

Recently, in a proclamation circulated among exile Iranians, General Aryana announced the formation of the Movement for the Liberation of Iran (MLI). Addressed to soldiers and politicians, businessmen and workers, intellectuals, students, and professionals, the Aryana manifesto called for defending the integrity of Iran's borders, reestablishing order, reconstituting the armed forces, saving Iranian culture, renewing the sovereignty and inviolability of the law, and rebuilding the ruined economy of Iran.

"These last few weeks," says Aryana, "numerous groups of patriots, politicians, intellectuals, and some of my colleagues in the armed forces have made contact with me."

Of course, the crucial question is: does Aryana—and the others—have a chance to succeed? According to reliable reports from Iranian sources, Aryana, despite long-standing ties to American military circles and to European, especially French, military people, is not receiving any substantial support or even encouragement from the United States. Many Iranians have reported that the Carter administration has succeeded in deterring any circles in Washington—whether covert, CIA-type forces or even private and semi-official organizations—from making systematic contacts with the Iranian exiles. A systematic effort is underway in Washington to dissuade Americans from seeking contact with the opposition to Khomeini, such is the fear that such contacts might upset President Carter's long-sought pact with the Iranian mullahs and "Islamic fundamentalism."

Recently, he is reported to have received official French government security for his own protection.

According to Iranians who know him, Aryana is a scholar and a political scientist as well as a soldier. Strongly influenced by Napoleon, Aryana has cultivated for himself the nickname "the Napoleon of Iran." His major treatise at the Sorbonne many years ago was *Napoleon and the East*.

Perhaps more relevant to his present situation, Aryana is also reported to be an expert on the subject of Hasan ibn al-Sabbah, the greatest Persian political-military genius of all time. A scientist, musician, and doctor, as well as a military man, the 12th-century Hasan ibn al-Sabbah built one of the most magnificent political cadre organizations ever established in world history, a movement that almost succeeded in its Grand Design: the elimination of the reactionary Persian feudal aristocracy and the establishment of an alliance with the humanist forces in Christian medieval Europe.

Today, the Persian feudalists have returned with a vengeance in Khomeini's regime. Perhaps the method of Hasan ibn al-Sabbah, if it were understood by more Iranians, and for all of the Khomeini pestilence.

Southwest Asia

Is Pakistan's Zia on the way out?

by Daniel Sneider

Washington is awash with rumors that Pakistan's military dictator, Gen. Ziaul Haq, is about to be overthrown. One top Washington policymaker close to the situation, when asked about the coup rumors Sept. 12, replied: "You are the twelfth person in the last few days to ask me that."

The rumors, while unconfirmed by any reliable source, are taken seriously. General Zia's regime, a military dictatorship based on "Islamic fundamentalism," is understood to be fundamentally unstable, with almost no base of significant popular support within the country. While ruthless repression of anti-government political activity has kept Zia in power, the anti-Zia feelings of the population have increasingly defied the threat of repression over the past few months.

In Washington and London, where the rumors have also been circulating for weeks, there are many in policymaking circles who are considering the removal of Zia as the only alternative to a bigger blowup down the road that will "get out of control." According to one Washington source, there are two alternatives being considered: one, that the Pakistani military, Zia's only reliable base of support at present, move to replace Zia in a quick coup; the second, that Zia move to widen the base of his regime by bringing in civilian leaders from the opposition political parties, now all banned.

In the last few days there are reports that General Zia has attempted to move along the latter path. According to reports from Pakistan and informed sources in New York, Zia hopes to put together a new "civilian" government before the end of the month when he will depart for a visit to the U.S. The London *Guardian* reported Sept. 13 that Zia had held meetings with political leaders, including two prominent rightwing leaders of the party of executed Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, offering them positions in a new government. There is no indication however that such a move will have any more than transparently cosmetic success, particularly since the most popular Pakistan Peoples Party of Bhutto has disowned any such deal with the hated murderer of their beloved leader.

Decisions by Washington and London, principal

backers of the Zia regime along with the Chinese regime in Peking, depend largely on geopolitical and strategic considerations. On the one hand, Pakistan anchors the eastern end of the Persian Gulf, now the focus of extensive U.S. and NATO arms buildup and deployment. The Pakistani military has long been involved in training and military assistance to the sheikdoms of the Gulf, particularly Oman, the British-controlled sultanate which is to be the site of a new U.S. base facility for deployment in the region.

