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**A TASTE OF POWER: THE UNEASY REIGN
OF BENAZIR BHUTTO 1988-1990**

OLIVIER IMMIG & JAN VAN HEUGTEN

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A TASTE OF POWER: THE UNEASY REIGN OF BENAZIR BHUTTO, 1988-1990

On August 6, 1990 the president of Pakistan, Ghulam Ishaq Khan, proclaimed a state of emergency. He dissolved the National Assembly, and dismissed the acting government led by Mrs. Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, which had been in office for only twenty months. The president also dissolved the four provincial parliaments and governments. In the province of Sind martial law was even introduced. Shortly afterwards Ishaq Khan confided to foreign diplomats that he could not have taken any other decision, since the armed forces had threatened to stage a coup. In this article we will discuss the major problems the Bhutto government had to face, and why it has not been able to achieve any lasting successes. Following that, a closer look will be taken at the consequences of the elections of October 1990.

The elections of 1988

On August 17, 1988 president Mohammad Zia ul Haq and almost the entire command of the Pakistani army lost their lives when their sabotaged plane crashed. A state of emergency was proclaimed immediately. According to the conditions of the constitution the acting chairman of the Senate, the 73 year old Mr. Ghulam Ishaq Khan, was appointed interim-president. He announced that the national and provincial elections, which were planned by Zia ul Haq to take place November 16 and 19, would be held presently, in spite of all the pressure that was exercised by Zia ul Haq's ministers to have them postponed and to proclaim martial law. Ishaq Khan gave notice publicly that he would accept any verdict soon to be given by the Supreme Court on the right of political parties to participate in the coming elections. The Pakistan People's Party (PPP), the largest opposition party in the country, had presented this request. On October 2, the Court ruled that political parties were entitled to contest the elections. The new Chief-of-Staff, general Mirza Aslam Beg, also publicly pleaded for the installation of an elected civilian government. The military command was well aware of the fact that the armed forces would in any case maintain their powerful position.¹

The electoral struggle would for the first time since 1977 be fought by political parties again. These had not emerged from the Zia ul Haq period undamaged. During the martial law regime (July 1977 until December 1985) political parties had been forbidden. Political rallies were but rarely allowed. These measures only turned out to strengthen the process of fragmentation in Pakistani politics. Larger parties hardly managed to hold together. In particular smaller islamic parties became numerous, since many politicians had varying opinions on the genuine islamic character of the Zia ul Haq regime.

From the start it was obvious that the PPP and the Islamic Democratic Alliance (IDA - in Urdu IJI, or Islami Jamhoori Ittehad) would be the main contestants. The IDA led by Mian Mohammed Nawaz Sharif was made up of a coalition of nine Islamic parties, most of them small ones. The IDA, founded in October 1988, was meant in the first place to establish a nationwide counterweight against the "un-Islamic" PPP - for years it had been known in Pakistan that free elections would make the PPP by far the largest party in the country. It strived to withhold an electoral victory from the PPP, and to deny it access to government power. The most important parties forming the IDA were the Muslim League (led by former Prime Minister Junejo) and the conservative Jamaat-i-Islami. The new party of former PPP-leader Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi also participated. The Muslim League and the Jamaat had long supported the Zia ul Haq regime. Their election programs mainly furthered the introduction of Islamic principles, and made strong appeals to ethnic solidarity. The Jamaat-i-Islami, for instance, declared itself against any form of birth-control. Education should only be available to boys. Crime and corruption should be dealt with by public corporal punishment.

The PPP had been declared illegal after the coup of 1977 against its leader and founder, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. Many of its members found themselves behind bars; Mr. Bhutto himself was hanged. After martial law was lifted on December 30, 1985 the daughter of Zulfikar Bhutto re-entered Pakistan political life. In May 1986 she was elected chairman of the PPP, and her mother Begum Nusrat Bhutto became co-chairman. Soon Benazir Bhutto started a thorough re-organization of the party, which met with strong resistance from members of "the old guard", often being founding-members. They had loyally supported Benazir Bhutto's father but felt unable to cope with the "authoritarian behaviour"² of his daughter, who did not allow internal party elections. A number of prominent leaders decided to step out of the PPP.³

Benazir Bhutto appointed relatively young party members to important posts. Most of them had a similar background to hers - educated abroad and coming from rich landowners or business families - or had had leading positions in trade unions or student organizations. Under her leadership the party gradually abandoned its left-wing position, moving to the political centre. The socialist and populist rhetoric of Zulfikar Bhutto were relegated to the past. Benazir Bhutto concentrated on mobilizing and tapping the large reservoir of discontent that was felt with the Zia ul Haq regime and the "rampant corruption". In the PPP-election programme it was emphasized that the ties between cadres and electorate urgently needed repair. Beside this the programme contained little concrete policy.

