

## The Struggle For Power

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Gen Musharraf seized power from an elected government in a bloodless coup in October 1999 after he was sacked by the prime minister, Nawaz Sharif, as head of the army. He promised to deliver "true" democracy, but Pakistan was suspended from the Commonwealth. Musharraf made himself president in June 2001. His military regime was considered a pariah by the international community until Sept 11, when the US asked for bases and logistical support for the war in neighbouring Afghanistan.

In April 2002, Gen Musharraf held a referendum for an elected presidency, in which he was the only candidate, extending his rule by five years. The army organised an election in October 2002, which was condemned as heavily rigged. The elections led to a pro-army government led by Prime Minister Zafrullah Khan Jamali. The Commonwealth refused to allow Pakistan to rejoin due to the direct control that Gen Musharraf and the army continued to exercise. His determination to hold on to power paralysed parliament for more than a year, with opposition parties demanding he relinquish his post as army chief if he wanted to remain president. On Christmas Eve, Gen Musharraf, 60, said that he would give up his uniform in December 2004. Information appearing on telegraph.co.uk is the copyright of Telegraph Group Limited and must not be reproduced in any medium without licence. For the full copyright statement see Copyright.