

Tribute to
Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto

By: Qayoom Nizami



Reproduced by:
Sani Hussain Panhwar
Member Sindh Council, PPP

**Tribute to
Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto**

**Collection of Articles, Poems and Photographs in her
remembrance.**

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The duty BB left us

Asif Ali Zardari

Last week the world was shocked, and my life shattered, by the murder of my beloved wife, Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto. Benazir was willing to lay down her life for what she believed in — for the future of a democratic, moderate, progressive Pakistan. She stood up to dictators and fanatics, those who would distort and defy our constitution and those who would defame the Muslim holy book by violence and terrorism. My pain and the pain of our children is unimaginable. But I feel even worse for a world that will have to move forward without this extraordinary bridge between cultures, religions and traditions.

I married Benazir in 1987 but spent less than five years living with her in the prime minister's house over her two terms in office, which were interrupted by military interventions. I spent more than 11 years in Pakistani jails, imprisoned without a conviction on charges that former prime minister Nawaz Sharif and Pervez Musharraf (who brought and pursued the charges) have now publicly acknowledged were politically motivated. Even before Benazir was first elected prime minister, in 1988, Pakistan's intelligence agencies began working to discredit her, targeting me and several of her friends. I was called "Mr Ten Percent" by their hired guns in public relations, and the names of her friends abroad were besmirched with ridiculous charges that they headed the nonexistent "Indo-Zionist" lobby.

This campaign of character assassination was possibly the first institutional application of the politics of personal destruction. Benazir was the target, and her husband and friends were the instruments. The purpose was to weaken the case for a democratic government. It is perhaps easier to block the path of democracy by discrediting democratic politicians.

During the years of my wife's governments, she was constrained by a hostile establishment; an interventionist military leadership; a treacherous intelligence network; a fragile coalition government; and a presidential sword of Damocles, constantly threatening to dismiss

Parliament. Despite all of this, she was able to introduce free media, make Pakistan one of the 10 most important emerging capital markets in the world, build over 46,000 schools and bring electricity to many villages in our large country. She changed the lives of women in Pakistan and drew attention to the cause of women's rights in the Islamic world. It was a record that she was rightly proud of.

Her murder does not end her vision and must not be allowed to empower her assassins. Those responsible — within and outside of government — must be held accountable. I call on the United Nations to commence a thorough investigation of the circumstances, facts and cover-up of my wife's murder, modelled on the investigation into the assassination of former Lebanese prime minister Rafiq al-Hariri. And I call on the friends of democracy in the West, in particular the United States and Britain, to endorse the call for such an independent investigation. An investigation conducted by the government of Pakistan will have no credibility, in my country or anywhere else. One does not put the fox in charge of the henhouse.

But it is also time to look forward. In profound sadness, the torch of leadership in the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) has been passed to a new generation, to our son, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. I will work with him and support him and protect him to the extent possible in the trying times ahead. The Bhutto family has given more than anyone can imagine to the service of our nation, and in these difficult days it is critical that the party remain unified and focused. My wife, always prescient and wise, understood that. Knowing that the future was unpredictable, she recommended that the family keep the party together for the sake of Pakistan. This is what we aim to do.

The Musharraf regime has postponed the elections scheduled for Tuesday not because of any logistical problems but because Musharraf and his "King's Party" know that they were going to be thoroughly rejected at the polls and that the PPP and other pro-democracy parties would win a majority. Democracy in Pakistan can be saved, and extremism and fanaticism contained, only if the elections, when they are held, are free, fair and credible.

To that end, the people of Pakistan must be guaranteed elections that are (1) conducted under a new, neutral caretaker government, free of cronies from Musharraf's party; (2) supervised by an independent and autonomous election commission formed in

consultation with the major political parties; (3) monitored by trained international observers who have unfettered access to all polling stations as well as the right to conduct exit polling to verify results; (4) covered by electronic and print media with the freedoms they had before martial law was imposed on Nov. 3; and (5) arbitrated by an independent judiciary as provided for in the constitution. In addition, all political activists, lawyers and judges being detained must be released.

The enemies of democracy and tolerance who took my wife from me and from the world can and must be exposed and marginalised. Dictatorship and fanaticism have always been rejected by the people of Pakistan. If free and fair elections are held, those forces will be defeated again on Feb 18. And on that day, the vision and indefatigable spirit of Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto will burn brightly, and, in the words of John Kennedy, "the glow from that fire can truly light the world."

Daily Times, Jan. 6, 2008

PAKISTAN'S TIPPING POINT

Bilawal Bhutto

*You can imprison a man, but not an idea. You can exile a man,
but not an idea. You can kill a man, but not an idea.*

Benazir Bhutto

My country mourns. And as my countrymen join me in personal grief over the loss of my mother, I join them in national grief over the loss of something even greater: the loss of Pakistan's greatest voice for democracy.

Benazir Bhutto's death, however, shall not have been in vain. We will go forward, as she would have wanted, and bring freedom and democracy to Pakistan.

For those in my country who would find it easier to walk away from democracy and seek revenge through violence, I urge you to remember my mother's words: *democracy is the sweetest revenge*. To plunge the country into more violence and chaos would only play into the hands of those who hope for democracy's failure. The terrorists have no use for democracy, and the current government fears it. We must unite and rise above both.

And to those outside of my country, who support our fight for democracy, I urge you to consider this: We cannot oppose one form of tyranny while turning a blind eye to another. Together, we must stand against the violence of the terrorists on the one hand, while standing equally firm against Pervez Musharraf's use of it as an excuse to impose his own repressive will upon the people of Pakistan.

Musharraf has made a mockery of our constitution. The world watched in disbelief as he declared emergency rule and sent troops into the streets in November – not because of a terrorist threat to the government, but a constitutional threat to his autocratic grip on power. The men he threw into jails were not terrorists but Supreme Court judges and respected lawyers. The newspapers he intimidated

were not organs of terrorists but of free and independent citizens of Pakistan.

My mother stood bravely against both the tyranny of terrorism as well as the tyranny of dictatorship. She has been martyred for her courage and pursuit of freedom, but now that courage and pursuit has been bequeathed to the people of Pakistan. We shall carry on.

It will take the kind of courage my mother showed. It will take courage among her loyal followers to calm their anger and renounce violence or revenge. We must instead demand fair and open elections, free of government intimidation, and then make our show of force on election day.

It will also take courage on the part of Pervez Musharraf and those who have supported his government, including those outside of Pakistan.

With my country's judges and lawyers still in jail, its free media intimidated and silenced, and its political leaders unsafe to walk the streets, we cannot pretend to have free and open elections. There can be no legitimacy to elections held under such ominous conditions. Those who espouse the virtues of democracy cannot stand by idly and maintain their credibility while this repression continues.

Our free and independent Supreme Court must be restored; the justices jailed by Musharraf must be released and returned to their proper seats, replacing the cronies with which Musharraf has packed the current court. Our other judges, lawyers and civic dissidents must be freed. The intimidation campaign waged against the free media must be halted. International election observers must be allowed to monitor our elections to ensure against government intimidation. And, finally, a credible international commission must be allowed to investigate the mysterious circumstances of my mother's assassination. Only after these steps are taken can we begin the honorable march to democracy and stability.

For those who think that by supporting dictatorship they are somehow securing stability in Pakistan, I can say only this: Where is that stability today? My country teeters on the precipice of anarchy not because of any actions by radicals or terrorists but because of the unchecked and power-mad actions of a military dictator.

Pakistanis will soon hold the most important election in our history. We have reached a tipping point. We will either unite behind democracy and the fight against radicalism and violence, or we will descend into the all-too-familiar cycles of despotism, terror and instability.

Those of us who will fight for democracy must make our stand now. Then, together, a united and democratic government can turn its attention to the extremists and terrorists who seek to undermine freedom in our country and throughout the world.

January 6, 2008

BENAZIR BHUTTO AS I KNEW HER

Aitzaz Ahsan

“The first thing I want to do is to release all political prisoners,” she announced as our meeting on Nov 30, 1988, began at Dr Zafar Niazi’s house in Islamabad. In the elections held after the death of Gen Zia, the PPP, despite all efforts of the agencies, had succeeded in the elections.

After failing to prop up any rival, President Ghulam Ishaq Khan had finally agreed that very day to accept her as prime minister of Pakistan.

The historic meeting of the PPP leadership was being held to set the top priorities of Benazir Bhutto’s first government. It was here as the prime minister-designate that she showed her mettle. So far her life and emotions had been premised on the bitter fact that her dearest father had been deposed, imprisoned, humiliated, falsely charged, hanged and then buried without due ceremony.

But she brought to that meeting only her winning smile and the undiluted optimism of a political idealist. Zia had left behind a large number of political prisoners and convicts of military courts. Each had been denied due process. Releasing them, she said, was going to be her number one priority.

What pledge should we make to ourselves? she asked. “That we must ensure press freedom,” I suggested. “For anything that it may print?” she asked. “Yes, for anything. We must set a precedent,” I said. And she agreed at once, excited that it was a good idea.

Next day I was sworn in as her interior minister. In that capacity, I received countless recommendations to prosecute this or that publication. I turned down each of these even when our government was brutally and deliberately slandered.

Once a cabinet colleague complained to her that I was not prosecuting publications for false propaganda against her husband Asif Zardari. “But Malik Sahib,” she retorted, “we have pledged to allow full freedom to the media. We will have to bear with it.” Then she turned to me and asked: “Is there anything that can be done

without the government getting involved?" "Yes," I replied. "Asif should file a civil suit for damages in his personal capacity." And so it was that Mr. Asif Zardari, husband of a serving prime minister, had the grace to file a private civil suit for damages as an ordinary litigant.

That is what she was. At once humane and proper. How can I recount in such a short piece, all aspects of a life lived to such fullness particularly when I have worked so close to her during her life? Even books will fail to do justice. At present, only a few instances establishing her more prominent qualities must suffice. One was fortitude.

Between 1990 and 1993, there were as many as 18 prosecutions against her and her husband Asif Zardari. Both were also slandered and defamed. I had publicly promised to turn these prosecutions "from the trial of Mohtarma into the trial of Ishaq Khan." In the end, they were both acquitted in all those cases, with her husband bravely facing adversity and she standing by him like a rock. She had the fortitude to bear the designed torment aimed at her by the notorious regime of Jam Sadiq Ali in Sindh.

Never will I forget that one day in 1992 when I entered the outer gate of Landhi Jail to defend Asif in a trial being conducted inside the jail itself. There she was, the former prime minister of Pakistan, carrying two young infants, Bilawal and Bakhtawar, in her arms, and sitting on a pile of bricks. I was furious and immediately went to the jail superintendent. But she calmed me down saying that she had learnt not to expect any decency from the jail staff. After all, she herself had remained imprisoned for five years as a young girl.

Through all her trials and tribulations, she demonstrated amazing charm and stamina. When she came to stay with us in Gujrat in December 1986, she arrived at 3.00 am on that freezing December night having travelled a full 10 hours from Lahore, but she sat up chatting with my wife Bushra for another one hour with Zaynab, our youngest, in her lap. Early in the morning she was up, fresh as a flower, all ready to meet local party officials.

She kept punishing schedules and was the only politician who had toured the entire Pakistan, city by city, town by town, village by village and hamlet by hamlet at least five times. She knew the party workers by face and the towns by the streets.

And through it all she remained a model of womanhood at its most sublime. While being the most hardworking, hands-on, leading politician of the country, she was unabashedly feminine at the same

time. In this intolerant and male-dominated country, she refused to be uncomfortable about her womanhood. She gave birth to her first child in the middle of the 1988 election campaign and another child while she was the first woman prime minister of Muslim Pakistan.

Then there was her courage. She was afraid of nothing. I was on her truck at the time of the blast of Oct 18. Next morning when I met her she was in her normal routine. I did not know that I was seeing her for the last time. When I sought her leave to return to Lahore for my Supreme Court Bar elections, she said, "It will be a landslide in your favour. Good luck. And thanks for being here."

When I was withdrawing from the parliamentary contest I sent word to her and she consulted me, through Senator Safdar Abbasi, on my choice for my substitute. She accepted the choice. But I was arrested the day after my election as president SCBA and denied permission even to attend the funeral or solem of the one who believed in freeing political prisoners and the media, and in the politics of non-violence.

As a political leader she could organise and mobilise the biggest political organisation in Pakistan, set the political agenda, make millions of ordinary people dream the greatest dreams for this land and yes, in fair elections, win elections too. She could do all that. But what she could not tackle were certain self-appointed guardians of the state, who refused to allow people the right to solve their problems themselves and who harassed, hounded, threatened and conspired against her. They did not permit her a fair shot at the democratic game because they knew that she would win, not by breaking the Constitution or at gunpoint but through the sheer will of ordinary people who are supposed to be sovereign. Even on the last day of her life, her foremost concern was not how to win the elections but how to prevent them from being rigged. I wonder if people understand that in this lies a tragedy, not only for Benazir Bhutto, but for this nation.

Many sincere analysts questioned the integrity of her politics. They did not understand that after facing conspiracy after conspiracy, Benazir Bhutto was forced to factor painful ground realities in her decision-making, always striving to achieve one day her true political ideals.

This fundamental question may indeed be addressed through another question: why, during the 30 years from 1977 when an elected and popular prime minister was ousted at gunpoint to the date when Benazir Bhutto lost her life to another gun, was the total

period for which she, the most popular political leader, was allowed to govern the country three times less than the time that Chaudhry Shujat's party remained in power? The real source of this country's problems may be revealed by the answer. In kowtowing to the civil and military bureaucracy there is a premium. He and his ilk can do it. She could not. They survive. She had to be eliminated.

One cannot help wondering why our establishment that claims to be obsessed with maintaining the federation, could not bring itself to see in Benazir Bhutto that glorious human chain that kept all four provinces together, and as an asset and an ally instead of a foe.

Above all else, I will remember her for three qualities: a constant urge to reach out to her people, a willingness to take on Herculean challenges, and for her ability to forgive, even embrace, her enemies. These three qualities made her superhuman. And all three took her to her tragic, yet heroic death.

All I can now say is: "Bibi it is an honour to have worked for you and with you. The Himalayas wept at the death of your father. The world weeps for you."

MY FRIEND, THE VISIONARY

Najmuddin A. Shaikh

Sitting traumatised by the tragedy that struck on the evening of December 27, I desperately looked for relief, for a palliative or at least distraction from the all-engulfing grief for the Bhutto family, for the Pakistani nation and for me as an individual who had known and admired Mohtarama Benazir Bhutto. I found it in surfing the net and reading the coverage that the assassination had received in the international visual and print media.

I had expected that the sense of enormous loss, the sense that a towering figure had been untimely ripped from the body politic of Pakistan, would bring millions out on the streets of Pakistan's cities. What I had not expected and what my benumbed mind slowly absorbed over the next three days was the extent to which this was shared by the world at large.

On December 27 and 28 there were by my count at least four articles each in leading newspapers of the world such as *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, *The Times of London*, *The Independent*, *The Guardian*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *Le Monde*, *Le Figaro*, *Arab News* of Saudi Arabia, and other newspapers around the world.

I tried to do a comparison of the coverage the Rajiv Gandhi's assassination had received. Like her, he was a young and charismatic leader on the election campaign trail. Like her, he was an ex-prime minister and anointed heir of the most distinguished political dynasty of India. Like her, he was struggling to bring modernity to his nation and to fight obscurantism in a region that qualified as one of the poorest in the world. Like her, he was dogged by corruption scandals that later all proved to be untrue. Moreover, he had the advantage of being from a much larger and more populous country that had always commanded greater attention from the international media. And yet while the coverage he received was extensive, it was not a patch on what BB's assassination evoked.

