories were presented viewing the military as a progressive force that would accelerate social and political change and lead third world states from “backwardness” to “modernity”. During the 1970s military regimes stabilised and coups were on the wane. Military regimes initiated social and political reforms and some regimes seemingly transformed themselves into civilian governments. By the 1980s opinions had shifted towards a more critical view of military achievements. Doubts arose as to whether it really enhanced cohesion, modernisation and democratisation.

Military interventions are characterised by the excessive use of force. The nature of military regimes encourages extreme reliance on force and suppression. Secret power-struggles result in social tensions, radical shifts in state policies following change in leadership, and a weakening of the professionalism of the military as a combatant force. Peaceful and orderly succession of power, which is a normal feature of democracy, is a very important feature lacking in this system. Power usually centres on a small clan close to the leader. Other potential power centres are eliminated. Particularism, patronage and nepotism flourish. In spite of much rhetoric on national unity, the minorities are often brutalised and old cleavages deepened.

Military adventurism is another feature of these regimes. A large proportion of national resources have been diverted into unproductive military build-up rather than to improving the lot of the poor.

The military promotes its own corporate self-interests by aligning itself with conservative social forces. The military officers are challenged by the rise of new centres of power—businessmen, professionals, entrepreneurs, academics, and technocrats.

Military forces even more than other bureaucracies are similar to authoritarian states in their denial of the right or opportunity to dissent, in their demand for obedience and in their use of reprisals against recalcitrant subjects. Hence military regimes cause suppression of the rights, liberty and equalities of the citizens which democracy promises and a reign of terror sets in. Functioning of media is also affected. All effective opposition is excluded from the political system. Corruption, increase in size of bureaucracy and inefficiency, stifling of the private sector, escape of capital abroad and a weakening brain-drain have all been an aspect of military rule.

These regimes cause serious setbacks to nationalisation, agrarian reforms, industrialisation and the control of the mushrooming state bureaucracy, which are key to the process of development in developing nations.

21.5 HISTORY OF MILITARY INTERVENTION IN POLITICS: CASE STUDIES

21.5.1 United States of America

In 1782, just after the Revolutionary War (1775-1781), certain officers who felt that they had received inadequate pay for wartime services contemplated a military revolt
against the civilian government. But General George Washington refused to support a military mutiny, calling instead for disbandment of the army and continuing loyalty to the civilian government. The successful defense of the American colonies during the colonial era strengthened local confidence that a militia or volunteers sufficed and that a standing army was not necessary to ensure security. Colonial legislatures, which possessed the power of the purse, proved effective in preserving control over military matters and resisting the English Crown. These bodies became the principal exponents of American ideas about the dangers of permanent military organisations, and they were the main advocates of civilian constraints on the military.

Thus during the Revolution, civilian control of the military became an indispensable attribute of liberty and therefore of democracy. In 1787, when the Constitutional Convention met in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, it devoted considerable attention and devised some structural devices to guard against an unduly powerful central government: President in dual roles of chief executive and commander-in-chief. During the civil war Lincoln despite massive war efforts, was firm in preserving civilian control of the military. Despite the remarkable expansion in the size and prestige of the armed forces, civilian control was never relaxed during World War I or II. Although the wartime crisis enhanced military participation in national planning and decision-making, military leaders displayed no inclination to supplant appropriate civilian influence. What accounts for the preservation and even the strengthening of civilian control of the military in the United States?

Americans view the expansion of the military establishment as an unavoidable measure to ensure the preservation of their freedoms. They perceive civilian control of the military as an indispensable aspect of the democratic process they seek to preserve. Civilian control of the armed services is an essential aspect of US governance.

### 21.5.2 Indonesia

In Indonesia there was a balance of power between the military and the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) until it was destroyed in 1965 when six of the most senior members of the general staff were assassinated in a failed coup led by junior officers under the leadership of the commander of the presidential guard. In the violent anti-Communist backlash that followed, the PKI was destroyed as a political force. The destruction of the PKI left the military as the unchallenged arbiter of Indonesian politics, with Major General Suharto, commander of the strategic reserve and the chief organiser of the opposition to the coup, sitting uneasily at the top of the power structure.