The Carter administration is deeply involved with the Zia regime in expanding its role in the region. General Zia will have a long-awaited meeting with President Carter on Oct. 3; it is reported Zia will ask again for arms, particularly sophisticated jet aircraft. The administration, however, particularly Zbigniew Brzezinski, have preferred to push Pakistan in the direction of the Arabs for funding for new arms.

According to well informed sources, this Brzezinski effort is behind the recently reported deal between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia to station significant numbers of Pakistani troops in the Gulf kingdom, supposedly for internal security purposes. Well informed Pakistani sources confirm these reports, which first appeared under Richard Burt's byline in the *New York Times* (a well known leak point for Brzezinski), and add that the forces involved are one infantry division and an armored brigade. The sources report that forward elements of those units are already in place, along with thousands of Pakistani military advisers who have been serving in Saudi Arabia for some time, and that the Pakistani regime will receive a large sum of money, reportedly \$1 billion, for the use of the forces.

Pakistan's importance as a military outpost, once formalized in the now defunct Central Treaty Organization (CENTO which linked Britain, the U.S., Iran, Turkey and Pakistan), has been increased since the Soviet intervention into Afghanistan. Afghan rebels fighting the Kabul government and the Soviet forces there are operating mainly out of bases in Pakistani territory along the border with Afghanistan, where they receive arms and training from Pakistani officers, along with a flow of arms and assistance from the intelligence agencies of China, the U.S. and Britain.

Pakistan also forms part of a growing alliance against India, its historic enemy. Chinese-led efforts to destabilize India, including backing for regional separatist movements in India's northeast, have been coordinated with recent efforts, according to Indian press reports, by the Zia regime to spark Islamic fundamentalist disturbances and communal violence within India. The Chinese-inspired "encirclement" of India is understood to have the backing of the Carter administration's geopolitical madman Z. Brzezinski, who is the key man behind the administration's military alliance with China, the so-called China card policy.

The military coup this week in Turkey was cited by several Washington sources as a clear precedent for a similar "stabilization" move in Pakistan. In the midst of embarking on a vast expansion of U.S. and NATO deployments along the southern flank of the Soviet Union from the eastern Mediterranean across to Pakistan and South Asia, the potential and existing instability of the Zia regime is viewed by many as an unnecessary risk.

The "stabilization" of Turkey and Pakistan, alongside efforts to secure a deal with Iran which could involve an enhanced role for the Iranian military, may be leading to a new, informal CENTO-type structure, but with a much enlarged direct U.S. military presence in the region. The recent visit of British Foreign Minister Lord Carrington to Saudi Arabia fits into this effort.

Why Zia runs scared

The decision to back an effort to remove General Zia or opt for a less drastic form of stabilization may also depend on the internal political dynamics of Pakistan at this moment. The main opposition to the regime is led by the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), the party of former Premier Z.A. Bhutto, overthrown by Zia in a military coup in July 1977 and executed in early 1979 following a long frameup trial on flimsy "murder conspiracy" charges. Now led by Bhutto's wife, Begun Nusrat Bhutto and his daughter, Benazir Bhutto, the PPP, despite being banned and subject to intense repression, is acknowledged to be the most popular force in the country and an easy victor if free elections were held.

Zia's fear of the strength of the PPP caused him to cancel scheduled fall elections last year, ban all political parties, and institute a heavy-handed dictatorship in the name of instituting a truly "Islamic" regime in Pakistan. Since that time even former anti-Bhutto parties who backed the coup, such as the Pakistan National Alliance (PNA), have disassociated themselves from the regime and joined others in a call for the end of martial law and political repression and the holding of free elections to form a new government.

The shaky hold of the regime was revealed last month when, for the first time since Bhutto was hanged, Begun Bhutto and Benazir visited the Punjab, Pakistan's most populous province and the political center of the country. Within 48 hours of their visit the regime forced them to leave and banned them from entering the Punjab. The two leaders have been meeting with PPP leaders in the region and planned to address a public meeting the following day.

