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Zia's Pakistan: The Politics of Survival



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An Intelligence Assessment

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May 1983*

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Zia's Pakistan: The Politics of Survival




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An Intelligence Assessment

This assessment was prepared by  of the
Office of Near East-South Asia Analysis. Comments
and queries are welcome and may be addressed to
the Chief, South Asia Division, NESA, 


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Key Judgments

*Information available
as of 15 March 1983
was used in this report.*

President Zia-ul-Haq faces no substantial challenge to his rule for now, although some senior Army and security officers believe public opinion is shifting against him and doubt that his government will survive the next two years. Zia, however, has proved a shrewd political survivor and could buy more time for his regime if the economy continues to grow, the opposition remains divided, and the political initiative remains in his hands.

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Zia's authoritarian regime has avoided overly repressive policies, though it has dealt firmly with organized demonstrations. It has given the country nearly six years of domestic stability and substantial economic progress. Zia also has been able to deal effectively with external threats. He has stood up to the Soviets on Afghanistan, while keeping channels open to a negotiated settlement; he has improved relations with India; and he has succeeded in gaining major economic aid and arms assistance from the United States.

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The President ultimately depends on the Army to remain in power. Although significant sentiment exists in the military for an end to martial law, most senior officers strongly believe the Army should remain united behind General Zia, who retains his position as Chief of the Army Staff. The Army as a whole is well disciplined and will back the regime as long as the domestic scene remains peaceful. Zia, however, cannot be certain of the Army's support if it is called upon to put down civil disorders, particularly in the all-important province of Punjab.

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Zia rules through a closed, highly centralized circle of military and civilian advisers. He has used arrests, travel restrictions, and censorship to keep his political opponents off balance. His main resistance, the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy (MRD), a coalition of eight opposition parties, is poorly organized and so far has lacked both a popular issue and an effective leader to galvanize an anti-Zia campaign. Its efforts over the past year to mount demonstrations against the regime have failed. The Pakistan People's Party, the party of the late Prime Minister Bhutto and the strongest group in the MRD, remains the most popular party in Pakistan, but it lacks strong organization and is factionalized. It depends on a dispersed constituency of the rural and urban poor that is best mobilized at the polls.

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Zia has marginally responded to calls for broader civilian participation by the establishment of elected local bodies and the appointive Federal Advisory Council, but neither of these moves has greatly strengthened his public support. The regime apparently has been aided by the acquiescence of the conservative political parties, Islamic fundamentalists, and interest groups such as bazaar merchants and local religious leaders that have benefited from Zia's policies. Support from these groups has kept the urban areas quiet, but Zia cannot count on them if the economy falters or if he makes a political or religious blunder. 


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Zia benefits, too, from popular fear that external enemies of Pakistan, particularly India or the Soviets in Afghanistan, would exploit domestic unrest. There is also concern in Punjab that a mass opposition movement could unloose serious separatist pressures in Baluchistan and possibly Sind. 

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Given the right circumstances, however, a mass opposition movement could arise rapidly and with little warning. Should the economy decline, a powerful opposition leader emerge, the situation in Afghanistan somehow become less threatening, or Zia blunder, the regime could find itself seriously threatened. In such an event, the Army probably would replace Zia with a more popular general who would negotiate a return to civilian rule on terms the Army could accept. The Army would attempt to preserve the present US-Pakistan relationship, but, if a Pakistan People's Party government succeeded in taking over, US-Pakistan ties, as well as Pakistan's stand on Afghanistan, probably would be significantly weakened. 

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Indications that the opposition was beginning to coalesce against Zia or that local police could not contain disturbances would be signs of serious trouble for the regime. So far, seriously disaffected groups in Pakistan, including lawyers, politicians, students, and minority Shias, have not combined against Zia, and local authorities have been able to deal effectively with most protests. Still, recent demonstrations by students over university issues, transport workers over increases in fuel prices, and Sunnis angry at government concessions to Shias have increased the level of unrest in Pakistan. 

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Zia will attempt to retain the political initiative over the next six months. He may hope that local elections this fall will provide an outlet for public grievances and has promised to provide the country with a framework for Islamic governance by mid-August. Zia's initiative probably will include nonpartisan national elections, with candidates screened for their Islamic fervor, and some provision for a political oversight role for the armed forces. Increasing dislike for the continuation of martial law among the public and the Army will make it difficult for Zia to renege on his promises. Nevertheless, the sharp departure that Zia apparently envisions from the parliamentary system enshrined in the 1973 constitution could bring opposition, political, and interest groups together and provoke serious protests.



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Zia in Power

Over the years President Zia-ul-Haq has proved to be a shrewd politician and has ruled Pakistan longer than any other leader except Ayub Khan (1958-69). Without a political party of his own, he has relied on the Army to stay in power, while deftly employing censorship, house arrests, and occasional secret negotiations to keep the opposition off balance and manageable.

He has played Army politics with skill, [Redacted]

[Redacted] easing out those generals who opposed his policies and filling key positions with his own supporters. At the top, he has capably mediated between powerful policy constituencies, although his detractors claim he has succeeded more by avoiding controversial decisions than by solving critical problems. By identifying his policies with Islam, Zia has gained the tacit support of key interest groups—bazaar merchants and Sunni clerics—and, we believe, made it difficult for his opponents to criticize him without seeming to challenge the religious basis of the state.¹ [Redacted]

Zia has been aided by the absence of a commanding alternative to his rule among opposition leaders and, in our view, by public fears—particularly in the all-important province of Punjab—that the Soviets or Indians would exploit internal unrest or that an opposition movement would unloose dangerous separatist pressures in Sind and Baluchistan. By securing substantial economic and military aid from Saudi Arabia and the United States, he can claim to have strengthened Pakistan's defense capabilities without having compromised its nonaligned status. [Redacted]

Over the past year, however, there have been signs of increased impatience within key pro-Zia constituencies over the continuation of martial law and stronger calls in the country for a return to civilian government through elections. Students, regional elites, Shias, and some influential interest groups are seriously disaffected with the Zia regime. [Redacted]

[Redacted]



President Zia-ul-Haq, Chief Martial Law Administrator and Chief of the Army Staff [Redacted]

