

Pakistan: court upholds verdict to hang Bhutto

The Supreme Court of Pakistan, pressured and intimidated by the martial law administration of General Ziaul Haq, has upheld the sentence of death by hanging against ousted Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. The long-delayed court announcement came as a brief prepared statement Feb. 6, sending Bhutto — one of the developing sector's most eminent spokesmen — to the gallows on alleged murder charges.

The hours preceding the verdict witnessed the most unprecedented military deployments against members of Bhutto's family, members of his People's Party, and even potential supporters. Thousands of arrests were carried out and a virtual state of siege imposed as the army and the population faced each other in a decision that has brought Pakistan extremely close to shattering civil strife.

Even though public outrage in defense of the still-popular premier was preempted before the announcement, the military junta failed to produce a unanimous verdict by the Supreme Court. The 4-3 decision has brought out the stark realities in the situation. Four judges from the Punjab region, the stronghold of the military and of the Jamaat-i-Islami Party, the equivalent of the British intelligence-created Muslim Brotherhood in Pakistan, ruled to hang Bhutto. Three other judges, one from each of the provinces of Sind, Baluchistan, and Northwest Frontier, dissented and questioned outright the validity of the case. Further, Chief Justice Anwarul Haq, whom Chief Martial Law Administrator Gen. Ziaul Haq appointed to that powerful post last July, cast the decisive vote. He is known to harbor deep grudges against Bhutto, having repeatedly stated that he considered Bhutto guilty even before all the evidence was presented.

Kangaroo court

As the case stands now, the clock is ticking to carrying out the military-inspired execution. There have been numerous international statements by eminent leaders (see below) calling on Gen. Zia to spare Bhutto's life. However, as experts themselves admit, there is a factor of irrationality involved in the decision. There are generals who want to hang Bhutto no matter what the consequences to the nation are; there is a deep-seated personal and political vendetta harbored by the Jamaati against Bhutto, and the military as well has no love for the ousted leader.

As this journal goes to press, reports are that Bhutto has refused the option of asking for clemency, and sources in Pakistan are viewing Feb. 13 or 14 as the potential date that the

army will take Bhutto to an isolated provincial outpost to hang him. Garishly the generals are said to be worried over what to do with Bhutto's body.

But the most stunning attack on the prejudiced judiciary and military came from the dissenting judges themselves. Justice Dorab Patel, a non-Muslim, stated publicly hours after the decision that the prosecution "had appalling defects in the evidence of its main witnesses ... it failed to inspire confidence." Another judge stated, "Mr. Bhutto's conduct was such (throughout the period of the murder allegations) that reasonable capacity for an innocent interpretation exists."

Strategic implications

For months the British Foreign Office has known that the building explosion in Pakistan had the makings of precisely the scenarios the experienced tribe profiler, Sir Olaf Caroe, had suggested. Caroe in many books and field expeditions had talked about regional upsurges in Central Asia, the Pushtu and Baluchi tribes, and Afghanistan. He had also been the author of the Central Treaty Organization pact — a treaty the United States then absorbed responsibility for from the British Foreign Office. The London Daily Telegraph, one day before the Supreme Court ruling, stated, "If Pakistan breaks up and lets the Russians through to the sea while other juicy morsels are snapped up by the Chinese and the Indians, the whole area, with neighboring Iran in turmoil, could become as dangerous to world peace as the Middle East has been for 30 years ... a flashpoint for thermonuclear war."

The disintegrative potential that exists in Pakistan is evident in the recent tensions on the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. It has been widely reported that a training camp has been set up in Peshawar, Pakistan where Pushtu and Baluchi tribal rebels are being armed and trained with Chinese arms to subvert the Afghanistan government. Reliable reports indicate that Zadir Shah, the deposed king of Afghanistan — until recently exiled in Rome — has returned to Pakistan, coordinating the subversion against the Afghan government. During Bhutto's rule, the Afghan royal family, sponsored by the British Foreign Office to run drugs and contraband goods into the Arab world and Europe, was not permitted to operate in any way out of Pakistan.