While other political parties have frequently violated the ban on political activity and suffered relatively light harassment, the PPP is clearly feared by the regime. In an interview with this writer last month, former Punjab Governor Mustapha Khar, a PPP leader now in exile in

London, put the PPP position the following way: "There is no such thing as a political solution without the participation of the PPP at this time. And I think it would be indefensible as a move by anybody who is a well-wisher of Pakistan, inside or *outside* Pakistan, to try to keep the PPP out."

Khar was clearly anticipating, in the context of increased instability over the next few months, an effort to restabilize the country. One figure frequently mentioned as a "moderate" (and U.S.-linked) opposition leader who could replace Zia at the head of a military-backed "civilian" government is former Air Marshal Asghar Khan. Khan heads the Tehrik-i-Istiqal, a small middle-class based party largely created as a vehicle for his political ambitions, but which has been active in recent public opposition to the regime. Asked about the possibility of a post-Zia regime headed by someone like Khan, Khar replied that: "They might try to have another adventure and might think this is a solution. I don't think this is a solution; not because I am a PPP man, but because this kind of thing will again rebound."

Resistance to any kind of deal with Asghar Khan and similar political leaders is strong within the ranks of the PPP. Despite numerous offers to form a united front with the PPP by Khan, this has not been reciprocated by Mrs. Bhutto, although it is well-known that some rightwing PPP leaders are favorable and have had talks with General Zia as well. But PPP cadre remember well that Khan and the other opposition leaders gave full backing to the regime's overthrow of Bhutto, the man still revered by most Pakistanis as the only political leader of stature in recent history.

Zia's Islamic terror

Zia has attempted to stem the discontent in Pakistan through a series of "Islamization" measures, supposedly aimed to make Pakistan a thoroughly Islamic state. These measures however have only sparked further unrest and are only popular among the tiny minority of fundamentalists led by the Pakistani branch of the infamous Muslim Brotherhood, known there as the Jamaate Islami.

One such measure was the forced implementation of the Islamic "wealth tax," the *zakat*, through the confiscation by the government of 2.5 percent of all savings accounts, securities and annuities. Pakistani citizens woke up one morning in June to find the tax withdrawn from their accounts. One section of the Pakistani Muslim population, the minority Shia sect, immediately reacted with mass demonstrations, complaining that the tax should be voluntary and not used for the benefit of the majority Sunni sect.

In a rare display of popular outrage in early July, tens of thousands of Shia demonstrators besieged government offices in Islamabad. President Zia was forced to promise a revision of the tax code—due to be

announced on Sept. 15—in order to disperse the demonstrators. While political circles in Pakistan are not necessarily sympathetic to the particular concerns of Shia religious leaders, the event was seen as a significant sign of the weakness of the regime.

The reaction to the regime's plans to impose "Islamic law" was also significant. On several occasions, in marches and mass meetings Pakistani lawyers have protested the plans to dissolve the civil court system, already undermined by military tribunals, and have called for repeal of constitutional amendments weakening civil courts, a return to civilian rule and free national elections. Many lawyers have been arrested by the regime.

General Zia has tried to use Islam in another way—through a rising tide of anti-Indian propaganda designed to appeal to anti-Indian sentiment long inculcated among Pakistanis. The incidents of communal and Muslim violence in India recently—organized by the Muslim Brotherhood's networks in that country—were the subject of massive anti-Indian propaganda on "Islamic" themes in the government-controlled media of Pakistan. The main result of this, however, has only been to cause a severe deterioration in Indo-Pakistani relations.

According to a recent report in the Indian press, Benazir Bhutto, in a speech delivered to the Karachi Bar Association last May and appended to an appeal sent to Muslim countries, condemned the regime's Islamic fundamentalism as a "theocratic oligarchy." Referring to the creation of a "mullah-military complex" which has "ravaged" Pakistan, Miss Bhutto came down decidedly in favor of a secular state and against the Islamic fundamentalists who she declared are "sponsored by imperialism," a clear reference to Brzezinski's backing for the "Islamic card."