Implicit if not explicit in much of this coverage was the assessment that she had represented the best hope for bringing Pakistan, a country of much concern to the world, back to the vision of the moderate and tolerant polity that the Quaid-e-Azam had outlined for our country.

Some will say that the coverage was prompted by this concern for Pakistan, but that is true only in part. Largely it was an acknowledgement of the qualities of this leader who, while deeply rooted in Pakistan, had an international vision and an international stature that no other Pakistani has enjoyed in recent years. It was a tribute to the first woman to become head of government in a major Muslim country, and to the role model that she became for Muslim and other women around the world. It was a tribute, despite her perceived imperiousness, to her commitment to the ideals of democracy and to her determined effort to give the masses a voice in Pakistan and other countries of the Muslim and Third World.

I had the honour and privilege of being her foreign secretary for much of her second term. In my 38 years of experience in the foreign service, I did not come across another head of government, apart from her own father, the late Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who could come close to rivalling her grasp of the realities of international affairs. There was never an occasion when she did not, in small and big ways, improve the talking points we in the foreign office provided to her for her meetings with foreign dignitaries or foreign journalists. It was intuitive in part, but largely it was based on what she absorbed from the enormous amount of reading for which she somehow found time and from the vast network of friends that she had built in the international intellectual community.

It was unfortunate that despite her understanding of the interplay of forces in the international arena, domestic limitations made it impossible for her to proceed with foreign policy initiatives that were proposed to her or which she had herself thought up. She was particularly concerned that, hamstrung by these limitations in her second term in office and by inflexibility on the part of her potential interlocutors, no progress could be made in the chequered Indo-Pak relationship. One could only make informal suggestions at informal meetings. What she had authorised as points to put across eventually became, as some Indian diplomats have said, the basis for the current Indo-Pak "composite dialogue."

Her diplomatic skills were more clearly evident when she met with Bill Clinton in Washington in 1995. Both she and Clinton broke

the ice with a reference to the visit Hillary Clinton had paid to Pakistan a few months earlier and from which Hillary had gone back very impressed with the social sector reforms the Mohtarama was seeking to implement and even more so by the galaxy of professional working women that she met at the PM House. A rapport seemed to come into being. The meeting was a success. We secured a breakthrough on the F-16 issue that went beyond our expectations. It certainly went beyond what Clinton, according to his National Security Adviser, had been advised to offer. Was this driven by Clinton's own sense of right and wrong or was he influenced by BB's eloquent presentation? I believe the latter, and I believe it because she chose with special care to adhere to a conciliatory tone both in tenor and substance rather than the combativeness that the justice of her cause would have entitled her to adopt.

Now, however, what will be most sorely missed is not her diplomatic skills but the national leadership she could offer to repair the fractured internal polity and to combat the forces of darkness that threaten to engulf us. Today we may lament our inability to formulate clear policies to protect our regional and global interests. But far more important is the need to put our internal house in order and to develop an internal cohesiveness, which alone will give us the strength to protect our external interests.

Can an orphaned political leadership rise to the challenge? We must hope that they will. That will be the best way to prove that her lifelong effort had not been in vain. It will be the best epitaph to a leader who, all naysayers notwithstanding, "put Pakistan first."

Newsline , January 2008

THE PPP AND THE STATE

Ayesha Siddiq

It was on the morning of December 27 that I was discussing with a friend why the phenomenon of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) could not be recreated in the country. That very evening, Benazir Bhutto was assassinated. My heart sunk at the news. That she was controversial could not detract from the fact that her death is a national catastrophe. Indeed, towards the end of her life there were many, including her party workers, who questioned her decision to tie a knot with the military establishment and its representative, General (retd) Pervez Musharraf. This was a questionable decision because she was seen as cosyng up to the forces that were uncomfortable with her father's PPP. However, for the moment, this debate has gone into the background, overshadowed by a greater tragedy.

While the circumstances and causes of her death will continue to be debated *ad infinitum*, it is even more important to take cognizance of the high opportunity cost of the assassination. It is not just the death of a leader but a lethal blow to a national political party: the PPP was the only party which represented and connected different parts of the country. And Bhutto was a political leader, who, despite all her flaws, was widely known nationally as well as internationally.

This was not because of her politics but due to the party she represented. And to understand the importance of the PPP and its relationship with the Pakistani state, one has to understand the circumstances under which the party was established. PPP was born in November 1967 amid another crisis in the country under a military dictator, General Ayub Khan. The general's distribution of resources among a selected group of 22 elite families, his problematic policies vis-à-vis the eastern wing and his undermining of politics and democracy in the entire country brought Pakistan to the brink of disaster — in 1971 East Pakistan seceded to form Bangladesh.

It was in this context that the PPP was born — with the agenda to challenge the elitist socio-economic and socio-political system. With its slogan of Islamic Socialism, the party talked about the empowerment of the ordinary people through land reforms, progressive labour laws and nationalisation of the sources of capital accumulation. This was the first time in the history of Pakistan that someone spoke on behalf of the people and in a language that they could understand.

Indeed, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto is still remembered for both the content and the style of his oratory. He was truly the first charismatic leader of the country. His ability to reach out to the people emotionally and talk about their rights is something which no leader could ever do or has done since. What further endeared him to the people was that having been through the corridors of power and being aware of how the system worked, he still challenged it.

Thus, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto created a party that transcended regional divides: he enjoyed the support of all the federating units of then West Pakistan. And though Sheikh Mujibur Rahman pursued similar politics in the eastern wing, Bhutto had one other advantage over him: Bhutto had friends and supporters in the military establishment who helped him rise to power after the military establishment collapsed temporarily in December 1971.

This started a different phase in Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's political career. The political activist and the head of the state and government were two entirely different personalities. As the head of the government he aimed at accumulating both state and personal power. In his five years at the helm he managed to rebuild the military and also create institutions such as the Federal Security Force (FSF) with which he secured power in his own hands.

But at the same time, as a national leader, he endeared himself to the security establishment. He played a major role in bringing back 90,000 prisoners of war from India and started the country's nuclear programme. In addition, he acquired conventional equipment for the armed forces despite the dearth of resources.

Yet the military led by General Ziaul Haq brought his downfall. From the military viewpoint, the 1977 coup is justified as the country was being divided by Bhutto's policies. Undoubtedly, the PPP leadership was caught with its pants down. The 1977 elections were needlessly rigged but this was not necessarily the cause of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's removal. Indeed, he had taken steps towards

reconciliation: he had agreed to hold fresh elections and an agreement to this effect had already been finalised with the Pakistan National Alliance when Zia intervened.

After that the military establishment continued to be haunted by the PPP. First, Bhutto was seen to have humiliated Zia when the latter was the army chief: senior generals held this against the PPP leader. Second, the 1973 Constitution — framed by the PPP government — defined a military coup as an act of treason punishable by death. Since Zia had suspended the Constitution, it was a matter of life and death for him to demonise the PPP. And even beyond Zia, this constitutional provision remained a thorn in the side of the military. No senior general can think of imposing martial law without considering the legal ramifications. Although the military has seized power twice since the 1973 Constitution was passed, the generals are always aware of the risks involved and the fact that the PPP was the architect of these risks. Third, the army was scared of Bhutto's popularity which neutralised the centrality of any other organisation in the country's power politics, including the military. After all, since the first coup in 1958, the armed forces have systematically undermined the image and credibility of all other institutions, ensuring that the military appears as the only credible organisation.

However, despite the military's best efforts, the PPP has remained a strong national player, especially as Benazir Bhutto successfully filled her father's shoes. As a result, the army could never trust the party and constantly nurtured other organisations to undermine the party's significance, such as the then Mohajir Qaumi Movement and Islami Jamhoori Ittihad. Even when the PPP was allowed to form a government in 1988 after Zia's death that year, the military under General Aslam Beg conspired to destabilise it, finally using President Ghulam Ishaq Khan to sack the government in 1990. Later, the party was brought in again in 1993, only to be sacked in 1996.

However, in the following decade, many have argued that there has been a change in the relationship between the military and the PPP. For how else could one make sense of the so-called deal between Musharraf and Benazir Bhutto? Had the military's attitude towards the PPP changed? Not necessarily. Because since deposing Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the GHQ has always accepted the party when it considered the alliance beneficial or unavoidable — in both 1988 and the mid-1990s. This time also, Musharraf was talking to the party

because the notion was popular in the US.

PPP leadership was also keen on reaching out to Musharraf in order to come to power, even to the extent of toning down its radical rhetoric. Nonetheless, the party continued to be a threat for the establishment because of its popularity and vote bank which successive regimes — military and civilian — had failed to destroy.

But now even Benazir Bhutto is dead. One wonders if the magic can ever be recreated now that the charismatic leader's charismatic daughter has also gone from the national stage. For the party's central executive committee, it will be an uphill task to keep the PPP intact and relevant to the people while transcending the ethnic, class and other divides. However, it can do so by institutionalising itself and allowing ideologically committed people such as Aitzaz Ahsan and Farhatullah Babar to take centre stage. Secondly, the party should sharpen the now blunted ideological overtones of its political message. In other words, the PPP itself has to recognise its strengths and focus on them instead of diluting its agenda and making compromises.

The Herald, January 2008

MEMORIES, PAIN AND GRIEF

Javed Jabbar

Having been fairly sceptical and critical of Benazir Bhutto since my resignation from the PPP in 1995, during her second tenure as prime minister (1993-1996), I was shocked at my own self for two of my reactions on Dec 27.

In the afternoon, in response to a friend's question as to who I would vote for on Jan 8, 2008, I spontaneously replied to the effect that if I did vote, it would be for the PPP. In view of my earlier condemnation of the decision by major parties to take part in the polls being held under a dispensation violative of the fundamental principles of justice and fairness, I was surprised at my own answer.

Despite all my reservations, developed over the past decade and more, about certain aspects of PPP's top leadership, I have now come to realise that if the electoral process is to be used to combat the demons of darkness in Pakistan, Benazir Bhutto was the most potent rallying point to combine the forces of modernism and secularism.

To recognise her primacy in the struggle against obscurantism was not to detract from the sincerity or the strength of other political personalities and parties that share the same broad approach. By being forthright on this issue, by refusing to equivocate with provisos and qualifiers, she was mobilising a new politically credible resistance to primitivism.

My second reaction on Dec 27 came when I heard of her death on my way home. Fortunately, I was not on the steering wheel. The driver too was taken aback by my reaction. Leave alone he, I too was unprepared for the pain and grief that suddenly surged in me.

Between the tears and gasps of shock, there came up enormous affection and empathy for her, sentiments I had obviously pummelled deep inside my psyche over the past ten years, as one's cerebral views took over almost entirely from partly emotional responses.

Our first meeting was in 1986. As a member of the independent parliamentary opposition group I joined other members in welcoming her to a meeting in Rawalpindi. Our last meeting turned into a three-hour, one-on-one lunch in, of all places, Damascus in 2000 where she had come to pay homage to a good old friend of the Bhutto family, the late President Hafez al Assad. I was representing Chief Executive General Pervez Musharraf at the state funeral.

We maintained a cordial, formal and sometimes warm relationship. In the past seven years, on random occasions, through common friends, we exchanged brief messages of goodwill. But now I regret I did not make an attempt to seek a meeting since our last chance encounter.

In the 15 years during which we did meet, particularly in the 1988-1990 phase in which I served in her first cabinet as minister of state for information and broadcasting and later, for science and technology, I often became conscious of her vulnerability and her fragility, qualities that one does not normally associate with a person of exceptional verve, composure and determination.

Behind her public persona of a bold defiance of dictators, of her bland, imperturbable expression that would deflect and reject queries from interviewers about corruption charges, there existed a sensitive private person thrust into public life through cruel twists and turns without a single day's direct experience of parliamentary membership or of executive responsibility.

To be the daughter of a famous leader long accustomed to public office is one thing. To become prime minister in her own right, in a sense overnight, at a critical period without any prior personal exposure to public office caused severe stress and strain on her, is another. On rare occasions, these became visible. This made her all the more endearing.

My working relationship with Benazir Bhutto was sometimes tense and troubled, marked by strong disagreements on some policy issues. Yet there was also amiability, affinity and humour. Whatever the mood or situation, it was always memorable. In spite of our divergent perceptions on certain issues, she sometimes entrusted me with extremely important tasks, a confidence on her part which I greatly respected.

She was leader of global calibre, and not just a daughter of the east. She inherited a powerful political legacy and sustained it in many ways while also enhancing it in some respects and diminishing it in others. In the new era of globalisation in the last

two decades of the 20th century, in the face of dramatic geopolitical changes that swept the world, in the context of the traumatic turmoil that has marked Pakistan's history in the first seven years of the 21st century, she remained, at home and in self-exile, a unique and formidable leader.

Assassinated by a cabal of cowards and conspirators who should be urgently traced and punished, her tragic loss opens up new challenges for society and the state of Pakistan. Every citizen who felt the grief and the pain at her demise now has a duty to render an active role to curb mayhem and disorder, to unite all progressive forces and to achieve the ideals she fought for.

More than ever before, there is a need to secure and strengthen the Federation of Pakistan for which she sacrificed her life.

Daily Dawn

BIBI'S MAGIC

Khalid Hasan

Few people have been mourned with as much feeling across the world as Benazir Bhutto. Poems have been written about her from Indonesia to Spain and across the seas, in America and Latin America. The savage act that cut short her incandescent life at a moment when she stood at the threshold of a new era, when she would have made up for the failings of the past, has moved many to tears. She had this strange quality about her. Long after you had left her company, you kept feeling a certain glow that was hard to explain. She made you feel good. She was a woman of immense good humour and she never wished anyone ill, which makes death at the hands of an assassin indescribably tragic.

I have been scouring the Internet, looking for a poem that she wrote on her 50th birthday. I did not find it, but I found much else, posted by people who never met her, never saw her and yet they felt devastated by her death. That was her magic.

A Pakistani, living in Spain, writes in Urdu — and his words are so simple and eloquent as to be poetry:

“Wherever you look in Spanish newspapers, there is just one headline/Those who look at us, know that we are Pakistanis/They are the ones to whom we were always saying, ‘This is how Pakistan is; that is how Pakistan is.’/But now, the more we try to show Pakistan in a good light to them, the more we fail/There is just on everyone’s lips today, given what the newspapers carry/But they ask it not/They say nothing/They only look at us in a strange way/They say nothing and yet they are saying much/What can we say?/ How can we explain why what has happened has happened? There are bomb blasts everyday/Why?/How do we explain it to them?/We no longer have words to speak or things to say/Our only refuge is silence/We must bear what has come to pass/That seems best/People can speak ill of Pakistan and Pakistanis but we say nothing/It’s painful but we have to bear the pain/It isn’t easy to go out/Not easy after the news we’ve heard/Not easy to talk to anyone/Please tell us what to say for we can find no words.”

Someone else, an American, writes, "I really felt that Benazir was a leader that would not only bring peace to my brothers and sisters in Pakistan, but also aid in the war on terror. The war on terror must come to an end, and to do this, we as human beings must care for our peoples and the well-being of their souls. We must stop killing one another, our Creator demands this, the Creator of all beings. I believe she will lead many from this day on, in her passing. She has inspired change! I wrote this as tears fell from my eyes upon the terrible news! May we all live to usher in peace!"