Notwithstanding the IDA opposition the PPP became the single largest party in the country. It got 38,52% of all votes, giving it 93 of the 207 directly contested seats in parliament, which has 237 members. The IDA won 30,16% of the votes, but only received 55 seats. The third largest party was the MQM (Mohajir Quami Mahaz). It managed to win 13 seats.

A closer look at the election results reveals that the PPP and IDA held a neck and neck race in the Punjab, each contestant winning about 40% of the votes. This gave the PPP 53 seats in the National Assembly, but only

45 to the IDA. In the homeland of Benazir Bhutto, Sind, the PPP achieved a major victory over the IDA, 46 against 15 percent. That gave the PPP 31 seats in the National Assembly, but none at all to the IDA. The victory of the PPP thus was largely based on the results in Sind.⁴

The provincial elections, held on November 19, initially resulted in PPP governments in three out of four provinces. This was not the case, however, in the Punjab, the most important province. Here, IDA leader Nawaz Sharif became Chief Minister.⁵

The PPP in power

After the altogether not very successful elections some members of the PPP argued that it would be preferable for the PPP to stay out of government and become an opposition party.⁶ But such a decision was far from Benazir Bhutto's mind, the road to national power now finally being open to the PPP.

No party had succeeded in obtaining a single majority. Under Ishaq Khan options to form a coalition were considered. The president favoured a coalition as broad as possible, one between PPP and IDA. But the IDA had mainly been founded to effectively combat the "un-islamic" PPP. The PPP itself viewed the Muslim League and the Jamaat-i-Islami as exponents of the repressive Zia ul Haq regime *par excellence*, collaborators that even during the state of martial law, but especially since 1985, had closely co-operated with the military. For the Pakistani political scene it would have meant a welcome breakthrough if the PPP and the IDA had been able to find ways to work together, but the wounds of the past had not yet healed.

The PPP decided to form a coalition-government with the MQM. Supported by most independent members of parliament, the coalition could count on a majority in the assembly. Nevertheless it turned out to be a political monstrosity. The MQM was founded in the first place to further the interests of the socially and economically threatened mohajirs (immigrants from India and their offspring). The MQM thus united the mohajirs against the original Sindi population - the natural PPP-followers. Besides, since both parties had their base in Sind the new government formed an easy target for accusations by the opposition, especially from the opposition forces in the powerful Punjab province. It was said that Sindi interests were favoured.

On December 1, 1988 Ishaq Khan appointed Benazir Bhutto Prime Minister. The next day Mrs. Bhutto was inaugurated, becoming the first female Prime Minister of a moslem country in modern history. In her inaugural address she thanked Ishaq Khan and Chief-of-Staff Aslam Beg for resisting "anti-democratic pressures", thus enabling democracy to be restored. A few days later her cabinet was sworn in.

The new cabinet made an energetic start. Thousands of political prisoners were released, trade unions and student organizations were legally acknowledged, and the media no longer were censored. Unfortunately,

these remained the most important measures the largely inexperienced government took. It managed to stay in power for twenty months, which can be considered a major achievement.

Zia's constitution

A major stumbling-block to the Bhutto government turned out to be the existence of the constitution as amended by Zia ul Haq. Before the general had ended the state of martial law he had forced the carefully selected members of the National Assembly (elected in February 1985) to accept a number of amendments to the constitution of 1973, thus enhancing the power of the president considerably, who at that time happened to be Zia ul Haq himself. In the notorious Eighth Amendment the president received unlimited executive power. He appointed the Prime Minister and all ministers who were supposed to form an advisory body only. The president also appointed the provincial governors, to whom the provincial parliaments were made subordinate, as well as judges and a number of civil servants. He could also veto decisions by parliament for a period of 45 days.⁷

In 1985 a heavily debated amendment that granted future immunity to the executives of martial law was passed as well. It meant that no court had the authority to question the legality of the measures taken by the appropriate authorities. The Bhutto government was unable to undo this amendment. It could not muster the required twothird majority of the votes in the National Assembly to do so. This kept existing fiscal and political relations between national and provincial governments unchanged. It also turned out to be quite difficult to make any change in the authority or rulings of judges who had been appointed by Zia ul Haq. Laws that curtailed the civil rights of women and minorities could not be changed either.

