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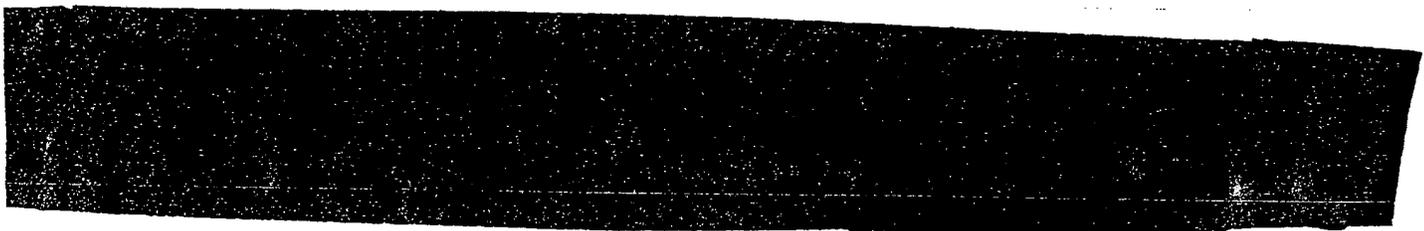
15 June 1988

Pakistan: Implications of the Dissolution of the Civilian Government ~~(S-NF)~~

Summary

President Zia has promised parliamentary elections by the end of August, but we believe he will postpone them until early 1989 to facilitate his effort to split the Muslim League and co-opt its more pliable members. Zia fired Prime Minister Junejo and dissolved the National Assembly because Zia believed they threatened to undermine the Army's preeminent position in Pakistan. ~~(S-NF)~~

The ouster of the Junejo government calls into question Zia's basic commitment to democracy. Unlike his July 1977 coup, Zia's actions now are solely to protect himself and the Army. Civilian resentment of the Army's hold is likely to grow and fester, while Army discipline could begin to erode as younger officers become more politicized. ~~(S-NF)~~



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The dissolution of civilian government strengthens Pakistan's willingness to ignore Soviet pressure to end aid to the Afghan resistance. Islamabad also will move more forcefully to install a pro-Pakistani government in Kabul, probably led by fundamentalist resistance leader Gulbuddin Hikmatyar. Zia will not seek to alter relations with the United States, but ousting Junejo and attempting to install a Gulbuddin government in Afghanistan probably will stress ties. Restrictions on democratic institutions are likely to heighten anti-American sentiments in Pakistan as the United States is increasingly identified with Zia. (S-NF)

President Zia's firing of Prime Minister Junejo and dissolving of the National Assembly on 29 May ended an experiment in power sharing that he began with nonparty parliamentary elections in February 1985.¹ Zia justified his actions by citing Article 58 of the Pakistani Constitution, which permits the President to act when he judges that parliament cannot cope with a breakdown of public order. He accused the Junejo government of rampant corruption, obstructing Islamization, and permitting the economy to stagnate. He promised to appoint a caretaker government and to hold elections within 90 days. His failure to renew his commitment to early elections in his 30 May national address, however, promoted public speculation that he would postpone elections indefinitely. (C-NF)

On 9 June, Zia announced an interim Cabinet composed largely of ministers from Junejo's Cabinet and the Pakistan Muslim League (PML). Most are personally loyal to Zia, and some served under his 1977-85 martial law administration. Zia did not name a Prime Minister but did appoint Aslam Khattak as Senior Minister. Khattak, who will also hold the Communications portfolio and serve as Chairman of the Provincial Coordination Committee, will probably act as de facto Prime Minister. Zia did not set a date for elections. On 15 June the Cabinet recommended the elections be held on a party basis. We believe Zia will concur. (C-NF)



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Why Did Zia Act?

We believe that Zia fired Junejo and dissolved the National Assembly because of his and the Army's discontent over civilian attacks on the military's independence:

¹Zia did not dissolve the Senate, a less powerful body whose members were not known for their independence. Junejo's Pakistan Muslim League held three-fourths of the 237 seats in the National Assembly. The rest were split among religious parties and independents. The Pakistan People's Party, led by Benazir Bhutto, boycotted the 1985 elections and held no seats. (C-NF)

Tried and True Advisers

In forming an interim government, Zia has surrounded himself with tried and true loyalists, many of whom will privately speak their minds and disagree with him, but who will accept Zia's decision as the last word. His advisers so far have been drawn from a pool of his colleagues whose association with him predates his coming to power. (CONF)

Mohammed Aslam Khattak, Senior Minister and Interim Communications Minister

An 80-year-old lawyer, who has worked with every national government since 1965 . . .