Another person, who signs himself Shaer or poet, writes, "As tears rolled down my face (I believe in peace) and I felt the damage that was done to world peace, I felt saddened to feel the loss in my heart. She was beautiful, and caring of the situations that needed attention. She was brave! May God bless Benazir Bhutto, and may you find peace in this poem."

The poem reads: "A woman/with three young children/putting her life on the line for a cause/I wonder how a mother could put her life on the line/Again/With three young children/I always thought/a mother's instinct is stronger than anything/Benazir indicated that her country is a greater cause/Brother, she is in the hands of God/Now let's pray for her soul/But brother/I grieve for those children."

One short poem dedicated to her goes: "The children are motherless/Let's hope that her sacrifice will be an offering/for a better Pakistan/In the eyes of God/blood sacrifice supersedes life itself/Go in peace, Sister." Someone signing herself as Anna writes: Benazir Bhutto was assassinated today/she expired at 6:16/I have no poetry for you/words have no meaning sometimes/and the poet is gone/absent from all reason/all choked up/with nothing to say."

A young woman named Mehnaz Malik, whom Benazir befriended, dedicates a poem by David Harkins, written in 1981, to "Bibi":

"She is gone/You can shed tears that she is gone/Or you can smile because she has lived/You can close your eyes and pray that she will come back/Or you can open your eyes and see all that she has left/Your heart can be empty because you can't see her/Or you can be full of the love that you shared/You can turn your back on tomorrow and live yesterday/Or you can be happy for tomorrow because of yesterday/You can remember her and only that she is gone/Or you can cherish her memory and let it live on/You can cry

and close your mind, be empty and turn your back/Or you can do what she would want: smile, open your eyes, love and go on.”

Mehnaz writes, “Her critics say she was a pampered princess, and yet I never saw her rest. Bibi was a workaholic glued to her computer. She was extremely efficient with answering emails, and reading copious amounts of paper. Bibi kept her staff to the minimum, there was no entourage of assistants or professionals, just the bare minimum. I often sent her the odd intern to ease her workload because she was so overstretched. Contrary to what people think, she was not living in a palace with a large staff. Her HQ was always a few computers with various volunteers helping out. At the very centre of activity was Bibi working away, until we would drag her to take that much needed break. More recently, with her lecture circuit, we used to discuss how much we had to travel just to earn a living.”

But I would like to end this in Bibi’s own words, “I don’t fear death. I remember my last meeting with my father when he told me, ‘You know, tonight when I will be killed, my mother and my father will be waiting for me.’ It makes me weepy but I don’t think it can happen unless God wants it to happen because so many people have tried to kill me.”

Daily Times

TRYST WITH EESTINY

Tina Brown

I knew Benazir Bhutto from our Oxford days. She was at Lady Margaret Hall and a great star of the debating society at Oxford. She was always very sophisticated, very cosmopolitan, with a great presence... She stood out even in those days.

I met her recently when she came to Aspen, Colorado, for a seminar organised by Senator Teddy Forceman. We were meeting after many years. I asked her about her plans to return to Pakistan. The resolve in her voice was clear. She replied, "I am going back in 17 days, 5 hours..." She was counting the days when she would touch the soil of her beloved country. I was struck by the determination in her voice.

The questions she was facing then were the obvious ones: about her safety. But her voice had unmistakable steel. "I have to do it now," Benazir told me.

She could not stay in Dubai any longer. It was as if she felt stifled. As if she was dying to breathe the air of her country. Others asked her the same question — about her safety. But she was firm. "I want to go back to Pakistan...whatever my destiny is. I have to go..."

It was not as if she did not know what lay in store for her. In Aspen that day, Benazir recalled what her father, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, had gone through, what her brother had gone through. "I have to confront my destiny," she kept saying.

She knew in her heart that her chances of survival in Pakistan were bleak.

Such was the danger to her life, as was evident on the day she landed in Pakistan. Makes me wonder how this terrible lapse in security could have happened.

It makes me suspicious.

Yes, before she returned to Pakistan there was so much talk about her so-called 'agreement' with President Pervez Musharraf. About the power-sharing I asked her about it. Her reply made it clear she

did not trust Musharraf. "He has not kept a word he's said," Benazir told me. "He's broken every word he said he was going to do."

She did not trust him.

Then she said, "Yet, I am going back."

She had lived in Dubai for years. But it was not the life she wanted. Her heart was in Pakistan. She was passionate about being a symbol of democracy. And yes, she was angry. She was angry that her name was being smeared by her opponents in Pakistan. She was riled her name was being dragged through cases of corruption, she was being accused of nepotism... what not. I could sense great anger in her voice as she recalled it all.

Now she wanted to get back to Pakistan and set the record straight.

She wanted another term as prime minister, to complete an unfinished job.

She said she was ready.

Her son had recently enrolled at Oxford. In fact, one of the reasons she had delayed her return to Pakistan was the safety of her children. But when her son went to Oxford, Benazir felt it was time for her to go as well... to take the risk.

The Nation, January 11, 2008

WHO KILLED BENAZIR BHUTTO?

By Rami G Khouri

The tragic assassination of former prime minister Benazir Bhutto will engulf Pakistan in grief and turmoil. Her death symbolises the wider calamity that envelops us all — throughout the Middle East, Asia, Europe, and the United States. The real significance of this latest killing and the others that are sure to follow — is not their surprise, but rather how common, almost inevitable, this sort of event has become in our part of the world. If we wish to end this horror show engulfing more Arab-Asian regions and increasingly sucking in American and other Western armies, we should start getting serious about what it means and why it happens.

We should largely dismiss the many exhortations we will now hear about democracy, stability, restraint, terrorism, and patience in the face of extremism. These are increasingly vacuous appeals by leaders who wilfully ignore a central, miserable reality in which they participate: Much of the vast region from North Africa and the Middle East to south Asia is now routinely defined by political violence as an everyday fact of life.

A telltale sign in Pakistan today, as it has been in Lebanon for years, and in many other similarly scarred countries, is that we can identify multiple plausible culprits because so many political people — good guys and bad guys alike — kill on the job.

Bhutto, her father, and brother have all been assassinated, as have been successive generations of other political families, in Arab and Asian countries. The lack of novelty is another telling sign that should clarify for us the wider meaning of this crime, beyond Pakistan. After grieving for one family and one country, we must react to the chronic nature of political violence by trying to understand the entire phenomenon, rather than its isolated, episodic manifestations.

An honest beginning in this direction would be to acknowledge that political violence does not occur in a historical vacuum. Lone gunmen, local militias, suicide terrorists, state armies, and even

democratically elected leaders in dozens of countries have all become players in an extensive global drama. On this stage, the use of force is an everyday event — the threat of force is never off the table. It makes little difference if this is the work of democratic or dictatorial leaders: Dead children and war-ravaged societies do not value such distinctions.

When the military and political violence of democrats and dictators goes on for several generations, social values are distorted, and human values are disjointed. It does not matter if this occurs in Pakistan, Egypt, Algeria, Kazakhstan, Northern Ireland, or pre-democratic southern Europe. The absence of credible governance systems based on the rule of law and the equal rights of all citizens slowly pushes citizens and rulers alike to rely on the law of the jungle. They use death and intimidation, rather than electoral or accountable legitimacy, to make their point, to perpetuate their incumbency, and to eliminate their opponents.

When everyone uses violence and intimidation as a routine, daily expression of their political aims, when terrorists and presidents use firepower to lay down the law, the circle of culpability widens like the ripples from a pebble thrown into a pond. It is becoming harder and harder to tell the difference between gunmen, gangs, and governments — in Asia, the Middle East and parts of the West — when the chronic use of violence and lawlessness makes death and assassinations routine, and subsequently inevitable.

We will hear passionate appeals this week about courage, democracy, and terror, from presidents, kings and warlords alike. These emperors appear increasingly naked as they exhort us to higher values. It is hard to take them seriously — these Asians, Arabs, Americans, Israelis, Iranians, Turks, Europeans, Africans and anyone else who wishes to stand up and be recognised. These pontificating presidents, kings, and warlords who preach about life and democracy have spent the last generation sending their armies to war, overthrowing regimes, authorising covert assassinations, arming gangs and militias, trading weapons for political favours, buying protection from thugs, cozying up to terrorists, lauding autocrats, making deals with dictators, imprisoning tens of thousands of foes, torturing at will, thumbing their nose at the UN Charter, buying and bullying judges, ignoring true democrats, and blindly refusing even to hear the simple demands of their own citizens for minimum decency and dignity.

I have spent my entire adult life in the Middle East — since the 1970s — watching leaders being assassinated, foreign armies topple governments, local colonels seize power, foreign occupations persist for decades, the rule of law get thrown in the garbage, constitutions being ignored, and, in the end, ordinary people finally deciding that they will not remain outside of history, or invisible in their own societies. Instead, they decide to write themselves into the violent and criminal scripts. They kill, as they have been killed. Having been dehumanised in turn, they will embrace inhumanity and brutality.

Who killed Benazir Bhutto? We all killed her, in east and west, Orient and Occident, north and south. We of the globalised beastly generation that transformed political violence from an occasional crime to an ideology and an addiction.

Daily Times, January 3, 2008

WHAT BENAZIR WAS WORRIED ABOUT

Robert D Novak

The assassination of Benazir Bhutto followed two months of urgent pleas to the State Department by her representatives for better protection. The US reaction was that she was worried over nothing expressing assurance that Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf would not let anything happen to her.

That attitude led a Bhutto agent to inform a high-ranking State Department official that her camp no longer viewed the backstage US effort to broker a power-sharing agreement between Musharraf and the former prime minister as a good-faith effort towards democracy. It was, according to the written complaint, an attempt to preserve the politically endangered Musharraf as George W Bush's man in Islamabad.

President Bush confirmed that judgment with his statement Thursday, within hours of learning that Bhutto was dead, when he urged that the elections scheduled for January 8 to be held in furtherance of Pakistani "democracy". That may be Musharraf's position, but it definitely is not the position of his critics. They believed the election would be a sham with Bhutto dead and with Saudi-backed former prime minister Nawaz Sharif boycotting the balloting, though Sharif's party reversed course yesterday.

The Bush administration decided months ago to broker a power-sharing arrangement, with the deeply unpopular Musharraf retiring from the Army but remaining as president and the popular Bhutto taking a third try as prime minister (after twice being ousted by the Military). That decision was based on Pakistan's strategic importance as a sanctuary for Al Qaeda and Taliban fighters. Bush was in a quandary. Bhutto was much tougher than Musharraf on Islamist extremists, but Bush had invested heavily in the general.

When I last saw Bhutto, over coffee in August at Manhattan's Pierre Hotel, she was deeply concerned about US ambivalence but asked me not to write about it. She had not heard from Musharraf for three weeks after their secret July meeting in Abu Dhabi. She

feared the Pakistani Military strongman was not being prodded from Washington.

Next came Musharraf's state of emergency and purge of Pakistan's Supreme Court to guarantee legality of his questionable election as president. According to Bhutto's advisers, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice asked Bhutto in a telephone conversation to go along with that process in return for concessions from Musharraf. Bhutto agreed, but she got nothing in return.

The unsuccessful October 18 attempt on Bhutto's life followed the regime's rejection of her requested security protection when she returned from eight years in exile. The Pakistani government vetoed FBI assistance in investigating the attack. On October 26, Bhutto sent an e-mail to Mark Siegel, her friend and Washington spokesman, to be made public only in the event of her death.

"I would hold Musharraf responsible," Bhutto said in the message. "I have been made to feel insecure by his minions." She listed obstruction to her "taking private cars or using tinted windows", using jammers against roadside bombs and being surrounded with police cars. "Without him (Musharraf)," she said, those requests could not have been blocked.

In early December, a former Pakistani government official supporting Bhutto visited a senior US government official to renew Bhutto's security requests. He got a brushoff, a mindset reflected December 6 at a Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing.

Richard Boucher, assistant secretary of state for South and Central Asian affairs, was asked to respond to fears by non-partisan American observers of a rigged election. His reply: "I do think they can have a good election. They can have a credible election. They can have a transparent and a fair election. It's not going to be a perfect election." Boucher's words echoed through corridors of power in Islamabad. The Americans not demanding perfection signalled that they would settle for less. Without Benazir Bhutto around, it is apt to be a lot less.

A more sinister fallout of a free hand from Washington for Pakistan might be Bhutto's murder. Neither her shooting on Thursday nor the attempt on her life October 18 bore the trademarks of Al Qaeda. After the carnage, government trucks used streams of water to clean up the blood and, in the process, destroyed forensic evidence. If not too late, would an offer and acceptance of investigation by the FBI be in order?

Daily Times, January 1, 2008

BENAZIR, THE STEELY AND VULNERABLE

Lyse Doucet

She was hailed as one of the Muslim worlds first democratically elected female leaders, and, at 35, one of the youngest ever prime ministers.

I will remember many faces of the Benazir Bhutto I saw over 20 years of following her turbulent political career: a charismatic populist who could hold forth for hours in her native Urdu language to huge, often frenzied crowds; a prime minister who would stride, head held high, through the corridors of power nodding “asalamaleikhum” to everyone on the way; a woman who could be downright silly; a mother who doted on her three children.

Over the years we have discussed everything from the nature of democracy to her latest diet, persistent allegations of corruption against her and her husband Asif Ali Zardari, and the unrelenting demands of her very political life.

She disappointed many during her two terms as prime minister. But whatever her flaws, she had courage.

The political game was in her blood. And, there was that deeply held belief — she would deny — that as a Bhutto she was “born to rule”, that her destiny and Pakistan’s was one and the same.

I have watched her closely since her momentous return from eight years in exile in October.

Emotional return: In our last meeting outside Islamabad in November she spoke with glee of returning to her homes in Pakistan and finding her bright — now congealed — nail polishes and the shalwar kameezes that no longer fitted and were out of fashion.

Then we shifted to the tough political questions in a recorded interview.

But with perhaps one question too many on the controversial deal she had done with General Musharraf, and an interview she felt had now gone on too long, she suddenly snapped.

I saw, for a flash, a woman still overwhelmed by the emotion of a tumultuous return scarred by violence, and the pressures of

controversial decisions she felt she had to take to have corruption charges dropped in order to come home.

Her eyes began to well with tears. But she also collected herself, in a flash.

And then hurried off to another round of meetings.

There was no doubting her energy and palpable happiness as she travelled across Pakistan again, with her trademark white “dupatta” or headscarf, always flanked by the same loyal women and men of her Pakistan People’s Party who linked their fate to her’s.

This was vintage Benazir — the same huge political processions we had reported on for years, that showered her with rose petals and the chants of Jeay Bhutto! (Long live Bhutto).

I could not see how she would have it any other way. It cost her life.

Dynastic politics: It puzzled me when I first went to Pakistan in 1988 that, in this conservative Islamic country, so many would vote for her.

When I asked why, many Pakistanis told me they were really voting for her charismatic father Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.

He was hanged in 1979 by the then military ruler General Ziaul Haq.

She was her father’s daughter, the heir to his legacy.

She could be imperious, the scion, after all, of a dynastic feudal family.

She did not always make the wisest choices on everything from policy to some of the people around her.

She was BB to her friends, and “Pinky” to her closest.

Determined but vulnerable: In recent years even some of her dearest companions accused her of betraying their political principles.

But she was still adored by countless followers who supported her with a blind unswerving loyalty.

However, she sometimes vented her frustration that her life was not her own.

During her first term, she also earned the distinction of being the first prime minister to give birth in office.

And she withstood the barbs of politicians who said there was no provision for a prime minister to take maternity leave.

