

Junta readies Bhutto's murder

The military junta of Pakistani General Zia ul Haq appears to be readying itself and the nation to murder imprisoned Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, awaiting only the decision of the Supreme Court on Bhutto's appeal of a death sentence conviction given him by the junta's courts.

Pakistani sources to have massively deployed troops into all Pakistani cities prepared to crush outbreaks of resistance to their move.

The London *Daily Telegraph* also reported that leaders of Bhutto's Pakistan Peoples Party are going underground in anticipation of the court's decision and a feared general roundup of party members. The decision of the court, which is "writing its judgment," is expected any day now and the time between its announcement and the carrying out of the execution of Bhutto if the court upholds his sentence will be swift, according to well-informed sources.

Latest reports, relayed from sources inside Pakistan, are that a decision will come down between Jan. 26 and the end of the first week in February. Rumors are also rife, some predicting Bhutto will hang, others that the court is split. One report indicates that the army itself is split three ways, and that two of the factions do not want Bhutto hanged because of the disruption it would cause, and instead want the army to get out of politics. But so far Martial Law Administrator Zia and the fanatic Muslim group most strongly supporting him have not indicated any change in their desire to get Bhutto permanently out of the way.

The Pakistani junta received important backing from the Peking regime, which sent Vice-Premier Li Hsien-nien on an unscheduled three-day visit to Pakistan on his way back from Africa. The Chinese official praised the government and gave Chinese backing to Pakistani claims against India over Kashmir, despite an upcoming visit of the Indian Foreign Minister to China in several weeks.

It is known that the Chinese, long-time allies of Pakistan, have made it clear they have no concern over what happens inside

Pakistan as long as their strategic interests are served.

The Iran connection

The murder of Bhutto, according to many observers, will trigger chaos inside Pakistan within a short time as the junta and its backers among the fanatic reactionary Muslim Jamaati Islami party, the Pakistan branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, try to hold onto power with little support in the population. The events in Iran will encourage the spread of chaos and the disintegration of Pakistan, which in turn will have an impact on the political stability of India.

Already Pakistan is being used for Muslim Brotherhood destabilization operations into Afghanistan. The Jamaati Islami of Afghanistan, operating out of Pakistan, claims that it is leading tribal revolts inside Afghanistan, attempting to undermine the revolutionary government of Prime Minister Taraaki. Taraaki

has vowed to fight "the black international," as he calls it, and the Afghan government stated recently that Western press claims of widespread revolts inside the country are "lies."

The fate of Bhutto remains a matter of urgent international concern to halt the collapse of the entire region. Former Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi recently told a cheering Muslim audience in southern India that she had sent letters to many Prime Ministers and Presidents urging their intervention to save Bhutto.


Both the Pakistani government and a minister of the Desai government in India itself responded with attacks on Mrs. Gandhi for "interfering in the internal affairs of Pakistan." However, the Defense Minister of India, Jagjivan Ram, has recently warned the U.S. against any attempt to escalate arms sales to Pakistan. Such sales have been reported recently as under consideration to "shore up Pakistan" in wake of the Iran events.

What Jack Anderson and Katharine Graham Wouldn't Print

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