Shahabzada Yaqub Khan, Interim Foreign Minister

Longtime associate and trusted adviser . . . former soldier . . . architect of Pakistan's foreign policy until forced out by then Prime Minister Junejo in November 1987.

Fazle Haq, Interim Chief Minister, North West Frontier Province

Former Governor and Martial Law Administrator for the province . . . ethnic Pushtun; staunch supporter of the Afghan resistance and refugees . . . able mix of soldier, administrator, and politician, according to US diplomats . . . one of last Pakistanis to be trained at British Indian Army School at Dehra Dun.

Ghulam Ishaq Khan, Senate Chairman

Longtime friend and political ally of Zia's . . . Acting President when Zia is out of country . . . one of Zia's closest advisers on many political issues, including nuclear program . . . dominated Pakistan's economic affairs as Finance Minister 1978-85 . . . de facto prime minister during martial law years.

Defense budget wrangling probably heightened Zia's belief that the National Assembly was threatening the Army. The US Embassy reports that the projected 1988-89 budget might have frozen defense spending and that a senior Defense Ministry official had reportedly warned that a freeze would not be acceptable so long as external threats (from Afghanistan and India) to Pakistan's security persisted



Zia's public rationale that disorder in the Sind had reached major proportions, the Junejo government was corrupt, the economy stagnant, and Islamization stymied were probably only secondary considerations:

[REDACTED]

- Zia and Junejo agreed on a strategy to lessen ethnic tension. In April Junejo removed Sind's corrupt and ineffective Chief Minister, a move Junejo had long resisted as setting a precedent for his possible removal.
- Corruption may have increased after 1985, but neither it nor economic stagnation had surfaced as an issue between Zia and Junejo.
- Zia had signaled his displeasure at PML resistance to proposed Islamic legislation broadening Federal Shariat Court jurisdiction and substituting Sharia law for Pakistan's English-derived legal code. Nevertheless, Zia had indicated that he was willing to respect the majority sentiment in parliament.

Prospects for Holding Elections

There is little chance that elections will be held by the end of August as Zia had promised. Nevertheless, we believe that Zia will hold elections.

Zia probably calculates that he can manipulate a weak, factionalized parliament and that legislation it passes will have more credibility than legislation by presidential fiat.

Moreover, one reading of the Pakistani Constitution would require Zia to declare a state of emergency or to impose martial law if he were to cancel elections, risking serious popular unrest, in our judgment. The Army could contain the unrest, but the necessity of having to do so would probably erode Army support for Zia. Nevertheless, we believe Zia would nullify the results and reimpose martial law if Junejo won a majority and threatened to use that majority to force Zia's resignation as President. (S-NF)

Undermining the Muslim League

We believe Zia intends to divide and discredit the Pakistan Muslim League, which, unchecked, could be his strongest parliamentary foe. Many PML politicians have told US diplomats that they are confident they can win reelection if elections are held in 90 days. These politicians concede, however, that a prolonged wait will seriously jeopardize their chances and promote the likelihood of a fragmented parliament. (S-NF)

Zia probably calculates that if Junejo—who has vowed to fight his dismissal at the polls—wins a renewed parliamentary majority he could demand Zia's resignation or try to curtail his authority to the fairly narrow powers given the president under Pakistan's Constitution. At the very least, Zia would be faced with the prospect that an alienated PML would refuse to reelect him President when his term expires in March 1990.

Zia has already begun to undercut the PML. He has accused the dismissed parliamentarians of misusing development funds in their districts and announced a corruption probe. US diplomats report that two PML members of the former Punjab Provincial Assembly have already been arrested. The probe will give Zia ammunition to either discredit or coerce PML candidates. Zia's dissolution of the provincial assemblies also undercuts the PML at the provincial level.

In the North West Frontier Province (NWFP), Zia named martial law era Governor Fazle Haq as Acting Chief Minister, securing an ally to run the NWFP while excluding the PML leadership. Fazle Haq has already reassembled most of his martial law era team and adds that Governor Fida Mohamad, a PML loyalist, may soon resign. Zia has not yet named interim governments in Sindh and Baluchistan Provinces. Zia's decision to name two Sindh

²Under Pakistan's Constitution, the president is chosen by an electoral college composed of the Senate, the National Assembly, and the provincial assemblies. (U)

and one Baluch who were cool to Junejo to the Federal Cabinet suggest that Zia is pursuing the same strategy there. (S NP)

Impact on Foreign Policy

We believe that Junejo's ouster will most significantly impact on Pakistan's Afghanistan policy and its relations with the Soviet Union and India. Pressure for concessions on Afghanistan had come from the dismissed civilians who feared that Soviet retaliation or delays in repatriating the Afghan refugees could damage their election prospects.