And then for years after, a woman with a weakness for sweets had to withstand questions from the press about her fluctuating weight.

One of my colleagues once asked her if she was pregnant again and she turned on him with a sharp retort: "No, I am not pregnant. I am fat. And, as the prime minister, its my right to be fat if I want to."

"Silk and steel", was how she described the late Indian leader Indira Gandhi in her memoirs.

This was Benazir too — a steely determination matched by very human vulnerability.

Daily Times, December 30, 2007

THE LEGACY OF BENAZIR

David Ignatius

Try to imagine a young Pakistani woman bounding into the newsroom of the Harvard Crimson in the early 1970s and banging out stories about college sports teams with the passion of a cub reporter. That was the first glimpse some of us had of Benazir Bhutto. We had no idea she was Pakistani political royalty. She was too busy jumping into her future to make a show of her past.

I saw this effervescent woman many times over subsequent years, and I never lost the sense of her as an impetuous person embracing what was new — for herself and for her nation. I remember encountering her once when she was a graduate student at Oxford, shaking up the august and occasionally somnolent Oxford Union debating society as its president. She was wearing a Rolling Stones T-shirt, the one with the sassy tongue sticking out, and I recall thinking that Pakistani politics would never be the same once she returned home.

In later years, I would see her during her periodic visits to Washington after she assumed her family's mantle of political leadership and became prime minister in 1988, at age 35. She changed in her outward appearance, wearing a headscarf and traditional clothes as she matured, but not in her inner passion for change.

Bhutto was fearless, from her college years in America to her cruel assassination yesterday. She had an unshakable belief that Pakistan should embrace the modern world with the same confidence and courage that she had. She believed in democracy, freedom and openness — not as slogans but as a way of life. She wasn't perfect; the corruption charges that enveloped her second term as prime minister were all too real. But she remained the most potent Pakistani voice for liberalism, tolerance and change.

A less determined person would have backed off when her conservative Muslim enemies tried to kill her after she returned home in October. But Bhutto had crossed that bridge a long time

ago. She was a person who, for all her breeding and cultivations, ran headlong at life. Her father and two brothers had died for their vision of a country where Islam and the modern world made an accommodation. Her only real fear, I think, was that she might fail in her mission.

Her assassination was, as President Bush said yesterday, a “cowardly act”. It was a defining act of the politics of murder — a phenomenon that we see from Lebanon to Iraq to Pakistan. If we forget, with the passage of time, the face of the Muslim extremism responsible for September 11, 2001, here is a reminder: Bhutto’s killers targeted her because she was modern, liberal and unafraid.

In the immediate aftermath of Bhutto’s killing, many people feel an instinctive anger at her political rival, President Pervez Musharraf. We will have to wait for the facts, but my first reaction is that blaming Musharraf is a mistake. He has battled the same Muslim extremists who appear to have taken Bhutto’s life. He has faced nine assassination attempts himself, by CNN’s count. He angered Bhutto and her liberal supporters in past because he argued that Pakistani politics was still so violent and volatile that the Army should impose emergency controls.

Bhutto’s death is a brutal demonstration of the difficulty for outsiders in understanding — let alone tinkering with — a country such as Pakistan. The Bush administration attempted a bit of political engineering when it tried to broker an alliance between Musharraf and Bhutto and sought to position her as the country’s next prime minister. Yesterday’s events were a reminder that global politics is not Prospero’s island, where we can conjure up the outcomes we want. In places such as Pakistan, where we can’t be sure where events are heading, the wisest course for the United States is the cautious one of trying to identify and protect American interests. Pakistanis will decide how and when their country makes its accommodation with the modern world.

I think Bhutto was right about the future — that the path to a more stable Pakistan requires precisely the democratic reforms she advocated.

Musharraf and the army have tried to govern from too narrow and unstable a base; that’s their mistake and their weakness. But the assassination of this brave woman is a warning that the path to the modern Pakistan she dreamed of creating won’t be easy.

The best memorial for Bhutto — and the right transition for this nation in turmoil — is to go ahead with the elections set for early January.

Bhutto wasn't afraid of that tumultuous and sometimes deadly process of change, nor should anyone be.

Daily Times, December 29, 2007

BENAZIR: A WARM, UNDERSTANDING AND CARING PERSON

Karan Thapar

Benazir was 19 when I first met her. I was the same age. At the time she was vice president of the Oxford Union and I was her counterpart at Cambridge. She had come to our union to propose the motion — ‘This house would have sex before marriage.’ It was a tongue-in-cheek joke debate but just the sort of thing to spark the union chamber. We were stuffed to the rafters and overflowing.

Halfway through her speech, I leaned across and grabbed the president’s bell. I rang it sharply. Benazir stopped and a hush descended on the union’s chamber. Rising to my feet, I said: “Madam, I see you are proposing sex before marriage. Would you care to practise what you preach?” The chamber erupted in laughter. Mine was the sort of interruption deliberately designed to produce softer humour.

Very cleverly. Benazir waited for the applause to die down. When it did, she swirled her feet, stared me in the face, removed her glasses, wrinkled her nose and with great aplomb replied, “Certainly, my dear, but not with you!” The laughter was even louder. Her reply had carried the day.

To my mind, that story encapsulates Benazir’s sense of timing, her sense of humour and her deft ability to riposte. But there was another side to Benazir — the warm, understanding, caring and deeply human.

Many years later, in ‘89 when she was the prime minister of Pakistan for the first time, my wife was in a coma at a hospital in London with encephalitis. I had just returned from a visit to Pakistan where I had met Benazir. Suddenly, one morning when I visited the hospital, the nurses were all aflutter. There was an enormous bouquet that looked like a tree in Nisha’s room. “What’s this?” I asked. “It is from the prime minister of Pakistan!” one of the nurses blurted out excitedly.

Later that evening, Benazir rang and asked why I hadn't told her about Nisha. I muttered something but she interrupted and said, "Remember Karan, We are friends." For the next 3 weeks as Nisha lay dying in London, Benazir made a point of ringing late at night at least every other day. I never forgot what she repeatedly said: "Karan, you must learn to talk about what you are going through. Believe me, it is the only way of coming to terms with it. I have been through it and I know what I am saying."

Benazir was a supremely confident person. She had a great ability to determine how people saw her. But inside she was a lady who often had deep doubts. She never showed them but they made her human.

She told me about the last moments on the plane in 1986 which was the first time she returned to Pakistan and took the country by storm. She deliberately chose to fly back via Lahore. As she said, I have to make an impact in Lahore if I am going to make an impact in Pakistan. She took a Pakistan International Airline flight from Saudi Arabia to Lahore and sitting in first class, alone she stared out of the window into the clouds and said to herself, in just a couple of hours I will know if I have a future or not.

When the plane landed, she scanned the horizon from the windows dismayed that the airport looked empty and there wasn't soul in sight. As she told me later, "my heart sank".

When she walked out of the plane, there were three solitary figures at the bottom of the stairs. They were from her party. They looked at her, "Bibi jaan, don't, there are a million people outside but Zia wont let anyone into the airport."

It took her over 19 hours to travel from the airport to the centre of town and in those 19 hours, a new political star was born. She repeated that performance days later in Peshawar, then Quetta and then finally, at her home, Karachi.

By the end of that first week, Pakistan knew its future prime minister would be Benazir Bhutto. It was just a matter of time before she took over.

My last conversation with Benazir was four days ago. Roughly a week before that, I had interviewed the National Security Adviser, MK Narayanan, who had expressed doubts about Benazir's ability to deliver on her promises to India. He pointedly mentioned that in 1988 she had made certain commitments to Rajiv Gandhi, which she had, he claimed, failed to deliver on.

This infuriated Benazir. Within hours of the interview being broadcast, she rang me, upset and angry.

“Why did he say this?” she asked. “If he had questioned my constitutional position caught between the president and army chief, I could have understood, but he didn’t. Instead, he questioned my ability to deliver. He seemed to be questioning my integrity.”

I tried to assure her. I told her that she was reading too much but she would not listen. “What is worse,” Karan, she added, “is that he then went on to mention an incident in 1988 when he claims I made a commitment to Rajiv which I did not deliver on. The truth is that Rajiv made a commitment to me that Rajiv backed out of. But I never spoke about that and I never will. So why are these false allegations being made.”

Days later, I mentioned this to G Parthasarthy. In ‘88, Partha was part of Rajiv’s PMO and had visited Islamabad with Rajiv. Years later, Partha was high commissioner to Islamabad. Partha confirmed that what Benazir said was correct and the NSA’s scepticism of Benazir was misplaced.

Partha told me that Rajiv had made commitment on Siachen which he had not been able to keep. When I said if he would say this in public and set the record straight, he laughed but declined: “I can’t defend Benazir by letting down Rajiv.”

Tonight, when Benazir is dead, and so tragically killed, I hope Partha will understand if I make this story public and I hope the NSA will appreciate the reason why. I am sharing with the world Benazir’s side of the story.

That conversation led to two or three more. I warned her to be careful.

“Don’t take silly unnecessary risks,” I said. Benazir laughed. It was an infectious little girl laugh.

“Karan, I can’t live with fear in my heart. I can’t fight terror scared of the terrorist. And if ordinary people have to face up to death, then politicians must be ready to face that situation first.”

Daily Times, January 14, 2008

PERSON OF THE YEAR: PUTIN OR BENAZIR

Helle Dale

As the media does its traditional review of the past year, *Time* magazine's choice of "Person of the Year" once again comes as a puzzlement.

The title used to be "Man of the Year", but that phrase has fallen into the dustbin of political correctness. Still, the "person" gracing *Time's* cover this year as was the case most years, is a man. In 2007, the honour went to Russian President Vladimir Putin, whose accumulation of power has indeed reached a new nadir, but hardly changed the course of international relations.

One hopes that the *Time* editors are kicking themselves, however, for though they could not have predicted the December 27 assassination of former Pakistani prime minister Benazir Bhutto, her tragic death will have a profound impact on the future of Pakistan and on the struggle against militant Islam. Not only that, but here is someone who gave her life for her country, to which she returned from exile in order to help pull it in the direction of political modernity and religious moderation. She did so with her eyes open to the grave personal risk. Her loss is not only mourned by her countrymen, but also by her husband and three children.

Time's editors argue consistently that "honour" is the wrong word to describe the motivation for their choice each year. Being on the cover of *Time* signifies impact on the world, not approval, they say. They point to Adolf Hitler, Josef Stalin and Ayatollah Khomeini as former "Persons of the Year". Yet, in a second instance of double standards at work in the selection process, the magazine cover story on Mr. Putin is a glowing review. Possibly, this is due to the fact that the otherwise elusive Russian president granted *Time's* correspondent three hours of interview in his dacha, complete with plenty of eye contact and an elaborate lobster dinner.

Thus, we read page after page about Mr. Putin's search for "respect" from the international community and from the United States (a perpetual Russian obsession), and about his economic reforms, which are keeping the Russian economy growing at a

record pace (though oil prices may have more to do with it) and putting bread on the table of ordinary Russians.

However, the dark side of the Putin era is noted in just one paragraph, which briefly lists his emasculation of the media, the way he has defanged the political opposition and jailed his critics. "Yet", *Time* writes, "this grand bargain — of freedom from security — appeals to his Russian subjects, who had grown cynical over earlier regimes' promises of magical fruits of Western-style democracy." So much for freedom.

What a difference it would have made had *Time* chosen someone to be admired. Perhaps one might suggest that is what the editors should do next year, chose someone uplifting and inspiring. The runners-up this year were former Vice President and environmental guru Al Gore, Harry Potter, inventor JK Rowling, Chinese President Hu Jintao and Gen David Petraeus, architect of the successful surge strategy in Iraq.

Gen Petraeus was going to be my choice, as someone who has clearly made a positive impact of major proportions. In the absence of a successful strategy and progress toward greater stability, the Bush administration may well have succumbed to the considerable pressure at home to begin a premature withdrawal of US troops.

But with the news of the murder of Mrs Bhutto, she gets my vote for "Person of the Year", not only for the impact she will have, but also for the example she set in terms of acting on the beliefs. After her return to Pakistan to participate in the political process that was to lead to January 8 elections, Mrs Bhutto knew she was the target of radical, anti-US, pro-Al Qaeda forces, even within the Pakistani Military. The security services were carrying on a bitter campaign against her, and there was not a whole lot of political sympathy from either parliament or President Pervez Musharraf for her demands for additional security.

Mrs Bhutto's political career was not unblemished, but during her two terms as prime minister, she was firmly democratic, pro-Western and determined to root out the religious fanaticism she knew was a severe threat. During a meeting with Washington reporters at Blair House, she spoke passionately about her fight against the fanatical Wahhabi infiltration of the Pakistani religious schools during her time in office. That is the kind of leadership the world will desperately need in the years to come.

Daily Times, January 3, 2008

A PATRIOTS TRAGIC DEATH

Cal Thomas

Former US ambassador Curt Winsor told me he had recommended that Mrs Bhutto accept a team of retired US Navy SEALs as her bodyguards. A similar team has effectively (so far) contributed to the protection of Afghanistan President Hamid Karzai. According to Mr Winsor, Bhutto deferred to her husband, who declined the offer, believing her adoring crowds and local security would be sufficient. It was a tragic misjudgment.

Benazir Bhutto was a strong woman. Women who are strong in the things that matter most — courage and character — are a threat to weak men without such traits. Some men will go to any length to oppress such women, even invoking “will of God” as the ultimate justification, when God wants to liberate women (and men), not subjugate them to self-righteous sinners.

The first thing most men — and many women — noticed about Bhutto was her striking beauty. At 54, her skin was flawless, and those dark eyes characteristic of people from her part of the world drew in all upon whom her gaze fell. The white headscarf added to her allure. In some ways, she reminded one of a younger Elizabeth Taylor. She could stop conversation and activity by entering a room. Like Miss Taylor, Mrs Bhutto had more than political celebrity. She had star power.

The second of her many noble qualities, like beauty that truly matters, was more than skin deep. She had a way of moving between two worlds — East and West; Muslim and Christian — that also threatened fanatics whose mission in life was to kill, not build; and oppress, not liberate.

She represented hope and a future separated from a culture that wants to drown people in the past. And this, too, was a threat to men with medieval minds. She was educated at Harvard and Oxford. To those indoctrinated in hate and fundamentalist religion, Mrs Bhutto was a threat to their ignorance, a pin light in a cave of intellectual darkness.

At the end of September she was in Washington for meetings with supporters and a few journalists. Sipping tea with her was an experience I shall never forget. She knew the risks of returning to Pakistan, but accepted them because, "I love my country and my people". That's something else we don't see much of today's patriots.

There are many politicians who, for reasons of ego and a need to satisfy their own narcissism, seek power, but hide their hunger with bows towards more noble objectives. Like all politicians, indeed like all humanity, Mrs Bhutto was flawed, but she was less flawed and more principled than many others in her country. Women with a husband and children don't jeopardise comfortable and relatively safe lifestyles for what awaited her in Pakistan. True heroism is to know the risks and to take them despite danger.

There were the usual statements of condemnation by world leaders. They mean nothing to religious fanatics who kill others and themselves in the process as Mrs Bhutto's murderer did. Pakistan is in a fight for its life, and one wonders whether President Pervez Musharraf, having made bargains with some of the Taliban devils and warlords, will be able to fight the terrorists the way they must be fought in order for democracy to prevail. Pakistan will not prevail any other way.