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[Redacted] the major opposition leaders believe Zia is becoming increasingly vulnerable to opposition pressures. [Redacted] and [Redacted] believe the tide of public opinion is turning against Zia and are increasingly skeptical about the regime's ability to contain possible internal disorders over the next two years. [Redacted]

We believe Zia probably can cope with such growing restiveness if he acts soon to schedule some form of elections as part of a major political initiative, but he lacks an organized constituency outside the Army and he could find his hold on power challenged if the economy stagnates, he blunders, or a popular leader emerges to unite the opposition. In our view, it is highly unlikely that Zia's leadership would survive prolonged disturbances, particularly in the Punjab. [Redacted]

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Secret**The Army**

Zia ultimately depends on the Army to preserve his rule. As Chief of the Army Staff, Zia holds the loyalty of the Army, [redacted]

[redacted] in extraordinary circumstances he could be removed from power by the Army high command and the corps commanders acting together. Coup plotting by middle and junior grade officers against military rulers is not unknown in Pakistan's history, but command discipline has remained firm and no such conspiracy has gone beyond the preliminary stages before being discovered. It is worth noting, however, that twice military presidents—Ayub Khan in 1969 and Yahya Khan in 1971—have resigned from office when it became clear they had lost the support of the Army. [redacted]

[redacted] strong initial support within the Army for the imposition of martial law has declined over the past several years. In 1977 most officers accepted the need to take over the riot-plagued Bhutto government, but in the past year, [redacted] middle and junior grade officers have become increasingly skeptical about the continued efficacy of martial law. They worry that the Army may already have stayed too long in power and faces a popular backlash that will benefit radical political elements that want to reorganize the Army and exclude it from politics. [redacted]

Sentiment for a return to the barracks is strongest among junior and middle grade officers and some senior officers in regular troop commands. [redacted]

[redacted] These officers would be called upon to lead their men into the streets if the Army were ordered to oppose demonstrators. They are particularly angered at growing evidence of serious corruption in the Martial Law Administration. They believe this is undermining public confidence in the Army and diminishing its capacity to defend the country. They worry further that in the long term Zia's Islamization program will threaten the unity of Pakistan by creating divisiveness among the country's many Muslim groups and sects. [redacted]

The line officers so far have had less influence on Zia than those in the Martial Law Administration, many of whom have benefited directly from the power and privileges of rule. [redacted]

Secret**Leadership Changes in Pakistan**

Mohammed Ali Jinnah, Governor-General	1948	Died in office
Liaquat Ali Khan, Prime Minister	1951	Assassinated
Khwaja Nazimuddin, Prime Minister	1953	Removed by Governor-General Ghulam Mohammed
Mohammed Ali of Bogra, Prime Minister	1955	Removed by Governor-General Ghulam Mohammed
Ghulam Mohammed, Governor-General	1955	Died in office
Chaudhri Mohammed Ali, Prime Minister	1956	Lost parliamentary majority
Hussain Shahid Suhrawardy, Prime Minister	1957	Removed by President Iskander Mirza
I. I. Chundrigar, Prime Minister	1957	Removed by President Mirza; lost majority
Firoz Khan Noon, Prime Minister	1958	Removed in coup d'etat led by Gen. Mohammed Ayub Khan
Iskander Mirza, President	1958	Removed by Chief Martial Law Administrator Gen. Ayub Khan
Mohammed Ayub Khan, President and Field Marshal	1969	Transferred authority to Gen. Yahya Khan and resigned after a mass movement, November 1968 to March 1969, led in West Pakistan by Z. A. Bhutto and in East Pakistan by Mujibur Rahman
Gen. Yahya Khan, President	1971	Resigned after the fall of Dacca and loss of East Pakistan; power transferred to Chief Martial Law Administrator Z. A. Bhutto
Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Prime Minister	1977	Removed in coup d'etat led by Gen. Zia-ul-Haq, after March to July urban riots; later executed for murder conspiracy
Chaudhry Fazal Elahi, President	1979	Resigned to protest martial law, but probably pushed out by Zia

[redacted] under Zia, Martial Law officers have penetrated all walks of Pakistani life, from state-run industrial enterprises to the diplomatic service and

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thus are reluctant to give up their new-found perquisites. Many fear entrusting their personal well-being to the mercies of vengeful politicians if martial law is ended. The Army's expanded role in Pakistani life has enabled it to co-opt some—but by no means all—disgruntled officers into the Martial Law Administration. [redacted]

Nevertheless, dissent within the Army over Zia's policies has begun to appear inside his administration.

[redacted]

[redacted] Zia and the senior generals will at some point accept a gradual return to civilian rule, but it will have to be on their own terms. In our view, they are likely to insist on the creation of a Higher Command Council to protect their interests and give them a veto over the country's major foreign and domestic policies. [redacted]

If the regime is faced with serious civil disturbances, particularly if the Army is ordered to quell mass protests in its home province of Punjab, we believe the pressures inside the Army to remove Zia will become intense. In such circumstances, we judge the Army will act quickly against Zia to protect itself and prevent an opposition movement from being taken over by radical leaders who would insist on far-reaching changes in the country's political system. [redacted]

The Regime

[redacted] there is a broad grass-roots desire for an end to martial law and return to civilian government through elections. President Zia, nevertheless, we believe, retains the grudging respect, if not the love, of most of his countrymen. He has performed shrewdly as a mediator between competing interests at the top—a traditional style of leadership that requires a reputation for piety and evenhandedness rather than the "charismatic" qualities of the political party leader. [redacted]

[redacted] Zia is an inherently cautious leader who deliberates at length on major decisions. Lacking a broad popular constituency, he rules more by appeasing powerful interest groups on policy issues and by avoiding controversial decisions

than by seeking confrontation. Although he has suspended much of the political system established under the 1973 constitution, he has not significantly altered major items of social legislation inherited from his populist predecessor. His regime, however, is quick to maintain order and put down opposition agitation. [redacted]

Key Decisionmakers. Zia rules Pakistan through a Martial Law Administration that imposes Army and other ad hoc lines of authority upon regular government and bureaucratic structures. [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted] No formal body with clear executive responsibilities can be singled out, and Zia appears to select his advisers on the basis of trust rather than function. [redacted]

[redacted] two fairly discrete decisionmaking groups can be discerned around President Zia. The first is a small group of core advisers who figure in the day-to-day running of the country.

