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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

Intelligence Memorandum

Pakistan: Internal Controversy

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
13 April 1972

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

PAKISTAN: INTERNAL CONTROVERSY

Introduction

Pakistan emerged from the disastrous war of last December with Bhutto appearing to be firmly in command. In the months that have passed since then, the new President has engaged in frenetic activities designed to improve Pakistan's international position--particularly vis-a-vis India--and to maintain his paramount position domestically. Recently, one of his major problems at home has been the growing friction between him and the leader of the principal opposition coalition in the yet-to-be convened National Assembly--Khan Abdul Wali Khan of the National Awami Party. The outcome of the dispute between the two men will largely determine the course of domestic politics in the important days immediately ahead and possibly whether Pakistan remains united or fragments over the longer period of time.

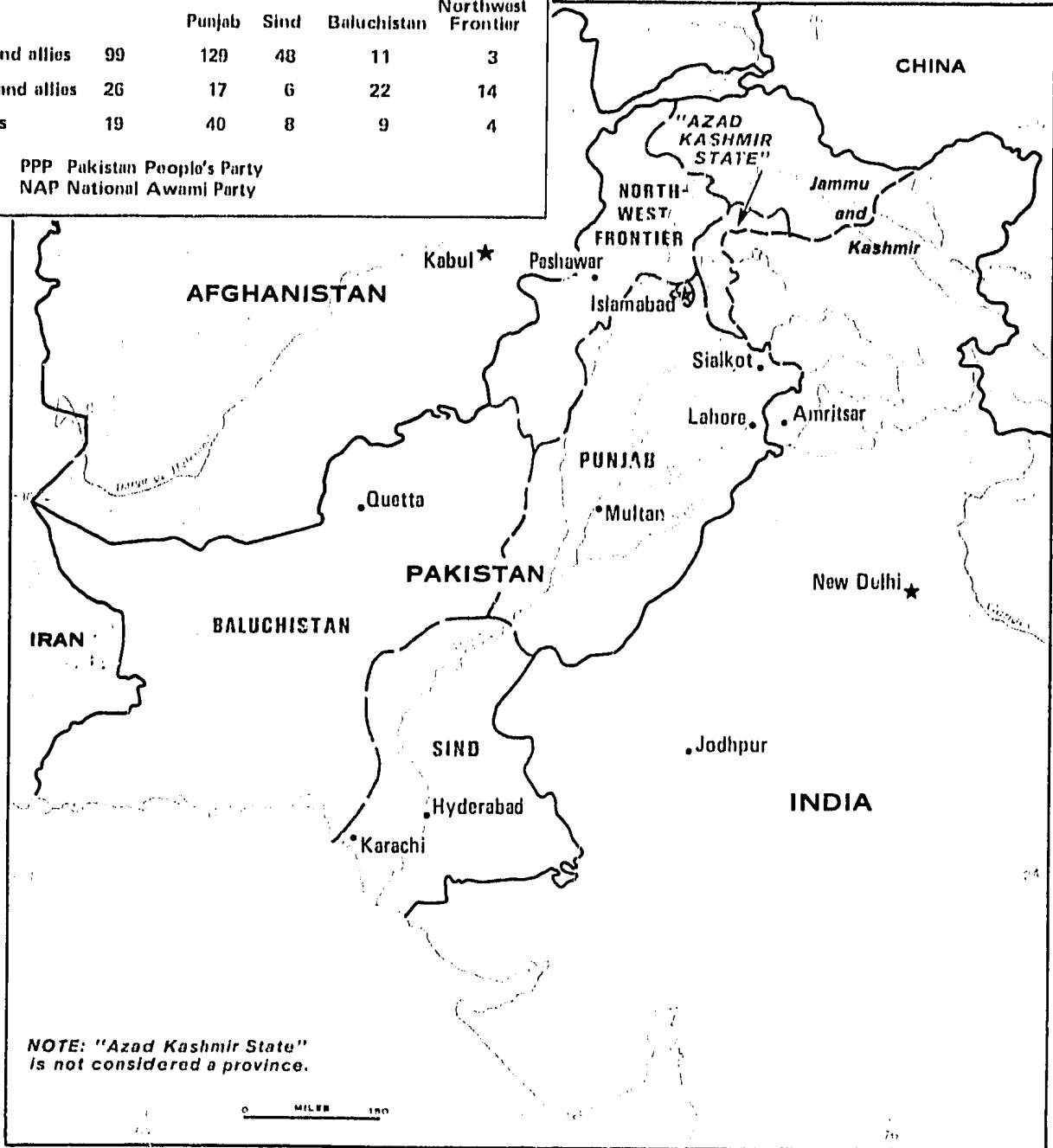
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PARTY ALIGNMENTS

