

COMMENT

*Foisted on Pakistan?*

IT DOESN'T TAKE A GENIUS TO figure out why the crooked Princess Ferrangamo-Benazir Bhutto has returned to Pakistan. Not very long ago Ms Bhutto traipsed all over Washington trying to garner support from think-tank heavies and establishment powerbrokers to help her stage a political come-back in Islamabad.

Steeped in crime and corruption she qualified. It took eight years of tutoring for her to learn by rote how to parrot big words like Islamic fundamentalism, democracy, elections, and, of course, freedom. Oxford and Harvard had effectually trained her in the art of ventriloquism. She was tested, declared passed with honors, among others, by the Council on Foreign Relations. Exile, in her case, proved significantly profitable rewarding her with a PR make over that signally rehabilitated a reprobate.

She was declared absolved of corruption; money stashed in Swiss banks, and court cases involving financial shenanigans in UK and Spain, proving to the hilt that she was religiously pledged to the holy principle of personal property, licit or illicit, stolen or swindled. As to crime, how much she as Prime Minister was involved in the murder of her brother Murtaza Bhutto, still remains a mystery, but not to his wife, or daughter Fatima Bhutto. (See her piece in *L A Times*, 17 Nov '07 and Counter-punch.org; and *Bhutto and Corruption* by Matthew Yglesias in his blog at the *Atlantic Monthly*, 7 Nov. 07). She was jubilantly inducted in the great club of democrats like Efrain Montt, Carlos Armas, Marcos, Mobutu, Reza Shah, and Pinochet, etc., etc. She had arrived in panoply. The crown in Islamabad must of rights be hers, asserted the West, and so she dreamed. As to Musharraf, he could be part of the duopoly if he played as dictated by the alien masters. He agreed, ostensibly in the interest of Pakistan.

The charade that Washington is good at is famously fertile in improvisations. The US envoy Negroponte's visit to Pakistan, and close on its heels, on Tuesday 20 Nov., that of Musharraf to Saudi Arabia, quite hectic and urgent, are widely believed to culminate in formulating a more militant and aggressive strategy to tackle not just the Taliban but much else besides.

Where, and whether, in this new scenario Zardari (ninety percent) Bhutto (ten percent) can fill a niche remains uncertain. "What is now being seriously contemplated is yet another colonial-style war in a region that stretches across the Middle East, and Central and South Asia, from Iraq to Pakistan, with the objective of salvaging with or without Musharraf, the Pakistani military the corrupt and repressive instrument with which Washington has been aligned for decades."

However, the "hijacking of a democratic country" and the political posturing as "pantomime" that Fatima laments have been essential to the sustenance of the empire. Pakistan is neither singular nor an exception. □