[redacted] Zia's closest adviser on all issues, both foreign and domestic, is Lt. Gen. Khalid Mahmud Arif [redacted]

[redacted] Arif, a relatively junior lieutenant general, has never commanded more than a brigade and is not a member of any clique in the Army. [redacted]

[redacted]

President Zia also relies on Lt. Gen. Akhtar Abdul Rahman Khan, a senior lieutenant general who heads the Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate. [redacted]

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Ghulam Ishaq Khan, Pakistan's top bureaucrat [redacted] Time ©



Sahabzada Yaqub Khan, Pakistan's top diplomat [redacted]

[redacted]

and ability to emerge as Zia's top adviser on foreign affairs. [redacted]

[redacted] Ghulam Ishaq Khan holds, among other portfolios, the Finance Ministry and is widely regarded as a policymaker and administrator of outstanding ability. He is widely perceived to enjoy major influence on domestic affairs and is Zia's chief adviser on financial and budgetary matters. The fact that he is also a career civil servant gives him great stature with the bureaucracy, the "steel frame" of administration that reaches down to the village level and without which Pakistan could not be governed.

These four advisers are regular attendees at policy meetings and function as an inner cabinet. Two other advisers can be considered members of the inner group [redacted]

[redacted]

Foreign Minister Sahabzada Yaqub Khan only replaced Agha Shahi in mid-1982, [redacted]

[redacted] The most senior of these is Gen. Muhammad Iqbal Khan, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee. A popular officer second only to Zia in seniority, Iqbal has questioned some of Zia's policies but reportedly has a key role in the development of Pakistan-Saudi relations. The second irregular member is Lt. Gen. Rahimuddin Khan, Governor of Baluchistan and Commander of the Army's II Corps. Related to Zia by marriage and widely respected in the Army, Rahimuddin reportedly is Zia's choice to succeed him as Chief of the Army Staff. [redacted]

[redacted] A retired lieutenant general and member of an aristocratic family of prepartition India, Yaqub has stood out over the past decade as a man of keen political insight and as Pakistan's ablest ambassador, having served successively in Washington, Moscow, and Paris. Like Shahi, Yaqub has both the experience

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Muhammad Iqbal Khan, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee [redacted]



Rahimuddin Khan, Zia's reported choice to be next Army chief [redacted]

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Depending on the issue at hand, other cabinet ministers and provincial governors will attend policy meetings of the inner circle. On matters of crucial import to the regime—such as maintaining order—Zia will turn to a somewhat wider decisionmaking group,

[redacted] This includes the three other provincial governors—all senior lieutenant generals, but without troop commands—and the Army high command, including the corps commanders and senior officers at Army General Headquarters. [redacted]

On less sensitive issues, Zia will ask for a recommendation from the federal ministry involved or the provincial governor. A decision is then made at a meeting between Zia, who is normally assisted by Lt. Gen. Arif, and the appropriate cabinet minister or governor. [redacted]

The Federal Advisory Council

Aware of the highly ambivalent public attitude toward his regime and its narrow base, President Zia has since December 1981 attempted to create at least the appearance of popular participation through the Federal Advisory Council (FAC), also known as the *Majlis-i-Shura*. Zia, however, has been careful to retain real decisionmaking authority. The FAC has no legislative powers, but it can “discuss all national

problems” and recommend the adoption of new laws and the amendment of existing ones. The Council is appointive, with the President naming its chairman and exercising the right both to call and adjourn Council sessions. [redacted]

The members of the Council represent a broad range of interest groups in Pakistan, much on a corporate pattern. The rural areas are represented by landowners and chiefs from locally dominant tribes and *baradaris* (lineage brotherhoods)—virtually all of whom have served or have close relatives who have served in every national and provincial legislature in the last half century. The urban areas are represented by a cross section of religious figures, businessmen, lawyers, and other professionals. The major political parties all have known members in the FAC, though no party can be represented officially, and some members have been expelled from their parties and professional associations for joining the body. Zia has kept about 70 seats—one-fifth of the total—unfilled, possibly hoping to attract more prominent political leaders as the Council evolves. [redacted]

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In our view, the Federal Advisory Council has neither been as ineffective as its detractors charge nor gained nearly the public support Zia probably hoped it would. It has functioned as a sounding board both for government policies and public concerns. Members have used the opportunity to question cabinet ministers and to discuss a range of key issues, including the allocation of the Indus River waters, press censorship, and the problems of Pakistani workers in the Arab Gulf states.

[redacted]

More recently, President Zia has looked to the Council to help frame Islamic laws on controversial subjects.

We believe that, over time, the FAC will become increasingly frustrated by bureaucratic inattention to its recommendations and probably will press for a grant of real authority. Already its members have shown a tendency to organize into groups to coordinate their demands on the bureaucracy. The largest grouping is under the informal leadership of Council Chairman Khwaja Safdar—a veteran Muslim League politician and former senator.

[redacted]

Local Government

Many pro-Zia politicians believe the rural, town, and municipal councils, by providing an outlet for local demands and grievances, have been an important factor for stability.

Established in 1979, with 70 percent of the electorate voting, the local bodies generally have functioned responsibly, despite the fact that the majority of the councilors originally identified with the opposition Pakistan People's Party. The local councils, however, have a narrow tax base and are unable to compete with the powerful and entrenched civil administration, appointed by the provinces, which continues to provide almost all local government services.

The local bodies could become more influential if proposals by a national planning body that they be given 10 percent of Pakistan's development funds are implemented. This would allow the government to co-opt local leaders by making local bodies channels for patronage, but it could also cause more divisiveness at the local level as various groups compete for development funds. Elections for the local councils, scheduled for later this year, will be the best indicator in some years of the popular strength of the regime and its opponents.

Zia's Fair-Weather Civilian Constituency

Zia so far has encountered only weak party opposition and has been able to garner indirect support from several key parties and interest groups. Support from these groups—if only tacit—has been crucial in enabling him to maintain public order, particularly in the cities. [redacted] mass opposition movements that have led to changes of regime in Pakistan have been almost exclusively urban phenomena. They were composed of alienated interest groups that, having lost in policy decisions, used emotional issues like official corruption or anti-Islamic behavior to arouse the urban population. Evidence that key interest groups are reconsidering their support for the current regime would be an important danger signal for Zia. Fragmentary evidence including growing criticism from Sunni religious leaders suggests that such a reappraisal may be in the offing.

