

MRS. BHUTTO'S ROLE EMERGES IN PAKISTAN

As Head of Leading Party She Gets Ready for Elections Called for November by General Zia

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KARACHI, Pakistan, Aug. 12 — Pakistani analysts and foreign diplomats here say that as matters now stand, President Mohammed Zia ul-Haq, the country's military leader, faces the prospect of turning over power to the widow of the man whose death warrant he signed four months ago.

They qualify this scenario, however, by adding that something will most likely arise before the elections, scheduled for Nov. 17, to derail such a dramatic eventuality. However, they add that at the moment General Zia insists the elections will take place.

According to the reckoning of the observers, the only political group with any chance of attracting majority support is the Pakistan People's Party, which was founded by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the executed former Prime Minister. And they point out, in preparing a case for the unlikely succession, that the party is now being led by Mr. Bhutto's widow, Nusrat, who is about to end a period of mourning by calling the faithful to organize.

Mrs. Bhutto charged at a news conference today that she was "100 percent sure" that her husband had not died by hanging and that people who had seen his body had told her it did not bear the marks of strangulation. She said she had not been able to establish that her husband was tortured.

Fires of Vengeance Fanned

Mr. Bhutto, who was overthrown by the military in July 1977, was executed after courts found him guilty of having ordered the death of a political opponent. While Mrs. Bhutto was sequestered at the family estate in Larkana, the fires of political vengeance were fanned by her daughter, Benazir, a 26-year-old Oxford graduate who has referred to General Zia as a monster and holds him responsible for her father's death.

While her mother will now be the official head of the party, Benazir is regarded as its driving force. Yesterday the daughter denounced a plan for proportional representation that was suggested by General Zia as a formula for the promised elections. The general submitted the plan a month ago to various political groups.

The plan ostensibly seeks to remedy the traditional imbalance of Pakistani politics, where a group like the Pakistan People's Party could win 65 percent of the seats in Parliament by gaining only 35 percent of the vote. The situation arises because of the large number of splinter parties, which despite the military Government's efforts have failed to form a coalition.

Under the general's proposal all votes would be weighted and seats apportioned in direct relation to vote totals. Abdul Hafiz Pirzada, a member of the People's Party executive, said in an interview that

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Gen. Mohammed Zia ul-Haq

the plan "was just another attempt to quash us."

The 47-year-old lawyer, who was jailed for 19 months without charges being filed, listed other alleged harassments. He pointed out that Mrs. Bhutto and her daughter were kept under house arrest, and said that the former Prime Minister's widow still faced proceedings before military tribunals empowered to bar her from political activity. The charges, he said, "were miniscule formalities having to do with taxes."

Mr. Pirzada also declared that while insisting there would be elections General Zia had not precluded a continued role for the military. Indeed, the general has talked of constitutional changes that would provide for the "doctrine of necessity." In effect, this would give constitutional sanction to the military as a governmental watchdog.

General Zia has referred to this approach as "the Turkish solution," though there seems to be no precedent for it in the Turkish Constitution. In practice the plan would empower Pakistan's military leaders to ask a government to resign in the event of what they considered to be a crisis. This action would not be interpreted as a coup.

Full political activity such as public meetings are still banned in Pakistan under martial law, but there has been a gradual relaxation and newspapers are no longer subject to prior censorship.

Open and Critical Debate

General Zia's suggestions are being debated openly and critically. A very real possibility is that if they were carried out the People's Party might decide to boycott the elections. This in turn could lead to civil disturbances.

Another possibility cited by those who do not believe that the military could relinquish power to the party and relatives of the man they toppled and executed, is that both Nusrat and Benazir Bhutto will be disqualified from holding elected office, leaving the party leaderless. It was suggested that Mrs. Bhutto would be barred by the tribunal and her daughter ruled out by a fiat requiring a prime minister to be at least 35 years old.

A Pakistani journalist offered the view "that perhaps these generals are smarter than people think and that they know no party can right the mess it would inherit."

This notion was indirectly supported by Mr. Pirzada, who observed: "Sometimes I shudder to think what will happen when we come back into power. The country is near bankruptcy and the people's expectations are so high."