| | National Assembly | Provincial Assemblies | | | |
|----------------|-------------------|-----------------------|------|-------------|--------------------|
| | | Punjab | Sind | Baluchistan | Northwest Frontier |
| PPP and allies | 99 | 129 | 48 | 11 | 3 |
| NAP and allies | 26 | 17 | 6 | 22 | 14 |
| Others | 19 | 40 | 8 | 9 | 4 |

PPP Pakistan People's Party
 NAP National Awami Party



NOTE: "Azad Kashmir State" is not considered a province.

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1. The basic issue in the dispute between President Bhutto and Wali Khan, leader of the National Awami Party, is over which man will control Pakistan's two least populous provinces--the Northwest Frontier and Baluchistan. Wali opposes the President's plans to continue martial law, because Bhutto uses martial law provisions to exert control over the two provinces. In demanding provincial governments, Wali, in effect, means to establish governments headed by the National Awami Party's control in Baluchistan and the Northwest Frontier Province.

2. In the elections of December 1970, Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party swept the Sind and the Punjab, the two most populous provinces of what was then West Pakistan. It won about two thirds of the seats from the West wing in the National Assembly and control over the two provincial legislatures. But the party did not fare well in the other two provinces. The National Awami Party has a one-vote majority in the Baluchistan provincial assembly, and in the Northwest Frontier--although it holds only a third of the seats--is the strongest single party and controls the assembly with the help of allies.

3. The glue which holds the party together is the demand for provincial autonomy. Wali himself has long been identified with the separatist aspirations of the Pushtu-speaking Pathans of the frontier. His father, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, opposed the inclusion of the Northwest Frontier Province in Pakistan in 1947 and since then has been the leader of a movement to establish an independent Pushtunistan. The National Awami Party, however, does not follow Ghaffar Khan. In the Northwest Frontier Province it is made up of a coalition of tribal leaders, provincial autonomy advocates, Pushtun nationalists, and pro-Soviet leftists. In Baluchistan--although some party leaders lean fairly far to the left--the party draws its strength from semi-feudal tribal leaders whose main political objective is to run their tribes without outside interference. The party in the Sind and the Punjab is weak and ideologically far to the left of the party in the frontier provinces.

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4. With Bhutto's accession to power last December, the National Awami Party stepped up its agitation for an end to martial law and for the establishment of elected governments. In the frontier provinces, the party tacitly threatened Bhutto with tribal rebellion and civil disorders. In the Sind and the Punjab, it threatened to exploit labor and student agitation and to win over the left wing of Bhutto's own party.

5. More in response to the tacit threats than to any overt action by the National Awami Party, Bhutto on 6 March agreed to a compromise political settlement. Under the agreement, Bhutto would convene the National Assembly on 14 April, replace his personally appointed and none-too-competent governors in the two frontier provinces with men acceptable to the National Awami Party and its allies, and set the definite date of 14 August for martial law to end. The provincial assemblies would convene on 21 April. In return, the National Awami Party, according to Bhutto, agreed to vote with the Pakistan People's Party in the National Assembly to extend martial law and to give Bhutto's government a vote of confidence. The agreement also provided that the assembly session would last only three days and that the agenda of discussions would be very limited. The assembly was to re-convene as both a constituent and legislative assembly on 14 August.