The Jama'at-i-Islami. The Jama'at is a small, fundamentalist religious party influential among students, merchants, and professionals. Founded by Maulana Maudoodi, the leading Muslim religious thinker in 20th-century India and Pakistan, the Jama'at-i-Islami has old links with the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and strong relations with the Saudi regime.

[redacted]

JI is the best organized and best funded party in Pakistan. Its shock troops are credited with leading the violent street agitation that resulted in the overthrow of Prime Minister Bhutto in 1977. The party's student group—the Islami Jamiat-ul-Tulaba

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(IJT)—enforces its dominance of student politics at key universities in Punjab and Sind through violent and aggressive tactics. Aware that it lacks the numbers to win elections, the JI concentrates on taking control of influential professional and labor groups from the inside. [redacted]

Zia consults often with the current head of the Jama'at, who also is a distant relative, according to Embassy sources. Some of the President's ideas—for example, the FAC—reflect the Jama'at platform. Publicly, the party maintains its distance from the regime and joins other opposition parties in calling for elections and a return to civilian rule. It has not joined the opposition Movement for the Restoration of Democracy, however, and it has kept its student group and street agitators out of MRD demonstrations. Embassy sources report that the IJT has effectively restricted leftist student groups to campus infighting and has been the main group opposing separatist student fronts in both Baluchistan and Sind. The party leadership opposes anti-Zia agitation at this time, citing the external threats from India and the Soviets in Afghanistan. [redacted]

[redacted] tensions inside the Jama'at-i-Islami recently have appeared between the more conservative, pro-Zia Punjab Group and the Karachi Group, which wants more active opposition to the current regime. The Karachi Group reflects the stronger currents of anti-Zia public opinion present in Karachi as well as pressure from impatient IJT student leaders who want to usher in a more Islamic government. So far the Punjab Group has remained in the ascendancy and kept the students under control, although last April IJT students caused a national outcry when they attacked the offices of two Lahore newspapers that had criticized their organization. [redacted]

The Muslim League. The League traces its lineage to the party that founded Pakistan, but today it is a splintered group that has local support only in those areas where tribal leaders or influential landlords still hold membership. The strongest of the three League splinter parties has offered its platform to Zia and urged him to contest elections, but it would be unable to provide him with a credible national political base.

The League parties have the support of conservative tribal chiefs in Baluchistan and the North-West Frontier Province and could give Zia at least a minimal foothold in these two provinces. Some younger politicians, including a former Pakistan People's Party (PPP) chief minister of Punjab, hope to revive the Muslim League, but there are no indications that their efforts have succeeded. [redacted]

The Mainline Muslims. Given the deep divisions among the clergy in Pakistan and the variety of competing schools of Koranic interpretation and Islamic jurisprudence, we believe that the emergence of a mass religious movement is unlikely in the absence of a Khomeini-like charismatic leader. In Pakistan such leaders have emerged only on a local basis and have failed to extend their influence to national politics. Escalating social change and economic pressures amid an atmosphere of Islamic resurgence, however, could produce such a leader and a country-wide movement, although we see no indications of either. Nevertheless, even in normal circumstances, most observers agree that the clergy have considerable political influence. Along with the bazaar merchants, local mullahs can readily sway the urban lower classes that are crucial to the success of any mass movement. [redacted]

The two main Sunni political parties are publicly opposed to Zia's policies, and the Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Islam (JUI), which participated in an earlier cabinet under Zia, has now joined the MRD. The ostensibly larger of the two parties, the Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Pakistan (JUP), is poorly organized and unable to enforce its will on the thousands of mosque associations that constitute its base of support, according to most observers. We believe both the JUI and JUP depend on mosque-level clerics for support and influence. At this level, we conclude, clerical attitudes toward Zia are more ambivalent. The introduction of courts employing Islamic law and the funding of religious schools through Islamic taxes have markedly enhanced the economic and social position of the urban and small town clergy. Although the *ulema*

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want more rapid Islamization, many observers have noted they are afraid agitation might replace Zia with a leftist leader. If they see the public mood shifting decisively against Zia, however, we believe they would attempt to capture at least a portion of any agitation by the secular parties. [redacted]

The Shias. The Shias, who constitute between 15 and 25 percent of the population, are skeptical of Zia's Islamization policies because they fear that Sunni legal interpretations and customs will be enforced to the exclusion of their own. Better organized and more volatile than the Sunni groups, Shia demonstrators three years ago virtually closed down Islamabad to gain a hearing for their demands on religious issues. Many controversial issues remain unsettled, and more will emerge as Islamization proceeds. In our view, the government has worked quickly and effectively to head off local Sunni-Shia conflicts, but the potential for more serious disturbances has been enhanced by Zia's push for Islamization. [redacted]

Bazaar Merchants. [redacted] small business activity has expanded massively during the Zia years, largely to fill the demand for consumer goods by families with members working in the Arab Gulf states. [redacted]

[redacted] more than 1 million households have been raised above the subsistence level by remittances from the Gulf, which total more than \$2 billion annually. Bazaar merchants were a key element in the overthrow of the Bhutto regime and have benefited greatly from the economic stability brought by Zia. The traditional bazaar associations are strong supporters of a more Islamic Pakistan. Although they agree that some form of elections should be held, they have opposed agitation to achieve this end because they fear the economically destructive effects of a mass movement and do not want the Pakistan People's Party to return to power. [redacted]

In our view, Zia could face strong pressure from the bazaars if government regulations and the lack of credit resources hamper the expansion of growing merchant enterprises, if bureaucratic and military corruption becomes too pervasive, or if the flow of

remittances from the Gulf begins to decline. Knowledgeable observers believe that criticism in the bazaars of stifling bureaucratic controls on economic activity and official corruption has been increasing. Last June, according to US Embassy sources, the influential Karachi Bazaar Merchants Association sided with the MRD in calling for a general strike to protest Israel's invasion of Lebanon—a move that was indirectly aimed at the Zia regime. [redacted]

Industrialists. The large industrial houses welcomed the coup in 1977 that ended years of economic chaos and a policy of industrial nationalization. Embassy sources note that they have benefited from the relative stability brought by the current regime but are disappointed that Zia has not revised labor laws to favor management or adopted policies allowing private firms to expand into areas currently controlled by state-owned enterprises. [redacted]