Co-operation with the IDA would have been the only possible road for the PPP to be able to effectively govern Pakistan. However, already by the end of November opposition leader Nawaz Sharif had announced that he would not allow the Bhutto government to actually govern. The IDA viewed the constitutional problems of the PPP government as useful obstacles in limiting its power. Former prime minister Junejo who described the Eight Amendment in 1985 as "a bitter pill", now considered it to be "a constructive measure". And the secretary-general of the Muslim League, former minister of Justice Iqbal Ahmed Khan, characterized the constitution as "a sacred trust".⁸ An attempt by the PPP to have the constitutional changes of 1985 declared null and void by the Supreme Court, failed. On October 23, 1989 the Supreme Court declared itself incompetent on the matter.

Since the constitution remained unchanged Ghulam Ishaq Khan, who had become president on December 5, 1988, held the same farreaching authority that Zia ul Haq had possessed. This caused many conflicts of

competence between President and Prime Minister. Both tried to extend the limits of their authority. Ishaq Khan, who claimed to be fully impartial in interpreting and applying his constitutional rights, soon disputed the right of the Prime Minister to appoint higher judges and military officers.

Bhutto and Ishaq Khan even refused to hold formal consultations for a period of four months. They only arranged a meeting shortly before an opposition vote of no-confidence against the government was tabled. They succeeded in finding a compromise. Bhutto had probably become acutely aware of her political vulnerability. Only shortly before, the MQM had decided to leave the coalition government in order to form a coalition with the IDA, under the name of Combined Opposition Party (COP). As for the President, he wished to avoid a national political crisis in a period of rapidly deteriorating relations with India.⁹

Central authority versus provincial autonomy

A basic problem of the federal state Pakistan ever since 1947 is that the country lacks national coherence. In Pakistan today great tensions exist between the Punjabi, Pashtuns, Baluch, Sindi and Mohajirs. The Mohajirs, united by social status rather than ethnic status, do not have a specific territory of their own. Zia ul Haq tried to overcome the ethnic differences by means of an islamization policy. This, however, did not lead to the intended result - on the contrary: the existing contrasts were even aggravated. For within the islamic religion there are many creeds. There are the shi'ite en sunnite interpretations, and within every interpretation there exists a diversification in orthodox, fundamentalist and moderate trends. Therefore many Pakistanis did not accept Zia's (in fact rather moderate) interpretation of Islam to be the correct one.

There is no solution yet either to the problem of the interrelationship between the national, federal government and the provincial governments. This relationship was described in the 1973 Constitution, and also in "Zia's Constitution" of 1985. The provinces were granted autonomy to a large extent. The federal government would deal only with a limited number of affairs such as Defence and Foreign Affairs. In other fields - such as Health, Industrial Development and Infrastructure - all governments should co-operate. The problem is that neither the form of this co-operation nor the competence of the participating authorities have ever been settled in detail.

Already under the reign of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (1971-1977), for example, a Council of Common Interests (CCI) was to have been founded. The members of this council should have been the four Prime Ministers of the provinces and four ministers of the federal government. Among other things the CCI should have taken care of a more equal distribution of the revenues of gas and the production of electricity among the producing provin-

ces of Sind, the North-West Frontier Province and Baluchistan. Provinces would be able to appeal against decisions of the CCI to a joint session of the National Assembly and the Senate.

However, the CCI was never formally established. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was confronted with a strong secession movement in Baluchistan. Shortly after the constitution was accepted he proclaimed the state of emergency. Under Zia ul Haq the constitution was even entirely suspended till 1986. Ever since, the federal government decides on the destination of all public revenue. The government of Benazir Bhutto also refused to found the CCI. The main reason for this refusal seems to have been that the PPP would have no majority in a joint session of National Assembly and Senate.

During the election campaign the PPP was in favour of more provincial autonomy,¹⁰ the IDA on the other hand opted for a stronger central authority. After the electoral victory by the PPP both parties changed their points of view drastically. The PPP now wanted a strong central government. And the wealthy businessman Nawaz Sharif, who became Chief Minister of the Punjab in December 1988, wanted a large measure of autonomy for his provincial government. Since then Sharif has been complaining that the Pakistani state is dominated by the Sindi. This makes no sense at all because the Punjabi control the armed forces and the bureaucracy. But Sharif's verbal activities were highly dangerous for the Bhutto government and undermined the fragile political stability of Pakistan. Of course, Sharif wanted the CCI to be founded, and in his efforts he was backed by the Chief Minister of Baluchistan. Sharif has founded a provincial bank and planned to found a provincial television station, thereby stimulating Punjabi nationalism. Both of these areas had previously been the monopoly of the federal government.

