

The U.S., Zia, and the future of Pakistan

The picture which Begum Bhutto paints of Pakistan under the Zia regime is a grim one. However, there is clear evidence that indeed "the fear has gone." The most crucial crack in the wall of terror was the forced release of Begum Bhutto herself, a highly visible victory over a regime which was openly intending to murder her by denying her medical treatment abroad. The importance of that victory was evident in the tumultuous scene which occurred at the Karachi airport as Begum Bhutto departed the country. An eyewitness to the scene there described it to us.

In open defiance of the police and the army, thousands of people, many of them women, gathered to see her off. The crowds were thick around her, men and women weeping in the emotionally charged atmosphere. The police and army completely withdrew from sight and officials at the airport treated her as if she was the leader of the country. Quietly, officials, including army men, came up to her and said: "Begum, we are with you." The crowd was so intense that the weak Begum Bhutto fainted and was picked up and carried in through the airport by her personal physician, Dr. Saeed, who accompanied her out of the country.

Begum Bhutto contends, without fear of contradiction, that her party would win an overwhelming victory in any free election in Pakistan. This is a fact admitted by even supporters of the regime outside the country. It is precisely for this reason that the junta has refused to hold elections, breaking every promise to do so. And it is also for this reason that dictator Zia has every interest in following up his murder of Z. A. Bhutto with the murder of his widow and daughter, who are the leaders of the PPP and the symbols of resistance to his rule.

The welcome given Zia by the Reagan administration in Washington flies in the face of this reality. While State Department officials proclaim that elections will be held in "two to three years," privately they know perfectly well that the Zia regime is an unstable dictatorship totally unsupported by its population. Perhaps they also know what Pakistani sources told us, that a significant portion of the army officers do not support the regime and want to "return to the barracks" and let civilian rule come back. Where will Washington be when the inevitable happens, when the dictatorship of Zia falls, probably in a far-from-peaceful way?

As we concluded our conversation with this graceful and courageous leader, we asked Begum Bhutto what she would say to the American people on the occasion of Zia's visit to the United States.

I would like to tell them that when there was martial law in Poland, there was such a hue and cry. Even wheat was stopped to the Polish people. But when there is such repression in Pakistan, much worse martial law than in Poland, why do you give them wheat? Not only wheat but arms, ammunition, F-16s. It's not fair!! Treat us both alike—treat all countries alike.

Bhutto supporters 'flog' Zia in U.S.

by Susan Brady

Judging from the itinerary, the first state visit to America of Pakistan's Chief Martial Law Administrator, Gen. Zia ul-Haq, was designed to give an official boost to the petty tyrant's status and make a show of "cementing" relations. It was Zia who overthrew the democratically elected Z. A. Bhutto in 1977 and subsequently hanged the national leader and founder of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP)—clamping a reign of terror over the country which he dares not lift for fear of immediately being driven from power. Since 1979 the United States has embraced the Zia junta as a "bulwark" against the Soviet Union.

But as it turned out, the official welcome, replete with pomp and professions of deep friendship, was unofficially punctured time and again, starting at Zia's first meeting, a working luncheon with Secretary of State George Schultz, where the dictator was confronted by a group of angry demonstrators led by Dr. Ghulam Hussain, Secretary-General of the PPP and representatives of the Club of Life. They let it be known, in demonstrations, press conferences and meetings in the capital, that all over the world, opponents of butchery and barbarism will not rest until Zia's regime is compelled to return power to the elected representatives of the people of Pakistan.

The demonstration at the State Department was only one of the many erupting across the United States as Zia visited New York, Houston, and San Francisco. The PPP, the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy in Pakistan (MRD), the Club of Life and National Democratic Policy Committee (NDPC) had already come together this fall in a successful international campaign to force the release from arrest in Pakistan of Begum Nusrat Bhutto, PPP chairman and widow of Z. A. Bhutto, to permit her to travel to Europe for treatment of lung cancer. The coalition is now pressing the demand for the release of Benazir Bhutto, her daughter, to permit her to carry on her mother's political leadership within Pakistan.

Before his entire entourage, Zia was confronted on this score by a representative of the NDPC following Zia's Dec. 9 address to the Foreign Policy Association in New York City. "General Zia, are you going to release Benazir Bhutto, or are you going to murder her the way you murdered her father?" the spokesman challenged him. "You are a killer. You are flooding our streets with heroin," he continued,

waving his finger in Zia's face.

The effect of the campaign against Zia's corrupt, illegal rule can already be seen. It is not every day that a visiting head of state is asked publicly and repeatedly to account for his regime's repressive practices and inability to halt a growing narcotics industry that has made it the world's number-one supplier of heroin. By day two of the visit, at the National Press Club, the homicidal military ruler was reportedly "bristling" at questions put to him about his human-rights record.