These problems, together with concerns about the long-term impact of the Soviet presence in Afghanistan and the staying power of the Zia regime, have kept private investment down in Pakistan and encouraged the continuing flow of capital abroad, [redacted]

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The Bureaucracy. The civil service in Pakistan is the framework holding the country together. Under the overall direction of the Martial Law Secretariat, the civil service implements the policies of the Zia regime down to the village level. In most cases, observers agree, the bureaucracy deals directly with powerful interest groups and is subject to an almost constant barrage of criticism in the press and from political parties—including the Jama'at-i-Islami—for its unresponsiveness and corruption. Civil service support is essential to the proper maintenance of order, and governments—such as Bhutto's—that acted strongly against the interests of the bureaucracy have suffered nearly crippling sabotage of their programs from below once their grip on power began to weaken. [redacted]

Zia has permitted the bureaucracy a powerful voice in policymaking through Ghulam Ishaq Khan. [redacted]

[redacted] Ishaq's position in the administration is less secure now and that Zia is considering economic policies proposed by Mahbub ul-Haq, a former World Bank official who now runs the Planning Commission and who reportedly backs stronger support for private industry. Zia also has presided over the military's penetration of the bureaucracy at all levels. [redacted]

[redacted] serving and retired military officers have been given more than half of the recent ambassadorial appointments. [redacted]

[redacted] civil servants have little respect for the administrative abilities of their military counterparts and deeply resent the blockage of promotions that results from military appointments. Their dissatisfaction with the military could well be further fueled by legislation that eliminates civil servants' judicial right of appeal if dismissed from service. While ostensibly passed to help weed out corrupt officials, the order would also enable the military to place compliant bureaucrats in key positions. Currently, there are no indications of broad sabotage of Zia's policies, but if his hold should weaken, we believe Zia could find it increasingly difficult to enforce his orders or cope with a growing public order crisis. [redacted]

The Main Opposition

Movement for the Restoration of Democracy. The major opposition to Zia is gathered in the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy (MRD), a loose coalition of eight parties. Although MRD leaders profess to believe the time is ripe for a mass movement against the present regime, their efforts to initiate such a movement have failed so far. Last June the MRD attempted to exploit the Lebanon crisis by leading demonstrations against the Israeli invasion and then turning them against President Zia as an ally of Israel's ally, the United States. During Zia's visit to the United States in December, the Movement joined with protesting lawyers in an effort to embarrass Zia for suspending the 1973 constitution, but, as in June, the demonstrations fizzled and the government placed MRD leaders under temporary house arrest. The Movement has endorsed student demands over educational issues in Sind and Punjab and reportedly is believed attempting to exploit the recently announced rise in the prices of gasoline and oil, according to Embassy sources. [redacted]

By itself the MRD evidently is unable to organize a mass anti-Zia movement. Its leaders lack credibility with a public that distrusts most politicians and is not prepared to sacrifice current economic stability simply to hoist them back into power. To be effective, the Movement needs an issue that cuts across diverse interests, a leader or group that can unite the opposition, and a general consensus that the time for Zia's exit has come. In our view, a general decline in the economy—or even a period of stagnation—probably would result in more active public opposition to Zia. Many observers believe that only the Bhutto women—the widow and daughter of executed Prime Minister Z. A. Bhutto—are capable of bringing the people into the streets, but the regime has kept both under control through various forms of pressure, including house arrest. Although most Pakistanis would prefer another form of government, we believe they are reluctant to act against Zia while Pakistan faces the Soviet threat from Afghanistan. [redacted]

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The MRD is united only by a common determination to end martial law and gain access to political power for party leaders, [redacted]

It should hold together as long as Zia continues to shun elections, but we believe it probably would break up if Zia called elections or brought moderate People's Party politicians into an interim administration. The smaller parties in the MRD deeply distrust the dominant PPP and have failed to get it to agree to contest less than a majority of seats in a new election. [redacted]

In view of the weak response to MRD calls for demonstrations, the moderates in the Movement probably are reassessing their earlier view that the public is ready for anti-Zia agitation. [redacted]

[redacted] the moderates—most of whom are landlords, lawyers, and tribal chiefs—have always been concerned that their reluctance to back a popular movement would give more radical groups unhampered leadership over street demonstrations and hence over the course and ultimate objectives of the movement. At the same time, they recognize that some mechanism that does not threaten the military leadership must be devised to peacefully transfer power. By organizing protests, we believe the moderates seek leverage in future negotiations with Zia, and some of them would accept positions in an interim cabinet provided the regime scheduled national elections. [redacted]

The leftists, on the other hand, want to confront the regime in the streets and make the authorities employ excessive force against demonstrations, [redacted]

[redacted] They hope to take control of a mass movement and keep it going until the Army is forced to negotiate a transfer of power on the left's terms. The leftists are more active and better organized than the moderates [redacted]

[redacted] They have set up a permanent MRD secretariat that is largely staffed by their own cadres, [redacted]

The Pakistan People's Party. The strongest element in the MRD, the PPP remains the most popular party in Pakistan and probably would win an unfettered national election. Although the party lacks a strong



Nusrat Bhutto, PPP Chairman, reportedly suffering from cancer [redacted] *India Today* ©

organization and is divided by ideological and personal factionalism, we believe it represents for many Pakistanis the most plausible alternative to military rule. [redacted]

The PPP has failed to rectify its problem of ineffective leadership since the execution of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, its founder and major inspiration. Bhutto's widow, Nusrat, who currently heads the party, has not proved a forceful leader and has failed to exploit a number of opportunities [redacted]

She claims to be suffering from lung cancer and currently is in Europe for medical treatment. While convalescing in Germany and France, Nusrat has been active in meeting PPP leaders and in speaking out in the press against the Zia regime. Her daughter, Benazir, is regarded by the party's rank and file in both the Punjab and Sind as its most promising leader and the person most capable of filling her father's shoes [redacted] She remains under house arrest at her family's ancestral home in Sind. Pakistani officials believe that Benazir, [redacted] has not lost her will to

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Benazir Bhutto has many of her father's political abilities

India Today ©

participate in politics. They believe that, if freed, she could incite a major upheaval in Sind Province, where her father is regarded as a martyr.