Violence in Sind

A major threat to the Bhutto government was posed by the unabated violence in Sind. After the partition of British India large groups of moslems migrated from India to Pakistan. Most of them settled down in Sind, particularly in the cities of Karachi and Hyderabad. These Urdu-speaking immigrants ("mohajirs") had usually received a better education than the local population, and they soon held leading positions. The Sindi began to feel discriminated because of this. In the 1970's Zulfikar Ali Bhutto tried to restore the balance by giving the Sindi easier access to the universities. Also he made the Sindi language obligatory. As a result of these measures, the mohajirs for their part now felt discriminated, and they organized themselves into the MQM. This party demands the recognition of the mohajirs as a distinct population group, fully entitled to receive the same treatment as every other inhabitant of Pakistan. Some extremist groups even want a province of their

own. In order to achieve this Karachi should be separated from the rest of Sind. This, in turn, has led to nationalist movements amongst the Sindi.

Since the war in Afghanistan a huge black market for arms and drugs has come into existence. The Zia ul Haq regime functioned as the main supply line of weapons to the Afghan resistance, causing a lively arms trade in Pakistan itself. Pakistan even got the dubious reputation of being the world's main exporter of heroine.¹¹ The conflict in Sind has rapidly escalated in recent years. Frequently there have been outbursts of violence between the heavily-armed youth movements of the PPP and the MQM. In this climate crime is prospering, and kidnappings of wealthy captains of industry and landowners have become an everyday feature. The police could not do much against this, presumably because they are corrupt themselves or tacitly take sides in the largely political conflict.

Under Benazir Bhutto there were new outbursts of violence, and she felt compelled to call on the help of the army Chief-of-Staff Mirza Aslam Beg (a mohajir himself), who wanted to have free scope to deal with the violence, by proclaiming martial law in the province. However, the Bhutto government did not allow him to do so, for fear that the army would become too powerful again.¹² Immediately after the dismissal of the Bhutto government martial law was proclaimed in Sind, making it a province ruled by the army. Since then it has been relatively quiet there.

Economic problems

Perhaps the problems facing the Bhutto government would have been easier to deal with if the economic situation had been better. But in this regard Zia ul Haq's legacy was a foreign debt of 14 billion dollars and a structurally weak economy.

Still, Pakistan under Zia ul Haq experienced a continuing economic growth of 6 to 7 per cent each year, exceeding by far the high increase in population (3 per cent). Therefore, the income per capita increased substantially, during the years 1983-1988 up to 4 per cent annually. The distribution of income became more uneven, however, both in the cities and in the country.¹³

For a great deal the economic growth under Zia ul Haq had been possible only by acquiring foreign capital. The Soviet invasion in Afghanistan in particular brought about an enormous increase in development funds. The government budget could be balanced only by accumulating national debt.

Under Zia ul Haq about 40 per cent of the budget was devoted to military expenditure. An equal share was devoted to debt repayment. Also in the fiscal year 1989-1990 under the Bhutto government 80 per cent of the budget was spent this way. What remained was spent on development projects and production subsidies.

Health and education were used again to balance the budget. Even for a developing country these sectors remain at a very low level.¹⁴

Shortly after the death of Zia ul Haq there had been negotiations on a new loan with the IMF. In full awareness of the serious economic problems, the interim-government led by Mr. Ishaq Khan decided to embark on a structural re-adjustment plan for the years 1988-1991. In its agreement with the IMF, concluded in October 1988, the government undertook to restrain the growth of domestic credit, and to reduce the budget deficit by lowering subsidies and imposing higher direct and indirect taxation.¹⁵ Cuts in spending and increased revenue should result in reduced inflation; the budget deficit (8,4 per cent in 1988) had to be brought down to 4,8 per cent of the GDP. The rate of economic growth had to be maintained at 5 per cent at least.

The Bhutto government agreed to continue the IMF-program, but succeeded in negotiating some less harsh conditions. The agreement was extended to four years. Adjustments were fully justified. At the end of 1988 the agricultural production appeared to be much lower than expected because of floods, and also industrial production did not catch up with expectations, mainly as a result of ethnic violence in Sind. In particular Karachi, the most important industrial centre of the country, and Hyderabad suffered from a drop in productivity and investment, due to the disturbances.

Among Pakistani politicians and economists there was a broad consensus on the necessity of the IMF-program. The rupie was devalued, import duties were lowered, and the export of agricultural products was strongly stimulated. The privatisation of state-owned companies, which had started under Zia ul Haq, was continued by the Bhutto government. The report on the fiscal year 1989-1990 showed that the government had succeeded in maintaining economic growth at a rate of over 5 per cent, and that inflation was reduced from 10,7 to 5,7 per cent.¹⁶ Price support for foodstuffs was drastically reduced. Despite an increase in minimum wages, most Pakistani experienced a decrease in their real income because of the higher prices of essential goods. One of the first measures of the interim-government of Jatoi, who started in office on August 6, 1990, was to lower these prices again.