What do Democratic candidates running for president offer as a policy for combating the terrorists? Just varying degrees of pullout, quitting and surrender in Iraq and no credible plan for defeating terrorists elsewhere. Mrs Bhutto is a threat to them, too. Her example of bravery is also a challenge to another woman, Hillary Clinton, whose true convictions are yet to be discovered.

Leadership is more than biology. It takes a well-crafted ideology and goals beyond one's self. Mrs. Bhutto had them in abundance. While her death is a great personal loss to her family and to reformers in Pakistan, it is also a loss to the world, which suffers from too few patriots and too few leaders who put others before their own careers and power.

Daily Times, January 3, 2008

NO, THINGS AREN'T FALLING APART

Amir Taheri

The death of Benazir Bhutto in a suicide-terror operation last week has pushed Pakistan, often regarded as a backwater in South Asia, into headlines as never before.

There's no doubt that Pakistan deserves attention, provided this isn't for the wrong reasons. Although, Pakistan has been a key battleground in the global War on Terror since 2001, it's little understood (not to say much misunderstood) in the West.

One American pundit asserts that Bhutto's death represents "Washington's policy failure in Pakistan". The claim is based on the belief that Bhutto was nothing but an instrument of US policy.

But Benazir and Gen Pervez Musharraf never did anything they didn't want to do simply because the Americans, or anybody else, asked for it.

Another myth since Benazir's death is that she was a victim of the Pakistani security services. The accusation is so childish that it wouldn't have merited attention had it not received global currency from conspiracy theorists.

Secret services may have hit men and hired assassins but don't have suicide killers. That's a specialty of Islamist terror groups. Had the Pakistani secret services wished to kill Benazir, they would've organised a massive explosion like the one that the Syrian secret service used to kill former Lebanese premier Rafiq Hariri in 2005.

Another myth is that Islamists are about to sweep the general election and seize power.

Today, Pakistani Islamists are at their weakest in terms of popular support. Their coalition, known as the United Action Assembly (MMA), has fragmented, its components spending more time fighting each other than their secular enemies.

In the last election, the Islamists collected some 11 percent of the votes. They would be lucky to do as well next week. Their best known figure, Maulana Fazlur Rahman, may lose his seat.

The Islamists have held sway in the Northwest Frontier province, one of the four that constitute Pakistan, for four years and have a record of failures. They've proved the bankruptcy of their sick ideology. I doubt they would fool many Pakistanis much longer.

Although, some 98 percent of Pakistanis are Muslims, few wish to live under anything resembling the Iranian regime.

Despite decades of misery under Military rule, most Pakistanis cherish pluralism and free elections.

One British magazine has come out with a cover story that Pakistan is about to fall to the Taliban. This turns out to be based on a claim that "Taliban-like" groups are assuming power in parts of a mountainous enclave known as South Waziristan.

Readers might not know that the enclave covers half of 1 percent of Pakistan's territory.

South Waziristan's population is less than half a million, compared to the total Pakistani population of 169 million.

Even then, there's no evidence that the enclave is being taken over by Taliban-style groups or "Arab Afghans", as foreign terrorists are called.

What's happening is the emergence of new groups of young armed men, often wearing long hair and beards, looking for fame and fortune.

Basically, they're bandits, continuing a tradition begun more than 2000 years ago. Alexander the Great tried to crush their ancestors by force, but failed. He then decided to use gold where steel had failed, and succeeded.

Today, too, the best policy would be buying the armed groups rather than "dishonouring" them in the battlefield, something no tribal warrior worth his salt would tolerate. (This is, perhaps, why Congress has just approved a package of \$800 million for Waziristan.)

Finally, we are invited to worry because Pakistan's nuclear weapons may fall into the hands of the Taliban and/or Al Qaeda.

There's no evidence, however, that the Pakistani Army is about to fall apart or that the nuclear arsenal put under Musharraf's direct control after he stepped down as army chief, is in any danger.

No, Pakistan isn't falling apart.

No, Islamists are not about to seize power.

There's no need to declare martial law, as some commentators suggest. There was no reason to postpone the elections.

Pakistan needs more, not less, democracy. The faster Pakistan returns to full civilian rule, the safer it will be — and with it the rest of us also.

Daily Times, January 3, 2008

UNLIKELY LAD THRUST INTO THE LIMELIGHT

Declan Walsh and Rachel Williams

The Bhutto family's war council gathered yesterday around a long table at their country home. The chair at the head of the table was empty apart from a portrait of the assassinated matriarch and political leader, Benazir.

There was urgent business on the agenda. As grieving supporters shouted at the gates of her home, her softly spoken son, Bilawal, produced an envelope containing a handwritten "political will" — written two days before her ill-fated return from exile last October — and started to read.

In her testament, Benazir Bhutto called on her husband, Bilawal's father, Asif Ali Zardari, to take over the reins of her party on her death. But her posthumous wishes were overruled by her family. Within moments, Bilawal became the third Bhutto to lead Pakistan's largest political party - a job with a terrifying death rate.

Described by friends and relatives as a reserved and polite young man, Bilawal initially rejected the job that was thrust upon him yesterday. "He didn't want to do it. He wanted to continue his studies," admitted Ali Jafri, an uncle whose task it was to "prepare" the teenage dauphin for the role.

Ultimately there was little choice. The inexperienced Oxford student accepted the job with a short speech in which he urged the party to work "for the poor downtrodden people of Pakistan," according to Zulfikar Ali Mirza, a family friend who was present.

He also urged those present to "run the party democratically" — an ironic touch given that his mother was "chairperson for life" and he himself was selected without a vote.

A black belt in taekwondo and enthusiastic target shooter, Bilawal will be a figurehead until he completes his studies at Oxford, becoming the third generation Bhutto to study there. But in a country dominated by a 40-year-old political cult, the symbolism will be powerful.

Bilawal is something of an unlikely candidate. Jafri, his uncle who shared the family's eight-year exile in Dubai, described him as a shy and bookish teenager who never had a girlfriend. "The mother wouldn't allow it," he said with a smile. "Bilawal was never a sporty guy. He was always into magazines, books and history. He was a very, very shy boy. But with tons of effort we've groomed him very well. He was learning everything from (Benazir) about politics and about Pakistan."

Alan Duncan, the Tory shadow business secretary and longtime friend of Ms Bhutto, said Bilawal had spent a couple of days working for him during the summer before he began studying at Oxford. "He seemed to me quite reserved, dutiful and steeped in the cause of the family. There are moving echoes of what happened to Benazir when she was at Oxford, when her father was deposed and hanged. She rose to events and I have no doubt that Bilawal will do so too."

Bilawal's shyness is perhaps behind his decision to go by the name Bilawal Lawalib — his first name spelt backwards, at Oxford Fellow students described him as popular and sociable. They say he does not broadcast his family connections and appears to live the life of any other first-year student.

On the section of his Facebook page devoted to favourite quotes he lists jokey comments from Oxford friends and the words of his own family, including his mother. Messages of sympathy now fill his wall on the site, and on the day of the assassination, he added the quote: "Well behaved women rarely make history."

In throwing himself into Oxford student life, he has followed in his mother's footsteps. Bilawal has been to several debates and social events at the Oxford Union, of which Benazir was president in 1976, but has not expressed any intention to run for elected office himself.

"He was a familiar face at the Union", said Luke Tryl, who was president last term. "He's very charismatic and engaging; he speaks confidently and eloquently. He seems very worldly and aware. He's chatty, he is willing to speak to lots of different people and he's good at making friends with new people. He never said who his family were. I only found out some time after I met him."

Christ Church second year student Phillipa Neal said: "It was something that was known but not broadcast as particularly interesting or special."

At the age of 15 and a student at a prestigious school in Dubai with top GCSE grades under his belt, Bilawal was reported to be a keen swimmer, horseman and squash player. Asked in an interview with the Pakistani daily newspaper *Dawn* in 2004 if he had immediate plans to go into politics, he was undecided. "We will see, I don't know. I would like to help the people of Pakistan, so I will decide when I finish my studies ... I can either enter politics, or I can enter another career that would benefit the people."

The choice seems to have been taken out his hands. Bilawal will now be groomed by party elders in the dark arts of Pakistani politics. It will be a lesson in survival.

Mirza, the family friend, said: "Here, politics are very volatile. It's not like playing a game where one can go home and sleep well. It's full of risks. You have to be very, very careful."

Daily Times, January 1, 2008

THE BENAZIR BHUTTO I KNEW

M. Ziauddin

I still cannot bring myself to believe that she is no more.

How could such a vibrant and vital soul disappear in a matter of a few moments? I was in Islamabad but was not at the site of the tragedy when it took place.

When I received the CNN breaking news on my cellphone I was in the process of re-writing my column for (Dawn's) EBR Weekly. I just sat back.

Dumbstruck and stunned, all strength in my limbs drained. I wanted to cry, but could not. She was larger than life to have gone so quickly. I still cannot imagine a Pakistan without Benazir. For most of us who were both highly critical of her as well as enamoured by her, she was our political reference point.

The last time I had stolen what I would like to call a quick exchange with Benazir Bhutto was on Oct 3, when she was addressing her last press conference in London before returning to Pakistan via Dubai. I had asked her if she was not violating the spirit of democracy by agreeing to participate in the election of a uniformed general.

Despite it being a seemingly offensive question, she disagreed politely and explained rather patiently that she had not yet given up the option of resigning and in any case, her party would boycott the elections and that she said in her opinion would not be an action violative of the norms of democracy.

What was more touching for me was that she heard me over the din of questions being shouted at her from other media persons, mostly representing leading foreign media organisations and asked them to allow me to put my question as she said with a straight face: "Mr Ziauddin is a very senior Pakistani journalist and I must listen to him first."

My first meeting with her was an experience in itself.

She had just survived a no-confidence motion against her first government and had invited some senior correspondents in

Islamabad to discuss what had gone wrong and how she could improve her performance now that the immediate danger to her government had been averted.

Most of us went after her with no holds barred. I even criticized her decision to make her father-in-law the chairman of the Public Accounts Committee and allowing her husband to run his private business from a room in the PM Secretariat.

She listened, defended and argued but never for a moment did I find her losing her patience or her cool. I had gone to the meeting after hearing many stories about her arrogance, hot temper and short fuse. But the Benazir I met was a person one could communicate, enter into heated debate and argue with.

After this meeting I had several longish debates with her mostly in the company of the late H. K. Burki.

On these occasions, I would listen mostly to the monologue of Mr Burki who would dissent her policies and actions like a surgeon without mincing words.

She would listen attentively and would never make even the slightest unpleasant response to the most unpleasant and uncharitable criticism of Mr. Burki. He was perhaps the first person to tell her on her face that her choice of Farooq Ahmed Khan Leghari as the president was wrong and he even went on to predict that Mr Leghari would betray her.

In my discussions with her, I found her to have a deep understanding of economic issues. She was very well versed in the subject and could stand her ground in a debate on economic issues even with the experts.

During campaigns leading to the 1988, 1990 and 1993 elections or before delivering her speeches in budget sessions, she would hold full sessions with the country's leading economic experts and then come up with scintillating arguments of her own for or against whatever subject she would chose to attack or support.

In my more than 40 years of journalistic career I have found most Pakistani politicians to show phoney respect to those among us who they knew carried a very sharp and effective pen.

But Benazir was different. Her friendship was above such pettiness.

I have had the dubious privilege of being highly critical of her as a professional and I know some of my colleagues who were even more critical in their writings. But she would never let this come in the

way of her friendship or her respect for those whom she really liked. I know a journalist couple who had crossed all the limits of decency in their criticism of her. But I don't think she ever ostracised them.

She was a great gossip. She would regale her friends with the juiciest gossips on occasions. And she carried no ethnic biases.

Once three of us (all having the same ethnic roots) were criticising her urban Sindh policies in rather bitterest terms, she argued and defended rather vehemently, but never for a moment did she let the fact of our own ethnic affiliations distort the debate.

Daily Dawn, December 30, 2007

ANOTHER POLITICAL WATERSHED

Ayesha Siddiqi

The PPP is back on the road again to fight its political battle. While the steering wheel has been passed on to Benazir Bhutto's 19 year-old son Bilawal, Asif Zardari will be the actual driver. The decision will not be welcomed by all. The PPP will most certainly be criticised for being a dynastic party.

The foreigners, the educated middle class and the military's covert propagandists will berate the murdered Bhutto and her party for concentrating power in her family's hand. After all, progressive and liberal political parties do not do this. But then this is pragmatic politics and about the survival of a party which the evil forces in the country damaged severely by killing its leader.

I just read an offensive letter circulated to most writers by a fictitious character employed to propagate the myth of the military being the only worthwhile institution in the country. I would like to agree with the ghost writer. In fact, I would like to add that the PPP, which was the only remaining civilian institution representing the politics of federalism in Pakistan, has also been killed which leaves ample space for just one institution.

The symbolic significance of another dead body flown to Sindh from Rawalpindi does not bode well for relations amongst the federating units, especially the smaller apropos the one large province. Moreover, the PPP was one of the rare civilian institutions which connected the federating units and held them together. There was truth in the slogan "*Saray soobon ki zanjeer — Benazir, Benazir*" (the link between all provinces — Benazir, Benazir). Now we have just the military. Perhaps we are fated to remain with only one institution.

Is it then a foregone conclusion that the PPP is no more? "Many believed even in 1979 that the party would die after Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's assassination. The appointment of Benazir Bhutto's son Bilawal is designed to keep the party alive. The educated classes might not understand how important are emotional symbols in

Pakistan's politics. Personal charisma is central to the game of politics. If you can't excite people then it doesn't work for you.

Many years ago I remember a personal conversation with Aitzaz Ahsan about playing a more active role in the PPP's politics and about the possibility of challenging Bhutto's dominance of the party. His answer was that the PPP worker commonly known as the *jiyala* only recognises the sacrifices of the Bhutto family or his own. No other person has the personal charisma to take over control of the PPP.

I remember another conversation with an Indian friend about the possibility of Rahul Gandhi, who is deemed intellectually less sharp than other youngsters in the party, taking over the Congress. Despite all what we believe about Indian politics I was informed that it would not take a lot for Rahul Gandhi to lead the party. For the common person it is not how smart you are but whether you have the personal charisma which the Gandhi name carries.

The PPP's decision is about the politics of personal and familial charisma which its other leaders do not possess. There is no one to fill Benazir's shoes. It is true that lately Aitzaz has built an impressive image but one wonders if he can carry this beyond the educated to the illiterate crowds and across the ethnic divide. The Bhutto name still works because of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's political legacy and personal charisma.

He was the man who for the first time in the country's history convinced the masses that the world was about them. Furthermore, his ability to come down to the level of the people and speak their language and inspire them was something totally new. He was truly the only charismatic leader. Bhutto even surpassed Jinnah who was not personally magnetic but had a charismatic cause.

So one understands Asif Zardari's decision to appoint Bilawal as the party's chairman. However, the boy is 19 and deserves political and social grooming to actually play the role he has been assigned. The six years in which he will educate himself, followed by years when he will have to acquaint himself with Pakistan, must be spent reorienting the party and providing it with a charismatic ideology.

The fact is that the PPP faces the major challenge of keeping itself intact. The forces which killed Bhutto will also find an opportunity to exploit the difference of opinion amongst its leaders and between leaders and party workers. After all the PPP no longer has Benazir

whose commanding voice could silence difference of opinion and make all decisions appear unanimous. Under the circumstances, the best option is to adopt two approaches. First, the party must become inclusive and recruit leadership for the future. This could include other members of the Bhutto family such as the young Fatima and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Junior who could be seen sharing his duties during the burial of his aunt.