According to press reports, Nusrat has appointed Benazir as Acting Chairman of the PPP during her own absence in Europe. The day-to-day affairs of the party, however, are guided by a Steering Committee composed of senior provincial party leaders.

few believe that either the PPP or the MRD can make even short-term gains against the present government. PPP leaders are extremely concerned that violence by Al-Zulfikar, a terrorist group headed by Bhutto's sons, is making it more difficult to incite opposition to Zia. Public revulsion at assassinations claimed by Al-Zulfikar and the regime's identification of the group with the PPP have, according to PPP leaders, undermined their own credibility. They believe that the wave of violence last fall hurt MRD efforts to build up opposition momentum before Zia's visit to the United States.

Factional problems continue to plague the PPP, and

[redacted]

[redacted] there are rumors inside the party of secret and unauthorized contacts between President Zia and one of their number, Ghulam Mustapha Jatoi. Jatoi, an influential landlord and Chief Minister of Sind under Bhutto, is a plausible choice to head an interim cabinet if Zia decides to call elections. According to Embassy reporting, Zia sounded out Jatoi on such a possibility in 1981, but the abrupt termination of contacts by Zia in late 1981 has made Jatoi more cautious about Zia's real intentions.

Al-Zulfikar. Since it first appeared publicly during the hijacking of a Pakistani airliner in March 1981, the small Al-Zulfikar terrorist organization has been able to mount periodic incidents in Pakistan.² During the past year it has claimed responsibility for several bombings and the assassination of a prominent pro-Zia member of the Federal Advisory Council. Although the group does commit occasional dramatic acts of violence, it lacks the capability to overthrow the Zia regime. Nevertheless, bombings and assassinations undermine public confidence in the regime's ability to maintain order.

Most Pakistanis reject Al-Zulfikar's methods and find unacceptable the organization's use of Kabul as a base,

[redacted] the Bhutto brothers admit they need Soviet and Afghan help for now but say they only want to punish Zia for the execution of their father and will not become tools of Soviet policy.

[redacted] the Bhutto brothers want to become more respectable. We believe they may now

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Murtaza Bhutto heads Al-Zulfikar terrorist group [redacted] India Today ©



Shahnawaz Bhutto, second in command of Al-Zulfikar [redacted] India Today ©

be aware that terrorist violence has been counterproductive and are considering other forms of political subversion. [redacted]

military and Islamic courts apparently have considerable popular support in the country because of their quick and inexpensive justice. [redacted]

The Lawyers. The lawyers have been among the most disaffected interest group in Pakistan, largely because their professional interests have been severely damaged by Zia's curbing of the courts and introduction of Islamic law. Zia also has outlawed political activities by bar associations to keep them from becoming centers of opposition. Former Prime Minister Bhutto effectively used provincial and district bar associations to spread opposition to the Ayub regime in 1968. Since last fall, prominent politicians have been accepting invitations to address the Karachi Bar Association, and the government has responded by arresting the Association's two top officers. [redacted]

The Separatists. Separatism remains Pakistan's most serious long-term problem. Punjabis, who constitute more than half the population and dominate the Army and bureaucracy and who have most felt the consequences of Pakistan's three wars with India, are the group that most strongly asserts Pakistani nationalism. Two other groups—Pushtuns from the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) and Muslims from north and west India who migrated to Pakistan at the time of partition—have had significant roles in the government and Army, but their weight has diminished somewhat as the Punjabis have become more assertive. Like the Punjabis, they have done well in business and industrial ventures. [redacted]

In mid-January 30,000 lawyers staged a countrywide boycott of the courts to demand the restoration of the 1973 constitution, but this protest failed to attract active support from other interest groups. Lawyers are not an especially popular group in Pakistan, according to experts. Most Pakistanis regard them as elitist, expensive, and the product of the landed class. The

[redacted] the Sindhis and Baluch have had almost no place in the Army and only slight participation in the civil administration and commerce. The politics of Sind has been dominated by a class of wealthy landlords—Bhuttos, Talpurs, Jatois, Pirzadas—that historically has seen its interests linked

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with similar groups in Punjab and the NWFP. Baluchistan has been a land of martial tribes, whose chiefs worked out a substantial measure of local autonomy with the British and whose accession to Pakistan had much to do with the Pakistan Army and little to do with their real aspirations. [redacted]

Baluchistan is Pakistan's potentially most unstable region, although the province has remained fairly peaceful since the latest insurgency ended in 1977. Tensions have been rising, however, between the Afghan refugees—most of whom are Pushtuns—and Baluch locals, who see themselves becoming a minority in their own province. Prior to the influx of the refugees, about 45 percent of the population was Pushtun. Further, the Baluch continue to resent what they regard as rule by an alien Punjabi administration and oppose development efforts that they believe undermine their tribal culture. These issues provide fertile ground for tribal guerrillas, several hundred of whom have returned over the last year to insurgent camps in Baluchistan from exile in Afghanistan. [redacted]

Zia also faces serious disaffection in Sind, where the pressure of an emergent Sindhi middle class against the hold of a largely Punjabi administration has created significant unrest. [redacted]

[redacted] Zia and his Army have virtually no support among ethnic Sindhis, who regard Bhutto as a hero and blame the Punjabis for his death. The "Sindhudesh" (Free Sind) movement so far remains largely confined to the student community and probably does not pose a serious threat to Pakistan's unity. [redacted]

[redacted] Zia has at least the tacit support of the migrant communities that dominate the cities and commerce of the province. Radical PPP elements and other leftists, however, have strong support in the province and have linked themselves to Sindhi aspirations. In our view, they could make it difficult for the

Afghan Refugees in Pakistan

Islamabad claims 2,922,341 Afghan refugees were registered in Pakistan as of the end of February 1983. They were distributed by province as follows:

<i>North-West Frontier Province</i>	<i>2,148,251</i>
<i>Baluchistan</i>	<i>706,261</i>
<i>Sind</i>	<i>19,396</i>
<i>Punjab</i>	<i>44,858</i>
<i>Azad Kashmir</i>	<i>2,360</i>
<i>Capital Territory</i>	<i>1,215</i>

The US Embassy in Islamabad believes these figures are inflated by an average of 15 to 20 percent. Inflation of Baluchistan's figures may be even higher. Figures for the Punjab are likely to increase as refugees continue moving from the NWFP into the camp at Isa Khel, which is one of two camps in Punjab slated to hold 100,000. [redacted]

regime to maintain order there if Zia's hold begins to weaken. [redacted]