After the agreement with the IMF and the World Bank it was virtually impossible for the government to negotiate new loans. In order to reduce the budget deficit in 1990 the only thing left to do was in fact to introduce a drastic reform of the tax system. However, a basic problem in Pakistan is that revenues from taxation are traditionally small. The big landowners are exempted from taxation, although the agrarian sector is the largest in the Pakistan economy. Also, there are but few companies that are not exempted from paying taxes. But no thorough tax reform has been presented by the Bhutto government. In the 1990-1991 budget the government put its hopes into increasing yields mainly by finding more efficient ways to collect taxes. Indirect taxation also had to increase, partly by the introduction of a General Sales Tax on July 1, 1990. For the fiscal year 1990-1991 the government continued to aim at real GDP growth at 5,5 percent.

The war in Afghanistan

From the start the Bhutto government had to deal with some serious problems in the foreign policy field. At the end of 1988 Soviet troops were preparing to leave neighbouring Afghanistan. Not so the secret service of the Pakistan army, ISI (Inter Services Intelligence), however. The ISI was in fact getting ever more involved in operations of the Afghan resistance groups against the communist regime in Kabul.¹⁷ The ISI had pre-eminently been the organization within the army which strongly supported Zia ul Haq. Therefore, it was considered a serious threat to the new PPP government, particularly if the latter should decide to reduce the power of the ISI in any respect -either by cutting its personnel or its budget.

On the other hand the PPP had changed its official policy regarding the conflict in Afghanistan and the contending parties. Before the PPP was led by Benazir and Nusrat Bhutto it was in favour of expelling all Afghan resistance groups and all three million Afghan refugees. After which the Pakistan-Afghan border should have been closed. During those years the PPP was still part of the MRD (Movement for the Restoration of Democracy). The Afghan capital Kabul was one of the bases from where some parties within the MRD were operating against the regime of Zia ul Haq. Since 1986 the policy of the PPP regarding the Afghan refugees and the resistance groups has become much more moderate, and even started to resemble the policy of Zia ul Haq.

By February 1989 the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan had been completed. Ever since, it has become more quiet on Pakistan's Western border. In the course of 1989 the Bhutto government succeeded in diminishing the ISI as a threatening political force. Contributing to this was the fact that the attempts of the Afghan resistance to recapture, with the support of the ISI, a major town in Afghanistan, failed completely. The Bhutto government was even able to replace the head of the ISI, Hamid Gul, by its "own man", Shamsur Rahman Kallu - this, however, only after a long dispute over competence between the Prime Minister and the president.¹⁸

Besides, both the Bhutto government and the Bush Administration thought it high time to reconsider the destination of the weapons sent to a number of Afghan resistance groups. When the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in December 1979 this had been welcomed by Zia ul Haq as "a gift of Allah". The international status of his regime was completely reversed. Though only shortly before it was called a "mediaeval tyranny", it now became, in the words of president Reagan, a "bastion of the free world" - against the flood of communism. By the time Bhutto and, shortly afterwards, Bush entered their offices, not only the Soviet Union was withdrawing its troops from Afghanistan, but also the communist system in the Soviet Union itself was in disarray. The fundamentalist resistance group Hezb-i-Islami had been the absolute favourite of Zia ul Haq for taking over power in Kabul. Now more weapons gradually started to flow to its main rival, the more moderate Jamiyat-i-Islami.

Afghanistan had been a predominant factor during the years of the Zia ul Haq regime; since 1989 its importance began to wane. Nevertheless, in the domestic policy area Bhutto's Afghanistan policy led to the breaking up of the coalition in the North-West Frontier Province. The PPP's coalition partner, the leftist ANP (Awami National Party), criticized Bhutto's Afghanistan policy and it demanded that an ANP-governor should be appointed in the NWFP. Because of the important role of the governor in this tribal area at the Pakistan-Afghan border, the Pakistan army staff and reputedly also the United States did not want such an appointment. Therefore, the PPP refused. After which the ANP withdrew from the coalition and joined the IDA.

In the meantime the United States and the Soviet Union came to the agreement that only free elections in Afghanistan might put an end to the continuing war. Baker and Shevardnadze did not decide, however, to stop the delivery of huge quantities of weapons to their respective clients. And so far the United Nations program of repatriating the Afghan refugees has hardly produced any results. Therefore, the millions of Afghan "guests" will probably stay in Pakistan a long time to come.

Kashmir

Another major problem in the foreign policy field that Bhutto had to deal with, was of a more permanent nature than the Afghan problem. By the end of 1989 it appeared that Kashmir would become a *casus belli* again between India and Pakistan. The latest outbursts of violence in Jammu & Kashmir, the Indian part, led to reciprocal accusations and brought the armies of both countries to a state of readiness. A fourth war about Kashmir seemed impending, but it was avoided after consultations between Bhutto and the Indian Prime Minister Singh.