Second, the party leadership must revive some radicalism in the party ideology. Asif Zardari's present posture is indeed understandable. His first priority is survival of the party and keeping it relevant nationally. However, he must get rid of the conservatism which had crept into the party. The PPP's election manifesto, which almost seems to have been developed in the offices of the Asian Development Bank or other multilateral NGOs is one example of this conservatism.

Surely, Mr Zardari realises that the evil forces within Pakistan's establishment might let him build and enjoy some power, but they will not let the PPP survive unless he can connect with the masses. The politics of pragmatism that every single person will talk to him about or educate young Bilawal is good but it didn't help Benazir Bhutto save her own life. The evil elements were not keen to see her party survive.

I remember talking to a prominent PML-Q leader a couple of months before Bhutto's murder. The gentleman insisted that the era of Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif was over. Perhaps what he didn't tell me was that they had planned to terminate Bhutto's era because she was not listening. She was the leader of a popular party and could not be expected to compromise beyond a certain point. This would threaten the new state which the powerful forces of the establishment have built. So it made better sense to get rid of Benazir.

Asif Zardari is a survivor and has learnt the ropes of politics during his years in jail. But this also means that he might instinctively over-concentrate on the game of survival. The party intellectuals will teach him about pragmatism. But being ideologically barren is the least pragmatic thing. He has already filled the board of advisers with conservative members representing the landed-feudal-cum-industrialist. He must bring the more honest

and ideologically motivated people on board as Bilawal's trainers and party advisers.

The Bhutto name is important but it might not necessarily help Bilawal when he returns to Pakistan after six years to start his life as a Pakistani politician. More than the Bhutto - Zardari son, this traumatised country needs a political party which can heal the bleeding wounds. Mr Zardari, let it be the PPP once again.

Daily Dawn

BENAZIR'S LEGACY

Mark A. Siegel

This week's publication of Benazir Bhutto's "Reconciliation: Islam, Democracy and the West" is bittersweet to me, her friend and collaborator on the book, which was written in her last days. Many mullahs may hate the book, but so might many in the US State Department. It takes on both the West and the Islamic world equally, exposing the dysfunctions of their respective world views, and puts Pakistan at the epicenter of the dual crises that were Benazir's themes -- the internal crisis within Islam and the crisis between Islam and the West.

Benazir and I worked on this project over the last very difficult days of her life, through assassination attempts, house arrest, emergency rule, martial law and constant harassment and intimidation. We had reason to know that all of our conversations and email exchanges were intercepted and monitored by the Musharraf regime. What we could not know, of course, was that this book would become Benazir's untimely final legacy.

Benazir believed that the international terrorist movement has two primary aims. First, the jihadists seek to reconstitute the concept of the caliphate, politically uniting the great Muslim populations of the world. Second, they seek to provoke the much debated clash of civilizations between Western values and Islam that they hope will result in the domination of a medieval interpretation of Islam that rejects modernity and pluralism. Benazir hoped to pre-empt this collision through reconciliation with the West and mobilization of the moderates within the world's 1.4 billion Muslims.

Benazir was critical of Western governments that in the past helped Muslim monarchs and dictators suffocate democratic movements and democratic governance. But she condemns Muslim hypocrisy as well. She says that while one billion Muslims around the world seem united in their outrage at the war in Iraq and the deaths of Muslims caused by US military intervention, there is little

similar outrage against the sectarian civil war in Iraq that has led to far more casualties. Benazir castigates Muslim leaders and intellectuals for criticizing harm inflicted on fellow Muslims by the West, but remaining deadly silent when confronted with Muslim-on-Muslim violence. She finds the Muslim community's silence about genocide in Darfur particularly reprehensible.

In her book, Benazir seeks to educate the West about what she believed to be the true nature of Islam. From the core of her being she rejects those who would use Islam to justify acts of terror; who pervert, manipulate and exploit religion for their political agendas. Chronicling and cataloging their assertions against democracy, pluralism, tolerance to other religions and societies, equality for women, and rejection of technology and modernity, she shows through specific citations of the Quran that the jihadist interpretations are not only antithetical to Islam but specifically prohibited by it.

Benazir believed that extremism thrives under dictatorship, and is nurtured and fueled by it. She believed that when people lose faith in the political process, frustration and despair lead them to reach out to extra-governmental solutions. That is exactly what she believed is happening in Pakistan today. The US is once again "dancing with a dictator" by supporting President Pervez Musharraf, a policy that will come back to haunt America. Despite the administration casting its lot with a military dictator, extremism has flourished.

Benazir Bhutto and I collaborated on "Reconciliation" while she planned her return to Pakistan to contest parliamentary elections that all polls indicated she would win. Mr. Musharraf repeatedly denied requests for meaningful security for Benazir, even after the heinous assassination attempt against her on Oct. 19 that left 179 dead. The State Department continued to dismiss repeated expressions of concern about her safety. When Congress sent letters and made phone calls, Congress was ignored.

And on Dec. 27 Benazir Bhutto was assassinated in Rawalpindi, in the heart of the nation's military garrison. On Monday, Pakistan will hold the national elections for which Benazir returned. The U.S. Congress has demanded that these elections be free, fair, transparent and internationally monitored. The US State Department, however, seems content to concede that the elections will not be free and fair

but still (somehow) "good." In Islamabad these words are seen as a green light to rig with impunity.

Benazir Bhutto gave her life for the principles in which she believed. It is time for the Bush administration to tell Mr. Musharraf that anything less than free and fair elections is unacceptable and that an electoral fraud will not stand.

BEYOND BENAZIR

Husain Haqqani

The Pakistan Peoples Party's decision to elect Benazir Bhutto's 19-year-old son, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, and her husband, Asif Ali Zardari, as co-chairs of the party in the aftermath of her assassination is being criticized as representing dynastic politics that do not promote democracy.

But a distinction needs to be made between dynastic politics and the politics of family legacy. And the context of such family-based leadership needs to be understood.

Much of the recent coverage of events characterizes Pakistan as facing a choice between flawed, family-oriented and often corrupt politics and the supposed stability provided by a military-intelligence establishment that has fostered terrorism for years. The international community, including the United States, must side with Pakistan's politicians, whatever their real or perceived faults. An unaccountable secret service and a military leader with delusions of regional grandeur could keep Pakistan, and its neighbors, mired in endless violence.

It is difficult for Americans to understand a situation in which a well-organized political party unites around the charisma of a single family while retaining a vast pool of talented leaders. But family legacies have worked to build democracies in countries as far apart as Greece and India.

The Papandreou and Karamanlis families provide leaders for rival parties in Greece, and the Nehru-Gandhi family has been the focal point for the Indian National Congress. The Pakistan Peoples Party, like other parties with family-based leadership, has a lot of talent in its ranks. That talent would remain available to Bhutto's husband and son. The choice of leaders from a particular family is often important for its symbolism and does not make the party a family fiefdom.

There is a fundamental divide in Pakistan. On one side stands the civil-military oligarchy (currently headed by Pervez Musharraf) that rules with the covert machinations of an all-powerful intelligence service, which fixes elections, divides parties and buys off politicians at will. On the other side are politicians who question the military-intelligence oligarchy's right to rule and pay the price by being periodically jailed and frequently vilified.

If, in the aftermath of Bhutto's tragic assassination, the party had taken time to go through the entire process of a party primary or intra-party election, the intelligence apparatus would have actively worked to divide Pakistan's largest opposition party, with the huge resources of the state, considerably boosted by US anti-terrorism funding, at their disposal. By rallying the party base around Bhutto's son and husband, the party has saved itself from the intrigues of Musharraf's secret services.

Some view the Bhutto legacy as a thorn in Pakistan's history. But to the family's supporters, the Bhutto name represents a wealthy family that spoke for redistribution of wealth in an elitist state during the late 1960s, when much of Pakistan's economic growth just went to 22 major families. Since 1967, when Zulfikar Ali Bhutto founded the Pakistan Peoples Party, the country's poor have continued to identify with it. The number of the well-to-do in Pakistan has increased manifold over the years, but the country still has 65 million people living below the poverty line and another 65 million living just above it — a total of 130 million poor people in a country of 160 million.

The Bhuttos have not been perfect, as critics remind us on a regular basis, and their stints in power did not always fulfill expectations. Western-educated Pakistanis, including professionals living in the US, resent what they consider feudal politics. But most of them refuse to engage in the political process and pay the price of combating militarism and dictatorship. And the removal of each Bhutto government by military or palace coup has only added to the aura of the family's struggle and sacrifice against military dominance.

As managers, Pakistan's politicians might not meet the standards of their country's professional elite. But they have the courage to question dictators and remain connected to the masses when the elites simply neglect them.

The visceral association with the Bhutto family and the PPP of millions of Pakistanis cannot be explained without reference to the value of sentiments in politics. And as Drew Weston's book, "The Political Brain: The Role of Emotion in Deciding the Fate of the Nation," demonstrates, even in the United States, feelings trump cold analysis in the making of political choices.

Los Angeles Times, January 16, 2008

BENAZIR BHUTTO: A GREAT AND BRAVE FRIEND

Victoria Schofield

When I said goodbye to Benazir Bhutto two months ago, just after she had survived a bomb attack, she said she would "catch me later". I was returning to England after accompanying her on her return journey to Karachi; and those were the last words she said to my face.

To me, they epitomised our friendship which had started 33 years ago, when we were students at Oxford.

Despite the different worlds in which we lived — she a politician in Pakistan, me a writer and historian living in England — I always knew I would be seeing her again, whether as prime minister, opposition leader or friend and mother.

Our friendship had passed through many phases. After our student days at Oxford, when we had enjoyed debates at the Union — where she became president in 1976, and I followed a year later — I witnessed the beginning of her political career.

Not long after returning to Pakistan, her father was dismissed in a military coup and put on trial for conspiracy to murder. While he was in jail, almost by default she picked up his political mantle. "All the other political leaders have been arrested," she told me when I joined her in Pakistan, that summer of 1978.

When her father was executed the following April, what she hoped would be only a temporary position, standing in for him as leader of the Pakistan People's Party, became a permanent one. It was to be a long struggle. General Zia al-Haq, the military leader who had overthrown and executed her father, was entrenched as president of Pakistan.

After the Soviet Union invaded neighbouring Afghanistan in 1979, he enjoyed the backing of the West. His death in a plane crash in 1988 opened the way for her to stand in national elections. When

she became prime minister, it seemed that she had been able to step into her father's shoes to continue his work.

As a liberal Western woman and believer in the political process — something she had imbibed during her education at Harvard and Oxford — she genuinely believed that she could make a difference. She often told me that it was the love and dedication of the people that kept her going.

But within 16 months, her first premiership was over, after the military ousted her amid allegations of corruption. Her second term as prime minister lasted longer but ended in the same way.

As a mother of three children with her husband in jail, she preferred to retain her liberty rather than face possible imprisonment — and so moved to Dubai. She also continued to campaign for the restoration of democracy in Pakistan, fighting, as she used to say, against dictatorship because under its wing the forces of extremism could flourish.

Her joy at returning to Pakistan in October was immediately marred by the attack on her bus as she made her way in a triumphal procession through Karachi.

It was a reminder, as she knew already, that by returning to Pakistan her life was in danger. Even then she showed that extraordinary courage, which I had come to appreciate as the hallmark of her character. "We cannot let them force us to quit," she said to me. During the various phases of her political career, I had also seen how much she enjoyed her role as a mother — more perhaps than the general public was aware.

Even during her periods of exile, when she came to London to meet politicians and party workers, she loved organising outings and picnics for her children. As a friend, she was kind and generous.

One of the things she enjoyed most was catching up with our old friends from Oxford, finding out who had married and had children. After more than a decade in exile, one might almost have thought that she would stay in Dubai, where she had made a home for herself.

But throughout her time in exile, she never lost sight of what was going on in Pakistan, or the pledge she had made to the people to return to attempt to make their lives better, repeating the election

manifesto of her father to provide them with food, clothing and housing.

In October, with elections due and her children now teenagers, she felt the time had come to return. Despite the dangers which she knew she faced, it was her sense of duty and commitment, which so tragically made her not just the daughter of Pakistan, as she was so famously known, but also of destiny.

TRIBUTE TO MOHTARMA BENAZIR BHUTTO

Sardar Aseff Ahmad Ali

Lie in eternal peace, O daughter of Indus.
So cruelly they took you away from us.

By your slain father and siblings rest.
Your courage heavens will now attest.

We'll cherish your beautiful memory, your sacrifice.
Tears of unbearable grief will never suffice.

Will your glorious dream ever realise,
for a land you said was full of promise?

We now mourn in grief and despair
of the wicked hand that's ever unfair.

Pristine Karakoram glaciers shed sad tears,
millions look helpless with new found fears.

Deodars and junipers bend in homage;
Valley of grains and greens is in rage.

The five rivers moan in sad sorrow.
They've taken away our hope of tomorrow.

The last hope of helpless is alas gone,
anguish is rife and on us upon.

You were in gardens of thorns a rose.
In you did we our confidence repose.

In despair and despondence we may seem,
Yet we too had dreamt your dream.

We shall triumph over evil for sure,
Your memory upon us will endure.

We'll celebrate your beauty, your courage;
We'll honor your memory in our age.

A new republic we will win
from hollow generals of tin.

With toil we will pay our tribute,
to the splendid city we'll our blood contribute.

BB'S POLITICAL WILL

NAUDERO, Feb 5: The Pakistan People's Party has released the 'political will' of party chairperson Benazir Bhutto who had written it on Oct 16, 2007, two days before her return to Pakistan from exile.

The will reads: "To the officials and members of Pakistan Peoples Party, I say that I was honoured to lead you. No leader could be so proud of their party, their dedication, devotion and discipline to the mission of Quaid-i-Awan Zulfikar Ali Bhutto for a federal democratic and egalitarian Pakistan as I have been proud of you. I salute your courage and your sense of honour. I salute you for standing by your sister through two military dictatorships.

"I fear for the future of Pakistan. Please continue the fight against extremism, dictatorship, poverty and ignorance."

I would like my husband Asif Ali Zardari to lead your in this interim period until you and he decide what is best. I say this because he is a man of courage and honour. He spent eleven and a half years in prison without bending despite torture. He has the political stature to keep our party united.

"I wish all of you success in fulfilling the manifesto of our party and in serving the downtrodden, discriminated and oppressed people of Pakistan. Dedicate yourself to freeing them from poverty and backwardness as you have done in the past."

Benazir Bhutto, October 16, 2007

Pakistan Peoples Party

To the officials and members of Pakistan Peoples Party I say that I was honoured to lead you. No leader could be as proud of their party, their dedication, devotion and discipline to the mission of Grand & Humble Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto for a Federal, Democratic and Egalitarian Pakistan as I have been proud of you. I salute your courage and your sense of honour. I salute you for standing by your sister through two military dictatorships.

I fear for the future of Pakistan. Please continue the fight against extremism, dictatorship, poverty and ignorance.

I would like my husband Prof. Ali Zaidi to lead you in this interim period until you and he decide what is best. I say this because he is a man of courage and honour. He spent 11 1/2 years in prison without bending despite torture. He has the political stature to keep our party united.

I wish all of you success in fulfilling the manifesto of our party and in serving the downtrodden, discriminated and oppressed people of Pakistan. Dedicate yourselves to freeing them from poverty and backwardness as you have done in the past.