Only in the NWFP, where Pakistani Pushtun tribesmen generally support Islamabad's policies on Afghanistan, has the demand for another partition of Pakistan significantly weakened. The demand for an independent "Pushtunistan," historically supported by Kabul but never by more than a minority of Pakistani Pushtuns, has lost momentum since the Soviets invaded Afghanistan. [redacted]

[redacted] most Pushtuns look to Islamabad as the center of resistance to the aims of an atheistic superpower in Afghanistan. [redacted]

The presence of approximately 2 million Afghan refugees in the province, however, poses serious long-term problems for Islamabad. Ties of culture and kinship so far have kept tensions manageable, but the Pakistanis are worried about the political and social consequences of a permanent refugee population. Influential autonomy-minded politicians in the NWFP recently have become more open in their criticism of

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Zia's refugee policy and the use of Pakistani territory by Afghan insurgents. They worry that refugee and insurgent groups will support the Islamic party that backs Zia. Although a manifestation of growing concern among Pakistani Pushtuns, we believe their political activities will increase tensions between refugees and locals. [redacted]

Soviet Subversion

Pakistan's leaders have become increasingly concerned about external support for subversion inside the country. [redacted]

[redacted] NWFP Governor Lt. Gen. Fazle Haq told high US officials that the Soviets had stepped up their efforts to arouse disaffection against Islamabad in the tribal areas, making 1982 the most difficult of the past five years in maintaining order along the frontier with Afghanistan. [redacted]

Although Kabul has long been involved with Pushtun and Baluch separatists, the reported increase in Soviet and Afghan activity in the NWFP probably is largely a result of Soviet intelligence requirements generated by the war in Afghanistan. At the same time, however, Moscow and Kabul may hope to gain leverage with Islamabad by stirring up traditional tribal rivalries, fomenting discord among refugees and locals, and encouraging opposition activity by students and trade unions. [redacted]

Moscow also maintains contacts with leftist opposition groups, particularly in Karachi, where the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy appears strongest and where leftist labor unions have significant support. Some moderate MRD leaders have told American diplomats they believe the Soviets have helped finance leftists in the MRD and are encouraging them to become better organized and more active. These include the radical wing of the Pakistan People's Party, which probably has links to Al-Zulfikar. [redacted]

Baluch separatism is also a potential issue for Soviet exploitation, although rumors of Soviet involvement remain unconfirmed. Nevertheless, the chief of the most powerful and militant Baluch tribe, Sardar Khair Bakhsh Marri, has been in Kabul for more than a year. [redacted]

[redacted] Although the guerrillas by themselves cannot defeat the Pakistan Army, we believe that a renewed insurgency with Soviet and Afghan assistance would put Islamabad under severe pressure. [redacted]

Outlook for Zia

Probably the most important factor that will affect the stability of the Zia regime in the next two years and beyond is the economy. If it falters, key groups, such as the bazaar merchants, may shift their support away from Zia. We believe that economic stagnation or decline, because it would frustrate strong expectations, could create the broad discontent that opposition parties and interest groups need to organize an anti-Zia mass movement. In addition, the public could become more conditioned to the Soviet presence in Afghanistan and less disposed to support the regime in power. [redacted]

Zia clearly has benefited from the economy's strong performance under his rule—the result of good harvests, stable economic policies, the increased security of private ownership, and a steady flow of worker remittances from abroad. His cautious economic policies, however, may not continue to produce growth in the years immediately ahead, and the possibility of an economic downturn cannot be ruled out. [redacted]

[redacted] Pakistan's external financial position remains dangerously dependent on world crop prices

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Pakistan's Economy

The economy continued its favorable progress last year, growing by 6.1 percent. Industrial growth led the way with 12.1 percent, but the agricultural sector also registered a gain, growing by 3 percent. The key ingredients of this successful performance have been favorable trends in:

- Weather and international prices for Pakistan's exports.
- Commercial borrowing on the international capital markets.
- Inflows of foreign concessional aid and workers' remittances.
- Capacity expansion in public-sector industry and acreage expansion in agriculture.
- Adequate financial management under President Zia over the last five years. [redacted]

Prospects for continued, rapid economic growth are uncertain at best, however, because:

- World demand and prices for Pakistan's key agricultural exports have begun to decline, lowering the expected growth in export earnings.
- The rate of growth in workers' remittances has slowed.
- Pakistan is already using virtually all of its cultivable land.

- Politically popular showcase industrial projects initiated under the former regime are nearing completion. Zia, however, is committed to major Western creditors and to invest public funds in any new public enterprises.
- The prospects for large-scale private industrial investment for new projects are bleak. 25X1
- Net concessional foreign aid inflows are declining, owing to a massive foreign debt service liability. [redacted]

The continuation of structural problems in key areas of the economy probably will result in another period of economic decline, unless there is a substantial pickup in net inflows of foreign aid and workers' remittances:

- A heavy oil import bill, together with a slower growth in workers' remittances and export earnings will keep Pakistan's balance of payments tight for some time. 25X1
- New foreign loans are required not only for development purposes but also to repay old loans that will reach the amortization stage and become due for repayment in the next few years. [redacted] 25X1

and the vagaries of workers' remittances. Price increases are a growing concern to the common man, and, we believe, Zia's policy of reducing subsidies for food and energy—if it goes far enough—could be exploited in the potentially volatile urban areas by the opposition parties. [redacted]

Zia's position also will depend on how well he stays ahead of demands for elections and an end to military rule. These pressures, we believe, will grow as Pakistan completes its sixth year under martial law this summer. Some observers believe that the longer Zia maintains the status quo without assuming the political initiative, the more difficult it will be to ease control without an explosion. Last year, President Zia eased restrictions on the press but quickly reimposed censorship after newspapers printed opposition statements severely criticizing the regime for corruption,

its failure to maintain order, and its continued imposition of martial law. [redacted] 25X1

The President has promised a scheme for "Islamic government" by 14 August 1983. This could involve a phased withdrawal of martial law along with a step-by-step grant of legislative authority to the Federal Advisory Council. It may also set the stage for formalizing a Higher Command Council—a supreme military council to oversee the security of the state. The plan probably also will involve some form of elections. [redacted] 25X1