The founders of the Pakistani state did not foresee that the maharaja of Kashmir, a hindu, would decide to join his kingdom to India. The treaty of October 26, 1947, which stipulates this step, has never been recognized by Pakistan. Since July 1949 Kashmir is divided by a cease-fire line between Pakistan and India. This line has been imposed by the United Nations awaiting the outcome of a plebiscite. The population would be given the choice of joining either India or Pakistan. Both countries had agreed to hold such a plebiscite. However, to this day a large majority of the population of Jammu & Kashmir is moslem. Because of this, successive Pakistani governments have insisted that a plebiscite should be held, for the outcome seems to be clear in advance. For this very reason no Indian government will organize such a plebiscite.

After having fought the last of the three "non-declared" wars about Kashmir, Pakistan and India agreed in Simla (1972) that the issue would be solved bilaterally and in a peaceful manner.¹⁹ However, since the eighties relations between Islamabad and Delhi worsened. The Indira Gandhi government accused Islamabad of lending

armed support and providing training facilities to extremist Sikhs that were active in the Indian Punjab. The bloody course of events in the Golden Temple of Amritsar in June 1984 only deepened the rift between the two states.

Since 1984 thousands of Pakistani and Indian troops have been facing each other on the Siachen glacier. Despite temperatures falling to minus 60 degrees C and altitudes of over 8000 metres there have been skirmishes regularly. New Indian accusations that Pakistan is arming and training moslem-guerillas were strongly denied by the Bhutto government. No Pakistani government though, has ever denied that it gives full moral support to the fight for independence of the population of Kashmir. The governments in Islamabad have always called this the "right of self-determination".

The Pakistani bomb

A new war between India and Pakistan might well develop into a nuclear confrontation. Military experts already assumed some years ago that both India and Pakistan possess nuclear arms.²⁰ According to confidential reports from India Delhi was informed by Washington at the end of October 1990 that Pakistan has built six nuclear bombs, to be used as first-strike weapons. But also India is said to have built several bombs.

The nuclear research program of Pakistan has been conducted by the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission since 1958. For many years it hardly gained public attention. Shortly after the third war with Pakistan, India succesfully exploded a nuclear device in 1974. The Indian government stated in a communique that the test served solely peaceful intentions. However, public excitement rose considerably in Pakistan, and the government in Islamabad strongly protested to the Indian government. Since 1974 no Pakistani government could afford to sign the non-proliferation treaty unilateraly. We will either sign it together with India or not at all, has long been the motto in Islamabad.

In an earlier decision, president Zulfikar Ali Bhutto had already ordered prominent scientists to manufacture a Pakistani nuclear device as soon as possible. The military command heartily welcomed the initiative by Bhutto. Naturally, the seriously demoralized armed forces, discredited by their defeat against India and the separation of East Pakistan (now Bangla Desh), did not want another war with India anymore than Bhutto did. But if war, for whatever reason, could no longer be avoided, the nuclear program should enable Pakistan to prevent another humiliating defeat.

Under the regime of Zia ul Haq the nuclear research program was continued. The invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union in December 1979 greatly helped the regime. The new status of Pakistan as a frontline state led to the resumption of U.S. aid, which had been suspended by the Carter Administration. It provided

the dictatorship with the means to develop its nuclear facilities. The Symington-Glenn amendment explicitly forbids any American military or economic support to countries that build uranium enrichment installations, but at the time it was conveniently neglected by the Reagan Administration.²¹

When Benazir Bhutto visited Washington in June 1989, the Bush Administration pledged to maintain the American aid program to Pakistan. Members of Congress, however, increasingly expressed their concerns about Pakistan's continuing nuclear development program. On October 1, 1990 the Congress suspended all 564 million dollars of military and economic aid for 1991. In order to achieve a resumption of American aid Islamabad not only has to prove to an independent international committee that it does not have a nuclear device but also that it has none of the parts to make one. The American step will add to Pakistan's balance of payments deficit. Under the Bhutto government this was expected to be around 1,8 billion dollars. Since the crisis in the Gulf higher oil prices and the loss of remittances from the tens of thousands of Pakistanis who used to work in Kuwait and Iraq will probably double that figure.

New elections, new prospects

In an official reaction to the death of Zia ul Haq the PPP issued a short statement: "Internationally, Zia may be remembered as the man who stood up to the Soviets after they entered Afghanistan, but in Pakistan he will be remembered as the man who illegally seized power, and after eleven and a half years of repressive rule, left nothing behind: debt and mortgages, hunger and unemployment, exploitation and discrimination, drugs and corruption."²² Indeed, Zia ul Haq may be held at least partly responsible for this, but after governing Pakistan for twenty months the PPP itself is responsible for some abuse. This is particularly true for the relationship with other political parties, not only with the IDA but also with "partners" like the MQM and the NAP. The PPP was continually engaged in a struggle for more power with the IDA and other parties. The political atmosphere was poisoned. The PPP government not only achieved little, it also did not even try: apart from the budget not a single bill was presented to parliament.