Benazir Bhutto
October 16, 2007

STORY OF BENAZIR AND MARVI

When the world was still to be born
When Adam was still to receive this form
Then my relationship began

When I heard the Lord's voice
A voice sweet and clear
I said "yes" with all my heart
And formed a bond with the land I love
When all of us were one
My bond then began

An exile now by destiny
I am nearer home than my heart's beat
I wonder: when will I be free
To return to Larkana

From dust to dust
Loved ones return
To what they were
When will I walk home from Arab lands
To my own sweet Motherland

Waiting for news in dreams and day
Waiting for messengers in dreams and day
When will the message come
Taking me from here to there
I want the answer to my heart
I want to pass God's test
O God, I await the messenger
Taking me to where I belong
Although the tyrants do not care
Strands of white my hair now shows
My face is gaunt with sadness

I to my people want to go
 I come in the winter of repression
 I pray to return in different times
 Like the joy of a seasonal rain
 The peoples support I will reclaim.
 Almighty God,
 Let Mother's sickness not worsen in exile
 Trapped in a mind wanting to forget
 A heart weeping for young sons killed
 O let Mother first her homeland see

O where is my husband gone?
 His life's prime and his grace?
 Prison Walls confine him
 Court rooms frustrate him
 Judges are frightened
 Courage has fled
 Salaries are more important
 Than honour for which men gave lives
 Pakistan, my health is worn
 My joy is gone
 Yet my heart is strong
 For the fight
 For our people lost rights
 Each day I smile for the world
 For my children and myself
 They ask: when can we return?
 I speak of justice fled
 From hearts of men
 Into the breasts of beasts
 I tell them
 We will simple and we will eat
 When freedom from chain is freed
 I think of the poor people
 A better fate they deserve
 Than the military conqueror's boots
 Yet the lust for land grows
 Plazas and Plots for the elite lot
 Government homes too
 Not one but two
 All on starving backs of people robbed
 The sweet lands lie parched

For water people pray
 The crops perish
 The cattle die
 The stoves grow cold
 As labour is sent home
 Fair Pakistan's face is blotted
 Mug shots and fingerprints are demanded
 Worshippers live in fear and dread
 Tenants are ejected
 Soldiers in snows abandoned
 The poets in the mountains and the deserts
 Speak of another time
 When the country and the individual had respect
 Before the Benazir Government left
 One pension is too little for some
 One state, two jobs, two salaries and two pensions
 For retired Khaki specials
 Democracy is for those in Mufti
 Dictatorship the dream of Generals in Khaki
 The British left last century
 Their space the Khaki filled
 The Father died too quickly
 In an ambulance in Karachi
 One day the tyrants will depart
 Public opinion will set us free
 There will be dancing in the streets,
 Music and song
 Laughter will fill the air
 As people rejoice in their destiny
 Larkana, Loved-one, I remember
 The sweet scent of roses
 Of fresh rain on desert sand
 Of trees washed by nature's hand
 Away I live in a mansion grand
 But I long to campaign
 On long and rocky roads
 In bumpy jeep rides
 With flags and banners
 With selfless zeal to change
 The sad present
 Into a smiling future
 I want to breathe the breath

Of home,
 A breath both fair and fine
 My spirit is in one place
 My body in another
 My mind torn asunder
 The Elections were so Unfair
 Made of Broken Promises
 Billions spent in marketing
 A dictatorship as a democracy
 That too unsuccessfully.
 The European Union called Foul
 So did the Office of the Commonwealth
 Boxes were filled
 Ballots torn
 Peoples verdict shorn
 By cowards masquerading as patriots
 The presidential palace is ugly
 In a land with widespread poverty
 Parliament has yet to dress itself
 With Constitutional power
 The phoenix rises from the ashes
 Peoples Power will be born again

Centres of learning
 I will build for the children of the poor
 Provide the aged and the young
 Dignity, hope and security
 We will raise buildings
 Where there are deserts
 And stop the weeping of the women of the land
 Cry not
 For change is in our hands
 To reject wrong and embrace right

There are two paths in life
 The path of surrender
 The path of courage
 Remember nothing remains
 Every thing changes
 These days of despots will soon go
 Just as other despots did

Memory forever recalls Quaid-e-Awam
The sword of truth

Who gave his life
So we could live
With legal rights and economic security
With knowledge and Opportunity
With representation and success
With peace and with progress
His name will forever shine
Who can forget him
That historical memory embraces
Forever in its folds.
He who wore threads of fine gold
Tore them for prison cells
He who slept in silken sheet and fed with silver spoons
Threw them aside for the darkness of the death cell
Defying death
The rulers offer comfort
In return they demand conscience
Don't offer comfort
To history's children
To the brave and the bold
The Kurds fought for decades
The Kashmiris do too
The Palestinians refused to surrender
In every continent
In every era
The brave and the bold
Carved history with their bare hands
One has might
The other right
One has the sword
The other the pen
Guns rust and fall apart
Ideas live forever
Tyrant: do not offer comfort

Comfort leaves me cold
Much dearer do I hold
Marvi's ancestral shawl
Symbol of our Treasure

From Marvi I learnt
 From past mystic saints
 From my dear brother Shah I learnt
 That handsome youth who fought another tyrant
 That
 Were I to breathe my last, living
 Away from the home I loved
 My body won't imprison me.
 Shah returned home while his soul went free
 No stranger to the soil
 Embracing his body in death
 Making it part of the legends of our land
 When his last breath came
 We carried him to the hidden coolness of the desert sand
 Pride and sadness mixed in our hearts
 Swaying emotions
 Knowing that his life was given
 For a clear cause of liberation
 From a Dictator's occupation
 We buried him lovingly
 In the land that was his
 In a sea of people
 That loved him
 For his life
 And for his death
 Killed and yet the struggle lived
 The cranes fly to their native hills
 My heart longs to fly with them
 Invisible chains
 Hold me prisoner

The wounds of the past
 Fester again
 For my country and me
 As I see people denied rights
 Denied opportunities
 Youth looking for hope
 Democracy separated from the polity
 Dictatorship cuts cruelly to the bone
 Undermining the economy
 Undermining the society
 Introducing suicide

Economic suicide for those too poor to live
 Political suicide for asymmetric warfare
 Joy left when the stove turned cold
 Joy fled when the church and hospital blew
 Some sent messages
 To forget about politics
 To leave the people
 To find happiness
 They thought it foolish
 That the weight of persecution
 Could be borne
 With a Mother ill
 And children small
 With the pain of exile
 Of a husband separated by prison walls.
 They thought it generous
 To offer freedom for abandonment
 The abandonment of a people, of a land
 Of a struggle, of a dream
 Of principles and of conscience
 I thought it wrong
 I know I will return
 On a wave of peoples support
 Led by the bravest Party of them all
 A Party of martyrs
 A Party of struggle
 A Party that serves
 A Party of the people
 My enemies wish I never was born
 For them it was a torture and a shame
 That I became
 The first woman leader of a Muslim State
 Crumbling centuries of control
 Triumphantly proclaiming
 The equality of men and women
 The pristine message of Islam
 Hidden under prejudice and discrimination
 Destiny's hand moves on
 Writing its own tale
 Of triumph and tragedies,
 Of wars and peace,
 Of bombs pulverising houses

Above the stench of death
 Life begins again
 The tide of sorrow turns
 The sea of happiness awaits
 The patient pray and persevere
 Loved ones parted meet
 Prisoners are freed
 Fresh ones take their places
 Or flee
 Destiny's moving finger writes on
 Seasons change
 The rest is a test
 Better a life of test
 Than a worthless life of rest
 The land reclaims its own
 When the dead die
 They live again
 Becoming part of a land
 Centuries old
 Holding secrets
 Of great civilisations
 Of heroes and heroines of bygone times
 Shaping history and heritage
 Shaping culture
 Shaping the future
 Time begins
 Time ends
 We decide
 What to do with time
 Remember the poor and the wretched
 Remember the desperate and the hopeful
 Remember God's sacred trust
 The children of the land
 Do not let your conscience die
 For Power and Pride
 The scent of the homeland
 Wafts through the ocean air
 Through continents
 Its insistent call
 A reverberating sound
 Through sunset and dawn
 Calling

Through walls
 Calling
 Through mountains
 Seeking to reclaim
 Its own
 To my dear ones I say
 Worry not
 Shed no tears
 Bear no regrets
 These days will pass
 After night comes day
 After sorrow comes joy
 The daughters of the desert know
 That Destiny
 Cannot Chain
 The dream of a people free
 Of a youth redeemed
 Of a land
 Where the sweet scent of justice
 Fills the air
 Where human rights
 And economic rights
 Break the prisons of poverty
 Break the dungeons of disease
 The repression of retrenchment
 The despair of downsizing
 The evil of unemployment
 Prisons hold
 Those that defy dictators
 Those that pay the price for freedom
 Knowing the chains holding liberty will break
 That the desert men
 Will write of desert courage
 Of integrity, loyalty and unity
 Baptised in suffering
 That a desert maid
 Will return home
 Hear the wind
 It carries the message:
 Of dictators that came and went
 Of tyrants now particles in the sands of times
 How many armies came and went

How much blood was shed
 Conquests proclaimed
 Kingdoms fell; Tyrants too
 The desert sands speak
 The desert winds whisper
 Truth will triumph
 The desert maid will return
 Travellers travel bringing news
 Of political developments,
 I hear of miseries
 Of families without income
 Of fear of hunger
 I hear
 And my own suffering retreats
 Days pass
 Life passes
 I am shackled
 To the dream of democracy
 Unhappy are the days
 Far from Malir and Multan
 Far from Mardan and Makran
 My countrymen are far
 No one can reproach them
 For they stand strong
 As the October elections showed
 One day I will recall these days
 And forget the pain
 One day I will recall these days
 When political storms roared
 When thundering threats filled the air
 One day I will recall these days
 Knowing my commitment to my land
 Was purified and sustained.
 I think of those exiled
 from their homelands
 In Los Angeles, London, Dubai
 Of the days they pass
 Some in despair,
 Some in frustration
 Some with determination
 The seasons change
 My face with them

Theirs too
Will my fellow villagers recognise
A face
Reflecting the seasons of fate
Night falls
The world sleep
Darkness fills the air
I raise both my hands
And ask my children
To raise their little hands
Marvi, of Maru and Malir,
In the mists of time
She raised her hands
While the world slept
To God
Full of hope
Praying to see her homeland
Marvi,
We raise our hands
As you raised yours
To God
In hope
For the homeland
I was born in
Buried my Father
Buried my brother
Married
Had my children
Served a Nation
Helped a people
Without telephone or electricity
Computers and emails
Polio drops or iodine
Enter the modern age
But the bullets were fired
Piercing my tall and handsome Brother
His precious blood on the pavement fell
Where once we walked
The angels came
And took him away
To my Father and my Brother
As the Martyrs watched

In July we met
 His warm embrace I recall
 In the chandeliered Prime Minister's Hall
 His special goodbye as he left
 His voice on the phone
 When we talked
 As family members do
 The phone came
 It spoke of bullets fired
 Of Murtaza wounded
 I took a plane
 With Holy Book in Hand
 To the Hospital where he lay
 God, do not take
 The brother that I love
 It was too late
 He was gone
 Again I buried a brother
 The killers buried the Government
 Husband was imprisoned
 Tiny children exiled
 With ailing grandmother
 Midnight raids and imprisonment
 Torture and terror
 Perjury and Perversion
 Billions spent on false cases
 On propaganda
 Psy war and special operations
 On a Mother
 Courts calibrated
 With different orders
 Caught flights daily
 From one to the other
 Lahore to Rawalpindi
 Then to Karachi
 The persecutors fell
 In divine retribution
 The military marched in
 Hear the wind
 It carries the sound
 Of horses that galloped
 Of caravans that came

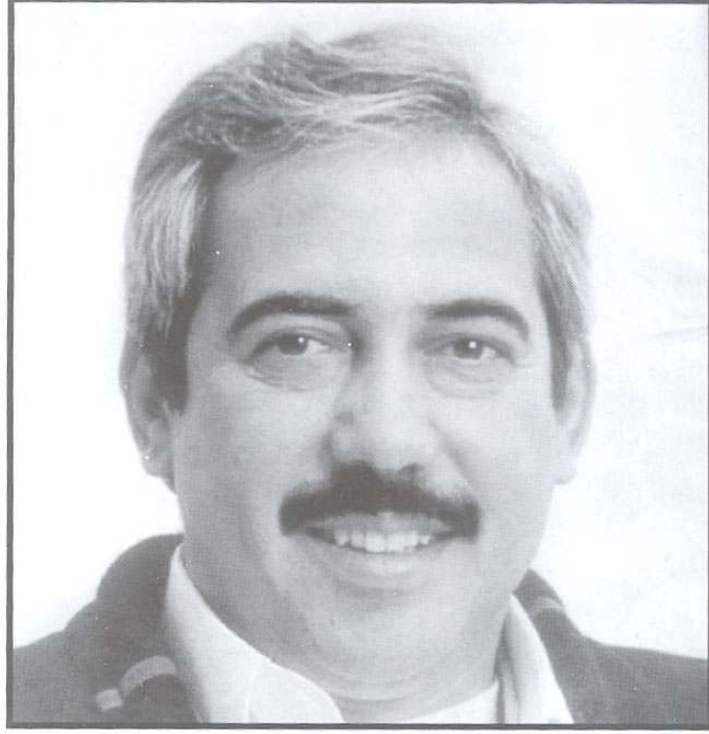
Of tanks that rumbled
Of planes that flew
Before the torch of time
Was passed
As history's pendulum swung
The desert wind calls
Marvi calls
A timeless call
A call
The desert wind carries.
Children: Hear the desert wind
Hear it whisper
Have faith
We will win.



جس دھج سے کوئی مقتل میں گیا وہ شان سلامت رہتی ہے



رات لمبی ہے مگر جاگتے رہنا لوگو!