In 1958 power was formally transferred to Suharto at the General Session of the Provisional Consultative Assembly. Then Golongan Karya, was established as the political instrument of the New Order. The old Sukarnoist political party, the Indonesian National Party (PNI), the Indonesian Socialist Party (PSI), and the Muslim parties were undermined from within and forced to merge into two authorised parties, which evolved into the Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI) and the Muslim United Development Party (PPP). In the early years of the New Order, the army played a much more overt role in politics than had previously been the case—so much more that some outside observers might
have confused the regime with a military dictatorship. Military officers held the key positions in the cabinet and in the higher levels of the bureaucracy and were allocated 20 percent of the seats in the legislature.

Military support for Suharto in the period following the attempted coup was not unconditional. Suharto’s consolidation of his personal power and his style of government repeatedly brought him into conflict with his generals. Several of the officers who had played key roles in helping Suharto seize power after September 30, 1965, later turned against him. In the later stages of the New Order, the power of the military as an autonomous political actor gradually eroded. During the latter part of his lengthy reign, Suharto sought to outshine any independent power centres within the military. Frequent command changes prevented the consolidation of power centres that could challenge Suharto’s authority.

The military was an important actor in the backroom manoeuvres that went on in the transition from Suharto to B. J. Habibie and from Habibie to Wahid, but it did not intervene to force an outcome from the power struggles that played out on the streets and in the MPR. During his first year in office, President Wahid concentrated on asserting control over the military. General Wiranto was moved from armed forces commander to the position of coordinating minister for political and security affairs, which removed him from the military chain of command. Wahid’s deteriorating political standing and loss of parliamentary support in the second half of 2000 also weakened his hand vis-à-vis the military.

Military support was critical to Megawati’s peaceful ascension to the presidency. She has established a much more harmonious relationship with the Tentara Nasional Indonesia (TNI) leadership than her two predecessors had. Megawati’s political history would not have suggested the development of a collaborative relationship with the TNI. As vice president, Megawati took pains to cultivate the support of TNI leaders, reassuring them of her commitment to Indonesia’s unity and territorial integrity. Several retired senior military officers play key roles in Megawati’s government— all are associated with the reform camp in the TNI (Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, Agum Gumelar, Abdullah Mahmud Hendarprijono, Hendropriyono to name a few), which helped to cement a strong relationship between Megawati and the military.

Thus we find that with the fall of Suharto, TNI tended to retreat from its political role by formally abandoning of its political functions. Under the new regimes, the military is still regarded as having a sociopolitical function, but that function is no longer viewed as being separate from defense.

The most visible symbol of a continued TNI role in the practical political affairs of the country is the military’s bloc of seats in parliament. Until the mid-1990s, the military held 100 seats in the House of People’s Representatives (DPR). After the fall of Suharto, the military and police representation was reduced from 75 to 38 and was scheduled to be phased out of the DPR and the regional parliaments by 2004, and out of the People’s Consultative Assembly (MPR), which elects the president, no later than 2009, per MPR Decree 7 of 2000. More recently, in the constitutional reforms of August 2002, the MPR
voted to move up the date of the phasing out of the military and police representation in the MPR to 2004.

Though reduced in numbers, the military bloc operates under military instruction and votes as a unit. Thus we find TNI leadership’s strong desire to remove itself from practical politics. Another reform well underway is the TNI’s withdrawal from day-to-day practical politics.

The new doctrine and changes in civil-military relations since the fall of Suharto make it less likely that any president can co-opt the TNI for personal political gain. However, although the military as an institution has removed itself from such unsavoury practices, it is increasingly obvious that individuals within the armed forces continue to be involved in political manipulation. Elements of the military, apparently acting in response to bonds of personal loyalty and orders outside the institutional chain of command, have been accused of involvement in all sorts of skullduggery throughout Indonesia. As in cases of alleged civilian malpractice, however, conclusive evidence is seldom proffered and impartial investigations are few and far between.

21.5.3 Lebanon

The Lebanese army had always maintained a neutral role in Lebanese politics since its inception in 1958. Its function was to safeguard internal security and served as a police force of last resort (may be during elections etc.). However during the period 1958-70 (Shihabist era), we find a tendency towards developing authoritarian power through the intervention of the military, (particularly the Deuxième Bureau) in politics. But the army tended to take an active role in politics, following Shihab’s elevation to the presidency. The army ‘took the form of a political party’ or ‘constituted a military government’ in civilian garb’. When Shihab assumed presidency, the administration of the country was chaotic and in a state of breakdown. Shihab reorganised the administration and made several advances in every branch of the bureaucracy on the one hand and introduced scientific planning programmes and works and reorganised the Planning Ministry. Despair at the country’s problems and distrusting politicians in the corrupt political system, Shihab brought senior military officers, who had direct loyalty to him, to key governmental positions. These selected officers acted as the President’s agents within the bureaucracy and became his personal ‘political organisation’. The president made use of it as a primary security force and as an instrument for carrying out his programmes. It was through the Deuxième Bureau, an intelligence section of the army, that the president managed the system and exerted his control in the bureaucracy.