'The lull before the storm'

In the words of Mustapha Khar the situation in Pakistan now "is like the lull before the storm." The unprecedented political repression of the Zia regime, unmatched even by Pakistan's two previous military regimes, has kept a lid on normal political activity. Parties like the PPP, itself a relatively late development in Pakistani political life, have had difficulty facing the impact of mass arrests of party cadre and leaders. But as Khar put it: "For the first time people have realized that to fight this situation you have to be more militant. So we had to organize the party a little differently. It took time and it took patience."

That Zia is now in great trouble is not in doubt. Yet he has managed to survive much longer than most observers, including this writer, expected, in part through the unwavering backing of the military and a campaign of ruthless political terror.

The Afghan crisis has been a boon of sorts for Zia,

giving him the lever to gain financial and military backing from the U.S., China, the Saudis, and others in greater amount than he might have otherwise received. If those same backers decide that Zia is now expendable, he has nowhere to turn, certainly not to Moscow which has taken a hard line toward the regime for its open backing for the interference into Afghanistan.

Perhaps the more interesting question is whether Pakistan's political leaders and parties, particularly the PPP, are fully prepared to take advantage of this situation. Or will they too become pawns of a geopolitical game which has already been responsible for the murder of Bhutto and the threat to the very sovereignty of Pakistan as a nation?

Ghulam Mustapha Khar: 'The Lull before the storm'

The following interview was conducted by Asia Editor Daniel Sneider in early August with exiled Pakistani politician Ghulam Mustapha Khar, presently living in London. Khar is formerly the Governor of the Punjab, a member of the Pakistani National Assembly several times, and at one time a close political adviser to the late Pakistani Premier Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. Khar is presently active outside Pakistan as a leader of the Pakistan Peoples Party although he is viewed by many party members as affiliated with the "right wing" of the party. For a period of time in the 1970s Mr. Khar opposed Mr. Bhutto and rejoined him shortly before his overthrow by General Ziaul Haq in mid-1977.

Next week the EIR will publish an exclusive interview with Shahnawaz Bhutto, the son of the murdered leader.

Q: The reports which now appear in the Western press concerning Pakistan portray the situation as one of stability with no serious challenge to the rule of military dictator General Ziaul Haq. Could you comment on that view and describe the situation in Pakistan now as you see it?

A: . . . The situation in Pakistan is that even if elections are held, the overwhelming majority will vote for the People's Party. As a matter of fact the opposition doesn't gain anything by elections. The main thing is that they have become so unpopular that they also realize now if they have to survive politically, they have no choice but to go and talk for elections. That's why they are talking for elections.

It is this kind of instability. The question is that it has developed in such a way that it is like the lull before the

storm. Before this time, the view was that General Ayub or General Yahya were also military dictators but the difference was that they did not ban political activity in total. They allowed some form of political activity in one form or another.

That is why all the political parties in our country were organized or tuned for two things: one was to take out big processions and the other was to vote in elections for their political party or personalities. But this man [Zia] for the first time, especially after the execution of Mr. Bhutto, the force which he started using—the lashings, beating up and all sorts of things—the full system of politics was disrupted. Anybody who came out was lashed. Anybody who tried to do something was either beaten up or broken, put in jail. So it took time and now I think some of the organizations are coming into being.

The people also have started to organize themselves in a different way because with the manner in which he is using force, the people are also beginning to think that unless they use force they will not be able to remove him.

This is my assessment, that in another three or four months you will see a lot of activity in Pakistan.

Q: It was reported in the Indian press that you made some predictions on the political situation including that the PPP plans to launch a mass movement. . . .

A: For two or three years there has not been political activity in Pakistan. . . .

Q: You anticipated my question.

A: In Pakistan the people were organized in normal political parties. This is for the first time that people have realized that to fight this situation you have to be more militant. So we had to organize the party a little differently. It took time and it took patience. Public meetings were not allowed, even in meetings in the houses people were caught and arrested.

Until Bhutto's death people kept thinking this man is promising elections and he is going to have elections, and people thought they will take all their venom and anger out in voting against him. Only last year, about nine or 10 months ago this was decided and we finally realized that no elections would be held, that there was no question after Mr. Bhutto's hanging that Zia cannot afford to have elections. If he can't afford to have elections then we have to restore democracy in our national interest or we don't know what will happen. So let us make an effort and organize it and throw him out.