6. Neither Wali nor Bhutto lived up to the agreement. By late March, Wali was again criticizing Bhutto, demanding that the assembly convene immediately to discuss foreign affairs and announcing that, in accordance with his interpretation of the agreement, the National Awami Party would vote against extending martial law. For his part, Bhutto with Wali's approval, selected prominent members of the National Awami Party to serve as provincial governors in the Frontier Province and Baluchistan, but never formally installed them. Although the two leaders met on 8 April to try to revive the agreement, the attempt was a failure.

7. A continuation of the dispute between Bhutto and Wali risks a showdown that neither man wants and that both appear to be trying to avoid.

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Wali, for example, shortly after his conference with Bhutto on 8 April, announced that the coalition led by his party was the de jure government of the Northwest Frontier Province. The establishment of a rival provincial government there would almost certainly force the President's hand, but so far Wali has done nothing to implement his announcement [redacted]

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Wali later indicated he planned no action until after the national assembly session.

8. Bhutto, instead of using the power of the government to face Wali directly, is trying to undercut him. Bhutto has published their correspondence, which he feels will place the blame for the dispute squarely on Wali. He may even be considering ending martial law, thereby depriving Wali of one of his main issues. Bhutto also attempted to prevent Wali from forming a coalition provincial government in the Northwest Frontier Province by forming an alliance with a faction of the moderate Muslim League, the second strongest party in the province. Even after the alliance was formed, neither group had a majority in the provincial assembly, and Bhutto hoped to win independents to his side. Wali, however, subsequently gained the support of enough assemblymen--including two from the Pakistan People's Party--to give his coalition a one-vote majority.

9. Neither man wishes to push matters too far, because--unlike East Pakistani leader Mujibur Rahman and former President Yahya--neither feels sure of his own strength. Yahya apparently believed that in the face of military action, Bengali resistance would collapse. Bhutto has no illusions that the Pathans and Baluchis--renowned fighters--can be cowed easily. Wali's popular support in the two frontier provinces, however, is far weaker than was Mujib's in East Pakistan.

10. Neither man wants to split Pakistan. Both believe that a further breakup would be an invitation for foreign interference--by the Iranians in Baluchistan, the Afghans in the Northwest Frontier, the Indians in the other two provinces, and the Soviets and Chinese everywhere. Neither man wants civil disorder, which both are well aware can easily get out

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of hand with unpredictable consequences. A military takeover which would end the power of both men would be almost certain. Neither, however, has much room for maneuver in his search for a compromise. Wali, who has ambitions of becoming a national figure, is under pressure from his more radical followers, probably the main reason why the agreement of 6 March broke down. Bhutto faces a number of limitations on his ability to deal with Wali. He thinks a strong negative vote on martial law in the National Assembly would be seen in New Delhi as an indication of weakness and would infringe on his ability to deal with Mrs. Gandhi. He could please the Afghans by granting maximum provincial autonomy to the Northwest Frontier Province, but the Shah of Iran is already worried about the effect that autonomy for Baluchistan would have on the half million Baluchis in Iran.

11. Bhutto could please not only Wali but many other Pakistanis by ending martial law immediately. Bhutto, however, believes that he must have martial law in order to push through his reforms. If he has to rely on the assembly, he risks deepening the rifts between the right and left wings of his party. Bhutto must also remember that if he stumbles badly on any issue, the army may once again consider taking control of the country.

12. In the next few weeks, a miscalculation by either side could lead to a confrontation. Bhutto still appears intent on convening the national and provincial assemblies on schedule.

13. On 11 April, Bhutto distributed a draft interim constitution to leaders of all parties. Several reacted very critically to the constitution's provisions for provincial government because they reportedly would place local administration in the hands of presidentially appointed governors instead of chief ministers elected by the provincial assembly. Such a provision would deny power to Wali Khan.

14. The draft may, however, be merely Bhutto's initial negotiating position in the assembly. The following day he told reporters that in a democracy power should lie with the chief ministers and that he

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would not tamper with provincial majorities. Nevertheless, even if Bhutto were willing to compromise and even if the interim constitution were designed to last only until martial law is scheduled to end in August, the problem of relations between the provincial and central governments could become most difficult and divisive, bringing on the confrontation neither man wants.

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