21.5.4 South Korea

Until 1971 South Korea operated under the political framework it adopted in 1963. In December 1971, Park again tightened his control over the country. He proclaimed a national emergency and in 1972 he proclaimed martial law, dissolved the National Assembly, closed all universities and colleges, imposed strict press censorship, and suspended political activities. Within a few days he presented yusin, the new Constitution to a national referendum. The 1972 constitution allowed Park to succeed himself indefinitely, to appoint one-third of the National Assembly’s members, and to exercise
emergency powers at will. Having concentrated all power around him, Park suppressed his opponents cruelly. KCIA agents abducted Kim Dae Jung, Park’s opponent in the 1971 presidential elections, from a hotel in Tokyo in August 1973, precipitating a major crisis in South Korean-Japanese relations. Kim had been abroad after the election and remained there after Park declared martial law, travelling between Japan and the United States and conducting anti-Park activities. Students demonstrating against the yusin constitution were summarily incarcerated. In March 1976, prominent political leaders, including former President Yun and presidential candidate Kim, issued the Democratic Declaration calling for the restoration of democracy. Park had them arrested and sentenced to five to eight years in prison.

21.5.5 Thailand

The case of Thailand is very interesting in the sense that Thai military, led by Suchinda Kraprayoon, overthrew Chatichai’s government in early 1991, in a country where the economy was in good health and there are long traditions of long parliamentary democracy since Prem’s administration in the 1980s. How can one explain this unexpected 1991 coup in Thailand?

A brief history of Thai military role in politics shows that since the 1932 revolution, by which Thailand was brought under a constitutional monarchy, Thailand has mostly been governed by a series of military rule. After a short period of Phahon’s military-dominated government (1933-1938), the military dictators such as Phibun, Sarit, Thanom and Praphat dominated politics from 1938 until the student uprising in 1973. Unlike their predecessors, Phahon who attempted to implement the democratic aim of the 1932 revolution in cooperation with Pridi, these military rulers led increasingly to the authoritarian rule. In the 1950s, while Phibun was still in power, Sarit emerged as the real power figure. After Sarit died in 1963, Thanom and Praphat did not enjoy much support from the palace the role of which was elevated greatly by Sarit from its suppression during Phibun regime.

In Thailand, the military asserts itself as “the protector of the nation.” The common justification used by one military regime after another has been “national security.” As in most developing countries, better established and better-disciplined, Thai military sees itself as a competent and strong leadership—in both protecting and governing the country. Even though the military role in national development has already been initiated since Sarit regime, it had not materialised until the late 1970s, when there appeared to be a shift in attitudes of some military leaders. In the 1970s, when communist expansion became threatening, national security was a legitimate justification for the military to counter communist insurgencies in various rural areas.

Now of course military has returned to its barracks, yet, the fears of a complete return will not completely go away unless genuine participatory democracy is achieved in Thailand.

21.5.6 Pakistan

In Pakistan too, Army is instrumental in running the state affairs, which controls everything, including all the national resources. The period from 1958 to 1969 was a period of military dictatorship under the leadership of General Ayub Khan. While upto
In 1962 he ruled with the cooperation from the bureaucracy and army, in 1962 he introduced a quasi-constitutional and civil regime in which, political parties were rejuvenated with some restrictions. He introduced a system of basic democracy. The next landmark in the political history of Pakistan was handing over the power to General Yahya Khan in 1969 when Yahya rule was a purely military rule in which no senior bureaucrats were associated with it. General Yahya became the CMLA, and operated with the collective leadership of army Generals. Yahya decided to hold general elections despite opposition from some military generals. Legal Framework Order (LFO) was announced in March 1970, which provided among other things for the formation of National Assembly to frame the Constitution. Elections were conducted and Sheikh Mujib emerged as the leaders of the majority party. General Yahya announced the name of Mujib as the next Prime Minister of Pakistan, but Bhutto, who had a desire to become the Prime Minister himself (despite his not having a majority), did not agree to this. As nothing could emerge from the democratic negotiations, the situation only deteriorated with the crisis in East Pakistan paving way for the military crackdown on March 25, 1971. General Zia ul-Huq declared martial law once again on July 5, 1977. His rule came to an end after his sudden death in a plane crash. After a short span of democratic rule under Nawaz Sharief, the military again intervened in Pakistan in 1999 in the form of coup under the leadership of General Pervez Musharraf. Thus, the army has been causing frequent interruptions in the democratic process in Pakistan. Musharraf’s martial law is the last such attempt which derailed democratic process, the seeds of which had been sown by the same army way back in 1954 with the imposition of first martial law in the country.