The reasons president Ghulam Ishaq Khan mentioned on August 6, 1990 for dissolving parliament and dismissing the Bhutto government, were quite similar to the accusations stated in the vote of no-confidence on November 1, 1989 - corruption of government officials, nepotism, and a government which is responsible for ethnic violence and growing unemployment. But in his long list of reasons Ishaq Khan also mentioned the internal dissension, friction, and "horse-trading" in the National Assembly, thus blaming the opposition as well. Because of these observations he came to the conclusion that an appeal to the electorate was necessary.²³

Although the President's decision did not come as a complete surprise, and in fact the reasons he mentioned were to some extent fully justified, the accusations made by Ishaq Khan on August 6th in his

address to the nation did not constitute the real reasons for the early dismissal of the Bhutto government. A few days later Ishaq Khan told foreign diplomats that he had dismissed the government in order "to prevent extra-constitutional actions and to preserve democracy", in other words: to prevent a military coup.²⁴

Benazir Bhutto and general Aslam Beg had already been fiercely disputing the approach to the problem of ethnic violence in Sind, when she appeared to have infuriated the general with her attempts to interfere in the promotions of senior officers. After which Chief-of-Staff Aslam Beg repeatedly stated that the military no longer aspired to play a role in the political process. Even: "We are not involved in politics. We have never been involved in politics. We are not going to get involved in politics."²⁵ There were, and still are, enough reasons, however, to doubt the sincerity of those words.

On October 24, 1990, for the third time in Pakistan history, free elections took place on a party-political basis. In comparison with the results of 1988 the PPP²⁶ lost 1,7% of the votes, while the IDA gained 6,6% of the votes. Both parties thus won precisely 36,8% of all votes. This time the IDA had closely co-operated with other parties and with independent candidates, thus winning over quite a number of seats in parliament.²⁷

Although in percentages there wasn't exactly a landslide, the consequences for the occupation of seats in parliament were spectacular. The PPP only received 45 seats, whereas the IDA now occupies 105 seats. This large difference is again accounted for by the system of representation. Candidates that have received a simple majority in their districts go to the parliament; all votes on other candidates are no longer valid. This time the elections were decided in the Punjab. There the IDA managed to obtain 92 of the 115 available seats for the national parliament; the PPP only got 14.²⁸

The provincial elections that were held three days later proved equally disastrous for the PPP. Only in Sind, where the party is based, did the PPP succeed in limiting its losses. Still, since the PPP has not even succeeded in forming a government in Sind, the party now finds itself excluded from any governing body.²⁹

The big losses that the PPP had to take in both election rounds have reduced the role of Benazir Bhutto's party to that of a small opposition grouping, in spite of the relatively high percentage of votes it received. For the first time since 1971 Pakistan has a chosen government with real power again; the national and all provincial governments are in the hands of the IDA. In this sense, after two democratic elections within two years, Pakistan now has arrived at a new, qualitatively higher level of political stability.

An important question, however, that will occupy domestic politics in Pakistan in the near future is whether the IDA will be able to maintain sufficient internal coherence. After all, it originally was not much more than a coalition of divergent parties directed against the PPP. And although the PPP has been reduced to an opposition role, it will remain a major national political force. Therefore, it is imperative that IDA and PPP will be able to arrive at some form of co-operation. In the long run this will be the only possible way to the development of a stable democratic government system in Pakistan.