In five years, Zia has taken a democratic country that was progressing into modern nationhood under Prime Minister Bhutto and turned it into a fear-ridden, unstable center of international narcotics traffic—a tinder box which Zia likes to describe as "a bastion of stability." This devolution, which began with Henry Kissinger's 1976 threat to Bhutto that he would "make a horrible example" of the prime minister should he persist in his plans to develop nuclear energy technology in Pakistan, threatens now to splinter the country.

Today Zia is conducting his first state visit to the United States, to be followed by a state visit to Canada, in an effort to cement U.S. support and press demands for continuing multibillion-dollar aid. Fresh from a tour of Moscow, Peking, and Southeast Asia, orchestrated to give the little hitman the aura of a "world statesman," Zia had an itinerary that included meetings with five top cabinet officials, from Schultz and Defense Secretary Weinberger to Attorney General Smith, Treasury's Regan and Agriculture Secretary Block. Zia will also meet with such Anglo-American financial and foreign-policy spokesmen as World Bank president A. W. Clausen, Bank of America Chairman Leland Prussia, Citibank's Walter Wriston, Occidental Petroleum's Armand Hammer, and AID Director McPherson as well as Zbigniew Brzezinski, Alexander Haig, and Richard Nixon. Finally, a rendezvous in New York was arranged with the reputed snake-charmer Henry Kissinger himself.

The U.S. visit was not intended to secure anything of substance in terms of new agreements. So far the establishment of a Joint Commission to promote the two countries' political, economic and cultural relations—a product of the Zia-Shultz working luncheon—is the only specific product of the Washington leg of the tour.

Elaborate measures were taken by the Pakistan Embassy and Zia's allies in the administration to protect the evidently paranoid dictator from any sign of opposition. The so-called Moslem Development Corporation bought up permits for pro-Zia demonstrations covering the entirety of Pennsylvania Avenue and Lafayette Park facing the White House—an area that holds 4,000 people!—where Zia met with President Reagan on Dec. 7. Of course, no such demonstration was held, or even intended. The Embassy is well aware of the impossibility of rounding up even a hundred to demonstrate for Zia; the transaction was solely aimed at preventing the anti-Zia forces from demonstrating there, and was apparently undertaken when Embassy personnel concluded that earlier efforts to terrorize and pay off individual Pakistan Peoples

Party organizers in the U.S. were a failure.

The truth is heard

But Zia could not help seeing the placards and hearing the chants that boomed over the loudspeaker from the demonstration held along the route he had to take to get to the White House, and the message has broken through in the press as well. The *Baltimore Sun* was compelled to note, in an otherwise scandalously inaccurate article, that Zia was followed by "an accusative shadow," Dr. Ghulam Hussain, and the *New York Times* quoted a PPP spokesman on Zia's record of criminality. On Dec. 6 Zia had to be hustled in through the back door of the Sheraton Park Hotel where he was scheduled to address "the Pakistani community." Outside the hotel was a 45-man picket line, with Dr. Hussain at the microphone delivering the message he communicated to Congress in a special message earlier in the day.

"I am the Secretary-General of the largest democratic party in Pakistan, the party which sponsored the only democratically elected Prime Minister in my nation's history, the party which your own State Department freely admits would today surely win any honest election in Pakistan," states Dr. Hussain, a medical doctor by profession. Twice elected to the National Assembly of Pakistan, and appointed Minister of Railways in Bhutto's cabinet, he was jailed without trial for three and a half years under Zia. "I can therefore speak knowledgeably about my own country's interest; but I also say to American patriots that it will not serve your interests to rely on the man who so easily betrayed his own country and violated his oath just to get power; who judicially murdered Prime Minister Z. A. Bhutto; who has restored the practice of public flogging and amputations; and whose brutal rule threatens to splinter the nation itself."

The United States took drastic measures in response to the imposition of martial law in Poland, Hussain pointed out to NBC-TV, AP and four other networks at an emergency press conference at Capitol Hill held just before Zia's scheduled arrival for meetings with House and Senate Foreign Affairs Committees. But in the case of Pakistan—the U.S. embraces the illegal regime and showers its dictator with more than \$3 billion in military and other aid!

Hussain has insisted that the alliance with Zia violates U.S. national interests. Not only is the Zia regime responsible for overseeing Pakistan's emergence as the number-one supplier of heroin to the world, but the belief that Zia is a "bulwark" against the Soviet Union is a myth. In fact the Zia junta is fostering the break-up of Pakistan, preparing the way for another Afghanistan or Iran—as the rebellions in Baluchistan and the activities of the fundamentalist mullahs attest.

Official spokesmen for the administration assert openly that Pakistan's strategic position in the Asian geopolitical scheme—named the "Great Game" by the British colonialists—overrides all other considerations. Pressed as to the effect of hosting Zia on the integrity of U.S. foreign policy, a senior official shouted, "I don't care! I don't care!"