21.5.7  Bangladesh

Bangladesh entered the international society as a parliamentary democracy in 1971, but soon it was changed to presidential form of democracy in 1972. The Constitution was once more amended in 1973 and emergency was imposed in 1974. In 1975 one party authoritarian rule was created. The killing of S. K. Mujib and the coup led by Khaled Musharraf and the Sepoy Revolution of November 1975 brought General Zia-ur-Rahman to power. Zia became CMLA in 1976 and took over as the President of Bangladesh in 1977. The next military takeover of political power was in 1982 when General H. M. Ershad declared martial law, suspended th Constitution banned all political activites and became the CMLA and later the President. His regime lasted until December 1990.

21.6  WITHDRAWAL OF MILITARY FROM POLITICS AND ITS EMERGING ROLE

21.6.1  Withdrawal of Military from Politics

Presently in most countries, the military has acknowledged its shrunken channel to political power. Nevertheless, whether it will withdraw completely from politics and adopt Western-style professionalism remains a question.

Mention should also be made about the withdrawal of military from politics as an offshoot of democratisation ripples across the world during the 1970s and 1980s. In a large number of countries, military withdrew from active politics. We may consider the
case of Latin American countries. In 1979, 19 governments on the mainland—between Tierra del Fuego at the tip of Argentina and the Rio Grande River on the Texas-Mexico border—had military officers as heads of state. Today, there is none. In fact, the only successful military coup in the Western hemisphere since the end of the Cold War took place in Haiti, where also civilian rule was restored in 1994. Military governments such as those in Nigeria and Burma, and military coups such as took place in Sierra Leone in 1997, are the exception rather than the rule.

In addition, while economic goal is the nation’s top priority, the military faces more constraints in expanding its role. Due to the higher level of education and modernisation, coupled with the economy-oriented international environment, the government as well as the military is more pressurised to respond to the popular demands. Socio-economic progress has had an impact on the military’s decreased role in politics in the past decade. Several factors such as the military’s historical involvements in politics, its attitudes toward civilian governments and democracy, as well as the political culture are to be taken into account in examining its persistent intervention.

In the post-cold war phase, especially in most western countries including USA there has been a substantial shrinkage in military expenditures not only in countries like the United States and the states of the former Soviet Union, but also in regimes like El Salvador and Argentina, Ghana and South Africa, and India and Vietnam. These cuts are largely the result of the changed security environment in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union. With few exceptions, the era is now past in which large combat forces need to be deployed at high states of combat readiness. Though downsizing in the number of the military personnel has been taking place, still military is the largest, most financed and, best organised institution in every country. Rather in recent years we have seen an increasing importance of civil affairs in military operations other than war. In view of the value of civil affairs, the staff, officers and planners of the conventional forces are becoming increasingly involved in planning the civil dimensions to military operations. For example, in Bosnia, the planning for military support to elections was accomplished by operations and strategic and policies staffs, while our civil affairs personnel served as critical links between military and civilian planners. While, US is the first country to recognise the importance of the civil affairs, other countries including United Kingdom, Republic of Korea, France and Germany are incorporating these types of skills into their own militaries.

While the central role of the military forces continues to be to look after the national security, military downsizing in the post-cold war phase has opened up new vistas and new roles for the armed forces. These functions range from assisting local police forces in maintaining internal order, to combating environmental deterioration, to providing basic health and education services, to constructing highways and bridges. These functions are in addition to the traditional secondary military function like providing emergency food, shelter, medical care and security to victims of floods, storms, droughts, earthquakes and civil disturbances.