President Zia: A Man With a Mission

President Zia regards himself as "godfather" and permanent protector of his country. He probably sees the political stability of the nation as his personal responsibility. A commitment to preserve and protect the nation is a strong Pakistani military tradition, but Zia apparently has taken it on as his personal mission. (S NP)

The Army and Islam are the primary sources of Zia's core values. A deeply religious man, he often sees responsibilities as moral obligations and believes that Allah has chosen him to lead his country. He feels a duty to preserve Pakistan's Islamic identity. Zia's support for the Afghan resistance emanates from a special responsibility he feels to the resistance and the refugees as fulfilling his religious duty to his Islamic brethren. His aversion to political parties stems from his belief that they are un-Islamic. (S NP)

A product of a military heritage, Zia believes in the virtues of discipline and order. The Army was the backbone of his martial law administration and continues to be the base of his political support. Zia will continue to depend on and draw from the Army to fulfill his vision of Pakistani national integrity and Islamic purity. (C NP)

Short-Term Prospects—Zia In the Saddle

We believe that Zia has regained the initiative and will be able to control the timing and the format of the elections. The business community, a key group in any successful anti-Zia movement, was generally pleased by the dissolution of the National Assembly and will not rally to Junejo. The Jamaat Islami, Pakistan's strongest religious party and a participant in parliament, condemned Zia's action and has put out feelers to the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), but

[REDACTED]

the Jamaat sees the PML rather than Zia as its main foe. Jamaat leaders are in basic agreement with Zia on Afghanistan and Islamization. The Jamaat and Zia were tacit allies in the martial law era, and we believe they will again draw together [REDACTED]

Zia can probably co-opt a portion of the party, although many locally powerful provincial and National Assembly members will hedge their bets by running as independents. (S/NF)

[REDACTED]

Down the Road: A Coward Parliament and Political Instability

The ouster of the Junejo government calls into question Zia's basic commitment to democracy. In our judgment, the fundamental sin the Junejo government committed was not incompetence or venality, but crossing the unwritten boundary by challenging the primacy of Zia and the Army. We believe the implications for democracy in Pakistan are even more ominous than Zia's original coup against former Prime Minister Bhutto in 1977. Zia acted then because the Army believed that fighting between civilians over disputed elections threatened to tear the country apart. Zia's actions now are solely to protect himself and the Army. Public cynicism, already running high, would be accentuated if elections are delayed or are viewed as having been manipulated to return a parliament that Zia can easily dominate. (S/NF)

Junejo's ouster does not bode well for parliamentary independence regardless of whether the next elections are on a party or a nonparty basis. We believe the perception was growing prior to Junejo's ouster that Zia and the Army were prepared to accept a PML victory in the 1990 elections and to continue to relinquish their influence over the civilian government they had created. If this perception is replaced with the belief that Zia stifled Pakistan's latest democratic experiment because it was working too well, the successor parliament is likely to have great difficulty building credibility. We doubt that the next parliament will risk the same fate as the Junejo government by challenging Zia. In any event, the Army is likely to tolerate little or no probing into its activities or questioning of its share of the national budget, which we believe could run as high as one-half. (S/NF)

Civilian resentment of the Army's hold is likely to grow and fester. We do not believe that the civilians will be able to overturn the Army's hold for the foreseeable future. In our judgment, Army discipline is strong, and junior officer loyalty to the Army chain of command probably guarantees that the Army will remain loyal to Zia [REDACTED]

Implications for the United States

In the short run, Zia is unlikely to alter relations with the United States. He has told the US Ambassador that he wants more vigorous narcotics interdiction and has blamed the ousted civilians for

retarding US-sponsored efforts to eradicate opium poppy in the NWFP

Zia's attempt to impose a Gulbuddin-dominated government in Kabul could evoke considerable Afghan resistance and exile community opposition, confronting the United States with the choice of opposing Islamabad or being vulnerable to charges that it is betraying Afghan self-determination. (S, NP)