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This recent newspaper cartoon protests increases in fares and energy prices. The caption reads, "Preparing the skeleton." The figure represents the common man. [redacted]

We think it more likely that Zia will wait at least until 1984 before calling an election, although some might urge him to act sooner to take advantage of Pakistan's economic progress and his foreign policy successes. Zia does not have a detailed blueprint for the future and is an inherently cautious leader. He may use rumored cabinet changes to bolster his position before introducing his scheme for Islamic government. Further, we believe Zia would not make major changes without first positioning Lt. Gen. Rahimuddin Khan to succeed him as Chief of the Army Staff. [redacted]

External events might also be exploited by opponents of Zia. Although any direct military pressure on Pakistan, either by the Soviets from Afghanistan or the Indians, probably would work to strengthen the regime unless Zia somehow blundered, the US-Pakistan relationship could be more problematic. Zia has been bolstered by the economic assistance and military sales agreement with the United States. He can claim to have begun the most significant upgrading of Pakistan's defense capabilities in 20 years. [redacted]

[redacted] Pakistanis generally support the new relationship for the security it provides against external threats, but most are skeptical of the durability of US commitments and know that the United States will not assist Pakistan against an Indian attack. Should the relationship falter over US

nuclear concerns or the package either fail in Congress or emerge much reduced, we believe that Zia's position both with the public and the elites will be significantly undermined. [redacted]

An Alternative Scenario

It is possible that President Zia's plan for Islamic government will be insufficient to contain growing opposition to Army rule. Zia, who has maintained martial law longer than any other military ruler in Pakistan, may find it impossible to loosen political restraints without losing control of the pace of events. Moreover, a decision to replace the 1973 constitution with an "Islamic system" could rapidly focus opposition to the current regime. Although all the elements are present to a degree, we do not see the mix of issues, leadership, and intense public discontent that we believe would be necessary for a mass opposition movement to emerge. Nevertheless, such movements can coalesce rapidly—often taking off from a seemingly insignificant event—and with little warning and cannot be ruled out in the next one to two years. [redacted]

The chief danger to Zia does not come from the extreme left—most Pakistanis have little patience with Marxist ideology—but from a centrist coalition. Because of its image and internal disunity, the MRD so far has failed to present itself as a credible opposition movement. In recent student elections, however, moderate to left-of-center alliances won significant victories, in most cases defeating the Islamic fundamentalist IJT. Student politics have on occasion led the way in Pakistan, and should other groups—labor and urban middle class professionals—take heart from these events, we believe Zia could find himself under serious pressure. [redacted]

In our view, should a mass movement emerge, it most likely would be a center-left coalition of parties and interest groups. PPP leaders probably would dominate such a movement, using populist themes and Islamic socialist rhetoric to galvanize mass support. Such a movement would insist on the removal of Zia and the Army's agreement to an interim government prior to

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holding elections. If the Army held out against these demands, we believe more radical leftist leaders could gain at least partial control of the movement. [redacted]

The Islamic right is a growing force in Pakistan and could pose a threat to Zia, although its identification with the regime would present initial problems. The Jama'at-i-Islami and its student group could mount strong street-level opposition to a government it opposed, but theological splits and rivalries probably would stand in the way of a wider unity of Islamic groups. Most Pakistanis are Sunni Muslims and, as such, are less susceptible to the inflammatory rhetoric characteristic of Shia Islam. Nonetheless, the Islamic right played a major role in destabilizing the Bhutto regime, particularly in the urban areas. The combination of social discontent and clerical agitation occasionally has been explosive in Pakistan. [redacted]

[redacted] some influential elements of the clergy are becoming disillusioned with the slow pace of Zia's Islamization program and could offer the President growing opposition. [redacted]

In the event of a mass movement, we judge that the Army probably would replace Zia quickly with a more popular general who could negotiate a return to civilian rule on terms that would protect the Army's interests. Alternatively, a popular general might adopt the populist rhetoric of a movement and attempt to consolidate his own regime once protests died down. An effort by conservative generals to hold out against a burgeoning movement, however, could weaken the Army's position in eventual negotiations. At a minimum, we believe the Army would seek to retain at least a tacit veto over Pakistan's major foreign and domestic policies. In the longer run, the Army, even without Zia at its head, would remain the country's most coherent institution, and its mainly conservative leaders would step in again if civilian rule began to falter. [redacted]

Implications for the United States

As long as President Zia-ul-Haq remains in control, we believe US relations with Pakistan probably will be more affected by external developments than by internal events. Large new influxes of refugees from Afghanistan, a breakdown in peaceful relations between refugees and locals, or a falling off of international assistance for the refugees could force Zia to

adopt a more flexible stand on Afghanistan. We believe, however, that Pakistan's position would still first depend on its own strategic interests and then on the degree of international support it receives. [redacted]

US-Pakistani relations would suffer if Zia were overthrown during a mass opposition movement. Opposition groups of all political persuasions almost certainly would adopt strident anti-US positions. In our view, the Army would attempt to protect the relationship during negotiations with opposition leaders, and, should the moderates win out, the relationship would remain essentially unchanged. If more radical elements emerged victorious—which seems more likely—both the US-Pakistani relationship and Pakistan's stand on Afghanistan probably would be weakened. Statements of PPP leaders, particularly those of the Bhutto women, indicate that a Bhutto government would downgrade relations with the United States, accept the reality of Indian hegemony in South Asia, and attempt to weaken the Pakistani Army. We believe that a PPP government probably would recognize the Soviet-backed regime in Afghanistan, seek more economic aid from Moscow, and put pressure on the Afghan refugees to return home—an extremely delicate and probably impracticable task. [redacted]

A regime of the Islamic right would remain committed to opposing the Soviets in Afghanistan and to resisting New Delhi's regional ambitions. We believe it would assume an even stronger identity with the Muslim world—particularly Saudi Arabia and the Arab Gulf states—and probably would deemphasize relations with the United States, though not to the point of forfeiting US arms and economic aid. There is a significant strain of anti-Westernism among Pakistani clerics, who see Western society as materialistic and morally bankrupt. They would seek to limit Western cultural influence, but, in our view, they are pragmatic enough to realize that only the United States has sufficient economic and military power to counter Soviet ambitions in the area. [redacted]

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