The future of the junta

Bhutto's fate is intimately tied to the future of the military junta in Pakistan. At the end of this month, Gen. Ziaul Haq's term as

chief of staff of the armed forces will expire. Zia has three options: he can retire as army chief, and stay on as President, a choice he rejected once before; he can appoint a junior officer to the post, thus forcing the resignation of many senior disgruntled officials; or he can retire both politically and militarily.

Since Zia himself seized power on July 4, 1977 in what he called "Operation Fair Play" and a "Ninety Day Operation Fair Play," he has long overstayed his own deadline to hold elections. Now his political future is complicated by the court verdict against Bhutto. Many sources suggest that there is extreme polarization among the military, between those who want Bhutto hanged and those who on some level understand the seriousness of the atrocity for Pakistan. Thus far, the former group, backed by the Jamaati, has managed to hold its ground to execute Bhutto.

— *Leela Narayan*

Governments, press support Bhutto

In 1976, when Pakistani Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto told then U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger that he would not cancel the purchase of a French nuclear plant, as demanded by the U.S., Henry Kissinger replied, "I will make a horrible example of you." In April 1977, four months before he was overthrown by a coup d'état, Bhutto publicly charged that the Carter Administration, the British Broadcasting Corporation, and the Zionist lobby were the forces who sought his ouster for seeking a nuclear capability for Pakistan. We present here the international reactions, governmental and in major press organs to the Supreme Court's decision to hang Bhutto. While European governments have made it clear that an execution of Bhutto would be viewed harshly by their governments and peoples, Kissinger's responsibility in the matter has even been noted by some foreign press. Overall, the international press has reacted strongly against the imminent hanging of Mr. Bhutto, though several U.S. papers also took the opportunity to take swipes at the Prime Minister. In France, *Le Figaro* warned of the danger of civil war should Bhutto be executed, and *France Soir* quoted a recent court speech by Bhutto warning that "If I

What is the Jamaat-i-Islami?

On Feb. 10, it is expected that Chief Martial Law Administrator of Pakistan, Gen. Ziaul Haq will make a nationwide address. The Daily Telegraph states that Zia will announce the creation of an Islamic republic based on new social codes. The code will include penalties such as chopping off hands for theft, amputation of feet for banditry, public stoning for adultery and flogging for drinking. Gen Zia proposes a return to feudal dark age legal code which endangers the future of Pakistan as a nation, as well as its economic development and prosperity.

The author of Zia's social codes is the Jamaat-i-Islami, the Pakistani equivalent of the supranational Muslim Brotherhood, the Islamic fundamentalist group organized by Britain in the early part of this century. The Jamaati has, since the July 4, 1977 coup which overthrew Bhutto, promoted his hanging. As well, the junta-appointed Information Minister Farooqi has told this press service that he views the floggings given to supporters of the Prime Minister during their incarcerations as merely the implementation of the 1898 Civil Penal Code instituted by the British Colonial Office.

The Jamaati's connections with the British Foreign Office operations runs deep. In collaboration with Zbigniew Brzezinski's Institute for Communist Affairs at Columbia University, the tribal deployments are being organized at a strategic level. Money for the Jamaati operation is believed to be coming from the Prince Abdullah faction of the Saudi Arabia royal family, funneled through the Islamic Foundation of Europe.

If Bhutto is hanged as the Jamaati wants, the type of civil war unleashed in Pakistan will be far worse than the current disorders in Iran because Bhutto remains today, even in jail, the most popular political leader of Pakistan. It is not a mere coincidence that Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini sent Jamaati leader Maulana Mawdoodi a secret message on the eve of the Bhutto verdict announcement. In the message, it is reported, Khomeini urged the Jamaati to press ahead with the "holy war."

am killed, Pakistan will become a new Iran." The conservative German daily *Die Welt* predicted "a chain reaction leading to the renewal of separatist tendencies" if Bhutto is killed, and cited a warning from Bhutto's son in London that "The elections Zia promised won't be held because whether Bhutto is dead or alive, he can win them, even from his death cell."

Heads of state react to the verdict

Bulent Ecevit, Prime Minister of Turkey: Called for Pakistan to pardon Bhutto, and offered Turkey as a place for Bhutto to live in exile "if that will contribute to the setting up of a democratic regime in Pakistan."

Ola Ullsten, Prime Minister of Sweden (in a cable to General