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Weekly Summary

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July 8, 1977

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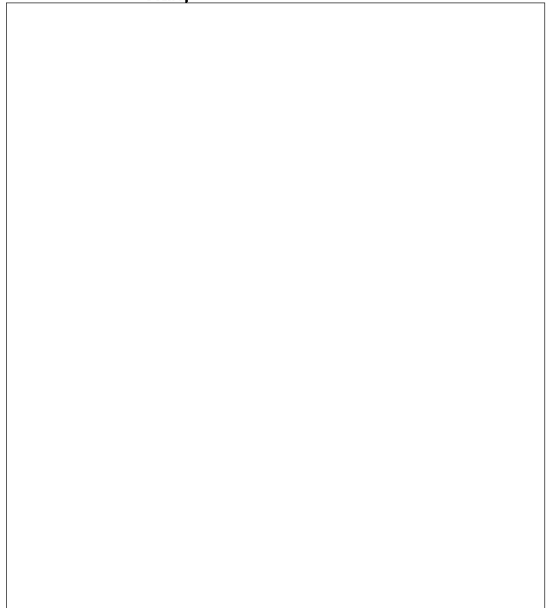


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July 8, 1977

The WEEKLY SUMMARY, issued every Friday morning by the Current Reporting Group, reports and analyzes significant developments of the week through noon on Thursday. It frequently includes material coordinated with or prepared by the Office of Regional and Political Analysis, the Office of Economic Research, the Office of Strategic Research, the Office of Scientific Intelligence, the Office of Weapons Intelligence, and the Office of Geographic and Cartographic Research.

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Pakistan;



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Comments and queries on the contents of this publication are welcome. They may be directed to the editor of the Weekly.

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Asia

PAKISTAN

Pakistani army leaders this week returned the country to military rule, finally losing patience with the protracted haggling between Prime Minister Bhutto and his political opponents. The new martial law administration, headed by army commander General Zia ul-Haq, now intends to hand power back to civilians in the fall.

The military acted early on July 5 after apparently concluding that further negotiations between Bhutto and the nine-party Pakistan National Alliance were pointless and that widespread civil disorder was imminent. Bhutto and opposition representatives had agreed on July 2 on a formula for holding new elections, but two days later the top leaders of the Alliance demanded stronger guarantees against a repetition of the rigged vote of last March, the event that touched off the four-month political crisis. Bhutto, his close associates, and key opposition leaders are all now under "temporary protective custody."

Army leaders clearly had hoped to avoid intervention; they are well aware that the last military government ended in disaster with the loss in 1971 of the country's "eastern wing"—now independent Bangladesh. General Zia, who owed his position to Bhutto, was probably among the most reluctant of the coup makers and may have agreed to the move only because of strong pressure from subor-



General Zia ul-Haq

dinates.

Zia has announced that the martial law administration will surrender power immediately after elections, which he plans to hold in October—a date set earlier by Bhutto and the opposition leaders. In the meantime, the military appears to be trying to limit its governing role as much as possible.

Although a council composed of Zia, the commanders of the navy and air force, and the chairman of the joint chiefs will have ultimate authority, figurehead President Chaudhry remains in office and the constitution has been suspended, not abrogated. Federal ministries have been

placed under their respective senior civil servants and provincial governments under the provincial chief justices.

Despite their present intentions, the military leaders could later have second thoughts about relinquishing power so quickly. The election campaign, following some of the worst civil disorders in Pakistan's history, is likely to be far more violent than the one last winter—possibly so violent that the military may not be willing to hold an election.

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