Q: So you feel the situation has reached a point now that the PPP and the other forces have a sufficient organizational capability to be able to act to sustain a movement against Zia?

A: All the national forces, all the people who believe in democracy, are absolutely united on one point—that Zia

has to be overthrown at all cost and then we can ensure some sort of normal democracy. He and his few cronies just can't afford to have elections, unless each and every member of the PPP is killed or dead, which is not possible.

Q: If you can't have elections now, what is the means by which that government is going to be ousted? Are you thinking in terms of elements of the military acting in support of the PPP? Do you think there is a possibility of a coup against General Zia?

A: I don't know, because if the institution of the military is to be saved in Pakistan, and it should not be destroyed, the only sensible thing one can do with army generals is remove General Zia and bring in somebody else who should hold elections, because it will be much easier for him to communicate with the leaders and political forces. This man has burned all his boats and there is nobody who is prepared to talk to him because nobody can trust him. Even if some people trusted him or are able to talk to him, the pressure of the people is such that once you go on to talk to him or trust him you lose your popular support, which no political leader is prepared to lose.

Q: To your knowledge, are there elements of the Pakistani armed forces that are thinking in terms of getting rid of him?

A: I think there are a lot of officers who are positively thinking of getting rid of General Zia because they see a grave danger. They say, and I think they believe, that if it becomes too late they may have to face a situation similar to that which the army in Iran faced. Because the hatred against the armed forces is becoming more and more intense and ultimately if the power goes to the street then there will be no compromise because then people will want everything. Now there is a time when the army can act and save their situation, and a lot of bloodshed can be avoided. But again, it is a question of time.

Q: What is the state of the PPP right now?

A: Most of the people are out of jail but most of the people have cases against them, just to keep the sword hanging. . . . As a matter of fact there is no such thing as a political solution without the participation of the PPP at this time. And I think it would be indefensible as a move by anybody who is a well-wisher of Pakistan, inside or outside Pakistan, to try to keep the PPP out. It would not be workable or acceptable. We would again go through the same cycle. This country is a poor country; it cannot afford to go through the business of new arrangements everyday.

Q: I think you are obliquely referring to, if I could spell it out, the possibility that circles in the U.S. may consider it necessary to remove General Zia and replace him with

someone more acceptable, let's say [former Air Marshal] Asghar Khan?

A: They might try to have another adventure and might think this is a solution. I don't think this is a solution. Not because I am a PPP man, but because this kind of thing will again rebound. The best thing is if a realistic attitude is taken from the beginning. I can assure you that in the PPP and its leadership there are a lot of sensible people who do realize what is good for us and bad for us. There is no such thing as is projected by some people that they [the PPP] have closed their eyes to everything except Pakistan.

We want stability in Pakistan and we want to make every effort for better relations with everybody.

Q: One thing on everyone's mind is that Zia has survived the last period in part because of the Afghanistan crisis and the way he has utilized that to shore up his own regime. . . . After the squabble about the "peanuts" and so on, aid has been coming through from the World Bank, U.S., etc. How do you view that whole question? Could you comment on the policies of nations which have supported Zia?

A: I have no grudge against any country who has supported General Zia because basically the policies of any country are made in their own interest first and then other aspects come in. The only thing I say is that the policy of the U.S. specially toward General Zia temporarily may have paid some sort of dividend, may have produced some results but finally if this sort of policy continues it will be more damaging to the U.S. than to any other country. The government and people of the U.S. have been very kind to Pakistan from the beginning and they have made a big contribution in building Pakistan and many other things, but now it is not the Pakistan of 15 or 20 or 30 years ago. It is not individual matters with the rest of the country not politically awake.

Today every Pakistani thinks and knows what is good for him and ultimately real friendship will lie with the people. By supporting General Zia it is unfortunate that even the common man of Pakistan gets the impression that the survival of General Zia has been because he has been supported by the U.S.

Q: What about the Chinese role in regard to Zia?

A: Mr. Bhutto was the architect of the China relations at one time.

Q: Now he is being repaid for his efforts in a very brutal way . . . a way I doubt he would appreciate.

A: I would rather not make any comment on this.