### 21.6.2 Emerging Role of the Military

Today military is expected to participate in the peacekeeping operations, promoting democracy or conflict resolution under the auspices of any international body. We have
US civil affairs personnel engaged in all sorts of activities not only within the domestic limits but also outside too. Such activities include: humanitarian demining, roads and schoolhouses are built, wells are dug, governments are stabilised, chaos and confusion are diffused and order is re-established. By making a difference in the lives of the local populace, these civil affairs personnel are helping to strengthen the goodwill of the United States in the eyes of the world—clearly, our civil affairs forces are invaluable diplomacy multipliers. There is a US civil affairs personnel team serving in Rwanda and Namibia as part of humanitarian demining teams, acting as intermediaries with the host country of Mali in a medical operation, working on small engineering projects such as well-digging and road improvement in Belize, continuing to help plan for elections in Bosnia, coordinating the allocation of humanitarian assistance flowing into Cambodia and also assisting the government of Cambodia to establish an infrastructure capable of providing necessary governmental services to its people, and working with non-governmental agencies and private entities on civic action projects in Laos, where up until a year ago, no U.S. military personnel had been permitted.

Samuel P. Huntington (The Third Wave, 1991) has talked about the phenomenon of democratisation in the late 20th century. Categorising the history of democratisation process into three different phases, he has mentioned three different waves of democratisation: (1) first wave, 1828-1928, (democratisation in Western Europe, Australia, Canada, Chile, Eastern and Central Europe); second wave (1943-1962), (democratisation of West Germany, Austria, Italy, Japan, South Korea, India, Philippines, Israel, Nigeria and Jamaica); and third wave beginning in 1974 (Portugal, Spain, Greece, fall of Berlin wall and demise of communism in Europe in 1989 and disintegration of the USSR in 1991). Huntington lists following reasons for military regimes shifting to democracy: the legitimacy dilemma, unprecedented economic growth, and change in the role of revision, role of mass communication in promoting democratic culture and role of external actors in supporting democratic political systems.

The most pressing factor leading to the downfall of military regimes is the international pressures favouring democratisation.

The innovations in fast means of travel and communications also played a major role in spreading the democratic tide across the world in less than a decade. The tele-revolution played a major role in the fall of communism in the former USSR and Eastern Europe. The success of democracy in Spain and Portugal had snowballing effect on other liberal cultures. Similarly, Marcos’s downfall had demonstrating effects elsewhere in Asia.

Establishment of democratic institutions and processes emerged as a pre-condition for foreign-aid especially in erstwhile communist countries like Albania, Armenia, Azerbaiian, Belarus, Bulgaria, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldavia, Slovakia, Ukraine, etc. Hence, we find that in some countries, (the US and its allies) have been instrumental in facilitating democratisation right since 1940s (in Austria, Belgium, Greece, West Germany, Iceland, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, and Luxembourg).
21.7 SUMMARY

The participation of military in politics is not seen as a positive phenomenon. It is usually restricted to national security and for a secondary role in a nation in case of an emergency. A number of countries experienced a tendency during the 1960s and 1970s of direct military intervention especially in Latin American countries.

The reasons for military intervention are related to their professional nature. Dissatisfaction with the lack of discipline and sense of duty which the military perceives in civilian life could be a likely cause. Nature of civil society too is a cause. The military cites lack of legitimacy of the civilian government and its own role as protector of the nation as well as a socio-economic crisis in the country as cause for intervention.

We can give the characteristics of the military government as excessive use of force, military adventurism, promotion of its own corporate self interest and hence suppression of rights, liberty and equalities of citizens.

The spread of democratisation in the 1970s and 1980s led to the withdrawal of military from politics. Today all nations give top priority to economic goals thus constraining the military’s role. Higher levels of education and modernisation also put pressure on the government to respond to popular demands. Although there is lower priority being given to the military, it remains the largest, most financed and best organised institution in all countries. Conventional forces are becoming more involved in giving a civil dimension to military operations. Now military is expected to participate in peace keeping operations, promoting democracy or conflict resolution through the auspices of an international body. As long as the military fulfills its main duty of providing security to the nation, its involvement in non-combatant roles can be seen as helpful for the consolidation of democracy.

21.8 EXERCISES

1) Why are military interventions in the government not considered as legitimate?
2) Account for the withdrawal of military from active participation in politics in recent years.
3) With the help of two case studies (of any two countries) explain military intervention in politics.
4) What is the emerging role of the military in politics?