Notes

- 1 Compare for instance Hasan-Askari Rizvi, "The legacy of military rule in Pakistan", *Survival*, vol. 31, no. 3 (May-June 1989), pp. 256-257; Rodney W. Jones, "Pakistan and the United States: partners after Afghanistan", *The Washington Quarterly*, vol. 12, no. 3 (Summer 1989), p. 69; and Paula R. Newberg, "Pakistan at the edge of democracy", *World Policy Journal*, vol. 6, no. 3 (Summer 1989), p. 566.
- 2 Jatoi on August 28, 1986. Also in Jones, o.c., p. 68.
- 3 Important leaders stepping out of the PPP in Sind were Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi, Abdul Hafiz Pirzada and Benazir's uncle Mumtaz Bhutto. Among the departing leaders in the Punjab were Ghulam Mustafa Khar and Haneef Ramay. They all began their own political parties, or joined existing ones.
- 4 See for a detailed survey of the final results: Election Commission of Pakistan, *Report on the General Elections 1988* (Islamabad, 1989, 3 vols.), volume II (*Statistical Data*) and III (*Detailed Survey*).
- 5 In the NWFP the PPP formed a coalition with the leftwing Awami National Party and, receiving the support of some independent members, it made up the NWFP government. In Sind the PPP established an outright majority (winning 67 out of 100 seats), but nevertheless started a coalition government there with the MQM. In Baluchistan the PPP won only 4 out of 40 seats. Here it formed a coalition government with the IDA, its arch-rival in national politics. This coalition only lasted for a short while, whereafter the PPP became an opposition party. In 1989 the coalitions with the Awami National Party and the MQM would be dissolved as well.
- 6 Compare John Bray, "Pakistan: the democratic balance-sheet", *The World Today*, vol. 46, no. 6 (June 1990), p. 111.
- 7 Hasan-Askari Rizvi, "The civilianization of military rule in Pakistan", *Asian Survey*, vol. 26, no. 10 (October 1986), pp. 1070-1071; also see Newberg, o.c., pp. 568-569. For a survey of constitutional amendments made by the Zia ul Haq regime, consult: Government of Pakistan, *Pakistan 1986. An official handbook* (Islamabad: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Directorate of Films and Publications, September 1986), pp. 35-44.
- 8 In: Newberg, o.c., p. 569.
- 9 Bray, o.c., p. 111.
- 10 Compare C.G.P. Rakisits, "Centre-province relations in Pakistan under President Zia: the government's and the opposition's approach", *Pacific Affairs*, vol. 61, no. 1 (Spring 1988), pp. 96-97.
- 11 *The Economist*, December 20, 1986, p 67.
- 12 *Far Eastern Economic Review*, August 9, 1990, pp. 17-18.
- 13 Anthony Hyman, Muhammed Ghayur, and Naresh Kaushik, *Pakistan: Zia and after...* (New Delhi: Abhinav Publications, 1989), p. 111.
- 14 Government of Pakistan, *Economic Survey 1989-1990* (Islamabad: Finance Division, Economic Adviser's Wing, June 1990), p. XIX, pp. 107-116.
- 15 See for example Alexandre Dastarac en M. Levent, "Le Pakistan à hue et à dia", *Le Monde Diplomatique*, March 1990, p. 20; and *Pakistan & Gulf Economist*, February 3-9, 1990, pp. 22-25.
- 16 *Pakistan & Gulf Economist*, June 16-22, 1990, p. 10.
- 17 George Arney, *Afghanistan. The definitive account of a country at crossroads* (London: Mandarin Paperbacks, 1990), pp. 162-165.

- 18 Lawrence Ziring, "The politics of stalemate", *Asian Survey*, vol. 30, no. 2 (February 1990), p. 129. Shamsur Rahman Kallu would not hold this position for long. Within three weeks after the dismissal of the Bhutto government he was replaced by Asad Durrani.
- 19 For the integral text of the Simla Treaty and Pakistani comments, see: Government of Pakistan, *Simla-Agreement. Pakistan's interpretation* (Islamabad: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Directorate of Films and Publications, n.d.).
- 20 See for instance Rodney W. Jones, "Pakistan's nuclear options", in *Soviet-American relations with Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan*, ed. Hafeez Malik (London: MacMillan Press, 1987), pp. 199-216.
- 21 Compare Thomas P. Thornton, "The new phase in U.S.-Pakistani relations", *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 68, no. 1 (Autumn 1989), pp. 154-155; and Iftikhar H. Malik, "The Pakistan-U.S. security relationship: testing bilateralism", *Asian Survey*, vol. 30, no. 3 (March 1990), pp. 293-298.
- 22 *The Washington Post*, August 20, 1988. Also in: Shahid Javed Burki, "Pakistan under Zia, 1977-1988", *Asian Survey*, vol. 28, no. 10 (October 1988), p. 1082.
- 23 Ghulam Ishaq Khan, President, Republic of Pakistan, *Address to Nation and Dissolution Order, Islamabad, August 6, 1990* (Islamabad: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Directorate of Films and Publications, August 1990), p. 3.
- 24 *The Times*, August 10, 1990.
- 25 In: *Far Eastern Economic Review*, August 16, 1990, p. 8.
- 26 Officially the PPP contested the elections with some very small groupings, as the "People's Democratic Alliance".
- 27 *Pakistan & Gulf Economist*, November 3-9, 1990, p. 16.
- 28 *Dawn*, October 25, 1990. See also *Viewpoint*, November 1, 1990, pp. 21-25.
- 29 *Dawn*, October 29, 1990; and *Dawn*, November 12, 1990.

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