Q: Let me pick up the Indian side for the record. Mrs. Gandhi, when she was out of power made some very strong efforts to save Mr. Bhutto's life and the present

Indian government is not at all happy with the situation in Pakistan. I can say from my own experiences that there is a very clear understanding in India that a stable Pakistan is in the interest of India, and the present government in Pakistan is not going to produce that kind of stability.

A: I think Mrs. Indira Gandhi before coming to power has done a very wise and respected thing expected from her, and as a matter of fact there might be some sort of embarrassment from the present government, but I can assure you that the people of Pakistan appreciated these gestures, and they remember it, and ultimately this will pay. Even today if you talk to an ordinary Pakistani, he will say that we are grateful to Indira Gandhi, and this is exactly what he can say. He cannot go beyond that, and there is realization that if Pakistan is going to be stable, a good relationship with Mrs. Gandhi's government will add to the strength of the democratic forces in Pakistan.

Q: Let me take you back to something you were talking about earlier . . . how General Zia has managed to stay in power. Now what about the way in which he has utilized Islam as a justification for his rule. What is your understanding of the role of Jamaati Islami, which might otherwise be referred to as the Muslim Brotherhood, in this situation?

A: General Zia in my opinion has done more damage to Pakistan than anybody else since he came to power. Now his brand of Islam, to the people, it has not benefitted the people in any way, it has been a great disappointment for the people of Pakistan. So far as support is concerned he has no support whatsoever. If he had support for his Islamic theory or his way of governing the country then it would be the best time for General Zia to have either an election or a referendum or to take a vote of confidence as Zia had initially stated. This he tried but by banning the PPP and allowing basic elections and soon he realized he had no support whatsoever and his real enemy emerged as the PPP. So under these conditions if [Zia's] Islam was accepted by the people then the party which was opposing him or the party which really wants him out their candidates would not have won. Their leaders and chairmen were not even allowed to campaign for one day. After that, he had a complete somersault and went back and said there will be no elections in Pakistan unless he thinks the time has come. He will never think the time has come. So under any circumstances if there was any possibility for support of the people, he would have shown it to the people. He would have shown it to the international world to have some sort of credibility.

Q: How would you describe his brand of Islam?

A: Disaster. His kind of Islam I would say is as if Islam

was projected 1400 years ago. In this way I think there would have been no Muslims left in the world.

There are certain things you can sympathize with, but in Islam there is one thing: a believer of Islam is not supposed to lie, especially when he makes a pledge to the people. This man, this is the sixth time he goes before the people and still no elections. There is another thing that you give justice. There were instances in the beginning when Islam was spreading even the greatest people were asked questions, even the common man had the right and they replied. So in history there are many cases. The only people who have suffered, who have been lashed and who have been beaten up except Mr. Bhutto, have been the poor people who tried to oppose him. He has made two cases, either this was rape or this was theft, but basically thousands and thousands of people who have been flogged have been his political opponents, just because they did not approve of him. My God, if this is the way that Islam could have survived then it is disastrous.

Q: The recent austerity measures adopted as a result of the pressures of the Pakistani debt rescheduling—in fact General Zia seems to be utilizing Islam as the justification for implementing very severe economic austerity. New taxes are put forward in the guise of Islamic tax and so forth. How do you view that?

A: Zia's real support was in the high classes of people. Even they are taking their money out and this is because their money is being taken by force. He does not have any concept. Whatever somebody tells him this is good, he does it. Once he goes to a point and then he sees the danger and then reverses himself. He is a sort of cunning person. . . .

Q: Do you think if the U.S. and Chinese withdrew support from General Zia that that would have significant impact on his rule?

A: My assessment is that he would not last for even a month. I don't know, I might be completely wrong but my impression is coming very soon that this realization must already be there. That he has played all his cards and that his hands are empty. I don't think even the U. S. would be able to keep him for long even if they gave him all their power and support. It would be a futile exercise. He would be doing more damage to the U. S. than anyone else. His rule ended very soon after Mr. Bhutto's execution; now he just has a bonus that might last a few months or a year. That is a different thing altogether.

We have had dictators before. He is not the first dictator ever, but they have created some sort of a base or some sort of support. Ayub ruled for eight or nine years, so he created a system, but this man has no base at all. He is just surviving. ■