قتل گاہوں سے چن کر ہمارے علم اور نکلیں گے عشاق کے قافلے



دار کی خشک ٹہنی پہ وارے گئے



ذوالفقار علی بھٹو شہید اپنی فیملی کے ساتھ



محترمہ بے نظیر بھٹو شہید، کی مختلف ادوار کی تصویریں



محترمہ بے نظیر بھٹو شہید، اپنی والدہ نصرت بھٹو کے ساتھ خوشگوار موڈ میں



محترمہ بے نظیر بھٹو شہید، اپنی والدہ نصرت بھٹو کے ہمراہ



دورہ شملہ (بھارت) کے موقع پر محترمہ بے نظیر بھٹو شہید، کی اپنے والد ذوالفقار بھٹو شہید اور بھارتی وزیراعظم اندرا گاندھی و دیگر کے ہمراہ گروپ فوٹو



سابق بھارتی وزیراعظم اندرا گاندھی، ذوالفقار علی بھٹو شہید سے مصافحہ کر رہی ہیں محترمہ بے نظیر بھٹو شہید، بھی نمایاں ہیں



دورہ بھارت کے موقع پر بے نظیر بھٹو شہید، اندرا گاندھی اور ذوالفقار علی بھٹو شہید کے ساتھ بیٹھی ہیں



محترمہ بے نظیر بھٹو شہید کی سارک کانفرنس کے موقع پر بھارتی وزیر اعظم راجیو گاندھی
مالدیپ کے صدر مامون عبدالقیوم و دیگر سربراہان مملکت کے ہمراہ گروپ فوٹو



محترمہ بے نظیر بھٹو شہید کا ایک خوبصورت انداز



محترمہ بے نظیر بھٹو شہید اپنی لائبریری میں



قیوم نظامی چین کے راہنما کے ساتھ



بیگم نصرت بھٹو کے ہمراہ چین کے دورہ کے موقع پر ایک گروپ فوٹو



لاہور میں تالیسی کنونشن محترمہ بے نظیر بھٹو شہید، قیوم نظامی، حاجی ممتاز کابلوں اور اسلم گل



نیویارک، امریکہ میں پبلک میٹنگ: محترمہ بے نظیر بھٹو شہید، قیوم نظامی
ڈاکٹر عبداللہ ریاز، افضل قریشی اور شبیر احمد



محترمہ بے نظیر بھٹو شہید، اپنے بچوں اور خاوند کے ساتھ



محترمہ بے نظیر بھٹو شہید، اپنے بچوں کے ساتھ



محترمہ بے نظیر بھٹو شہید دورہ چین کے موقع پر چینی وزیر اعظم کے ہمراہ



محترمہ بے نظیر بھٹو شہید بھارتی کانگریس جماعت کی سربراہ سونیا گاندھی سے ہاتھ ملا رہی ہیں



محترمہ بے نظیر بھٹو شہید حامیوں کے نعروں کا پُر جوش انداز میں ہاتھ ہلا کر جواب دے رہی ہیں



محترمہ بے نظیر بھٹو شہید جیالوں کے درمیان



آٹھ سالہ جلاوطنی کے بعد کراچی آمد پر



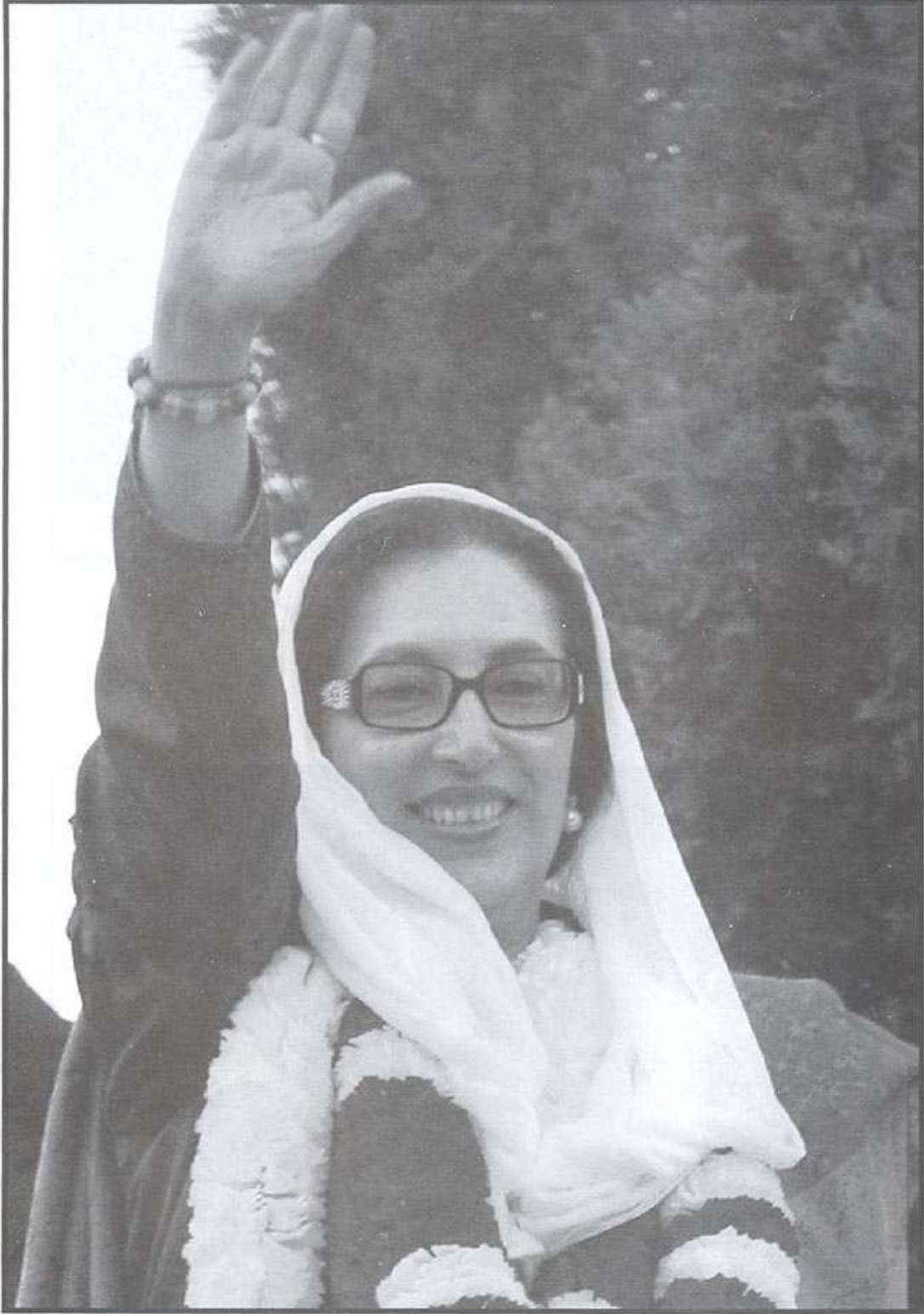
ملاقات سے قبل سابق وزیراعظم میاں نواز شریف کے ہمراہ



محترمہ بے نظیر بھٹو شہید، شہادت سے کچھ لمحے قبل راولپنڈی کے تاریخی لیاقت باغ میں جلسہ سے خطاب کر رہی ہیں



محترمہ بے نظیر بھٹو شہید، لیاقت باغ راولپنڈی میں عوامی نعروں کا جواب دے رہی ہیں



اے صبح میرے دیس میں تو آ کے رہے گی



صدر پاکستان غلام اسحاق خان محترمہ بے نظیر بھٹو شہید سے بطور وزیراعظم حلف لیتے ہوئے



حلف برداری کا ایک اور منظر



1989ء محترمہ بے نظیر بھٹو شہید ملکہ برطانیہ سے ہاتھ ملاتے ہوئے



محترمہ بے نظیر بھٹو شہید، سابق برطانوی وزیراعظم ٹونی بلیر کے ساتھ



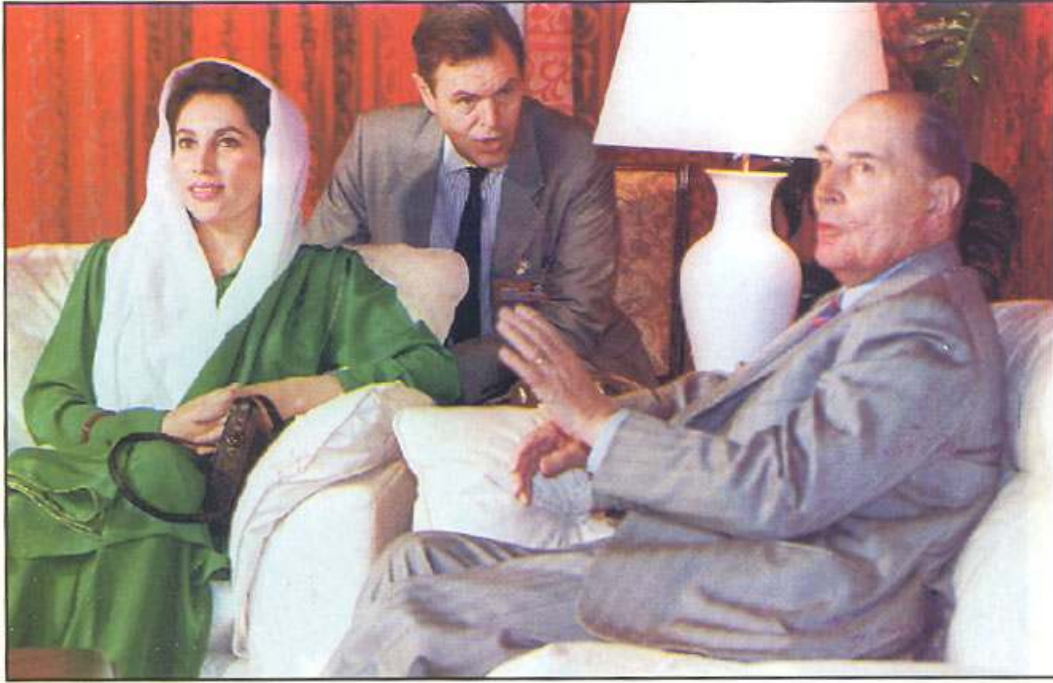
محترمہ بے نظیر بھٹو شہید، فرانس کے صدر کے ساتھ



محترمہ بے نظیر بھٹو شہید، بھارتی وزیر اعظم اٹل بہاری واجپائی سے ملاقات کے دوران



محترمہ بے نظیر بھٹو شہید، فلسطین کے صدر یاسر عرفات سے ملاقات کر رہی ہیں



محترمہ بے نظیر بھٹو شہید، فرانس کے صدر مٹراں سے ملاقات کے موقع پر خوشگوار موڈ میں



محترمہ بے نظیر بھٹو شہید جنوبی افریقہ کے صدر نيلسن منڈيلا کے ساتھ



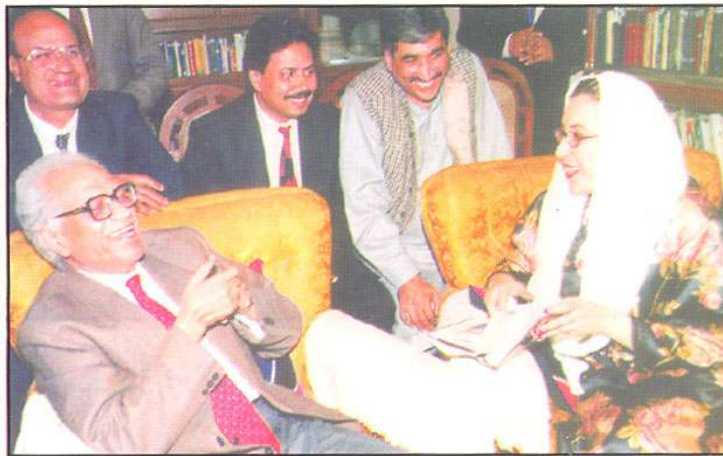
محترمہ بے نظیر بھٹو شہید ایک غیر ملکی ٹی وی چینل کے ٹاک شو کے دوران



ارشاد احمد حقانی کی فیملی کے ساتھ محترمہ بے نظیر بھٹو شہید کی ایک یادگار تصویر



ارشاد احمد حقانی کی بیٹی محترمہ بے نظیر بھٹو شہید کو شمال پیش کرتے ہوئے



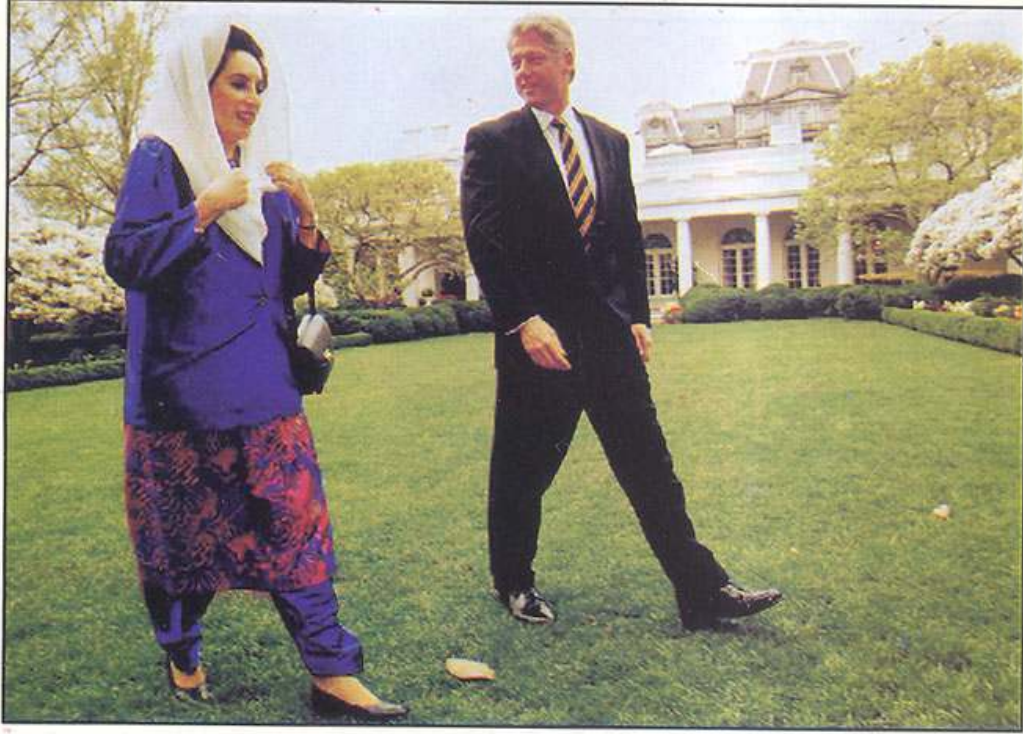
محترمہ بے نظیر بھٹو شہید، ارشاد احمد حقانی اور منورا نجم کے ہمراہ ایک یادگار تصویر



1986ء محترمہ بے نظیر بھٹو شہید لاہور میں بیگم کشور قیوم نظامی کے ساتھ



1987ء محترمہ بے نظیر بھٹو شہید اور آصف علی زرداری کی شادی کی ایک یادگار تصویر



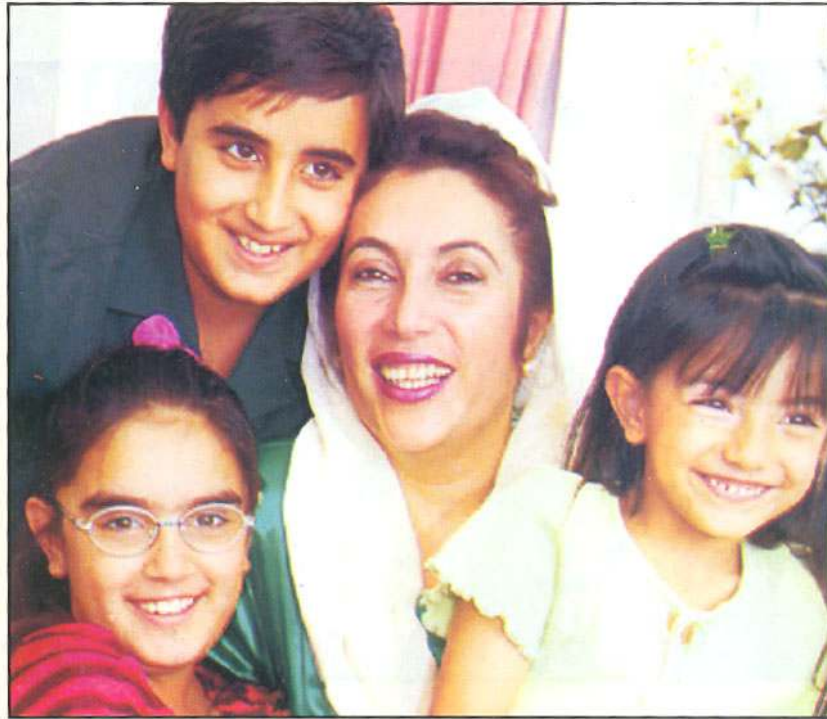
محترمہ بے نظیر بھٹو شہید سابق امریکی صدر بل کلنٹن کے ساتھ



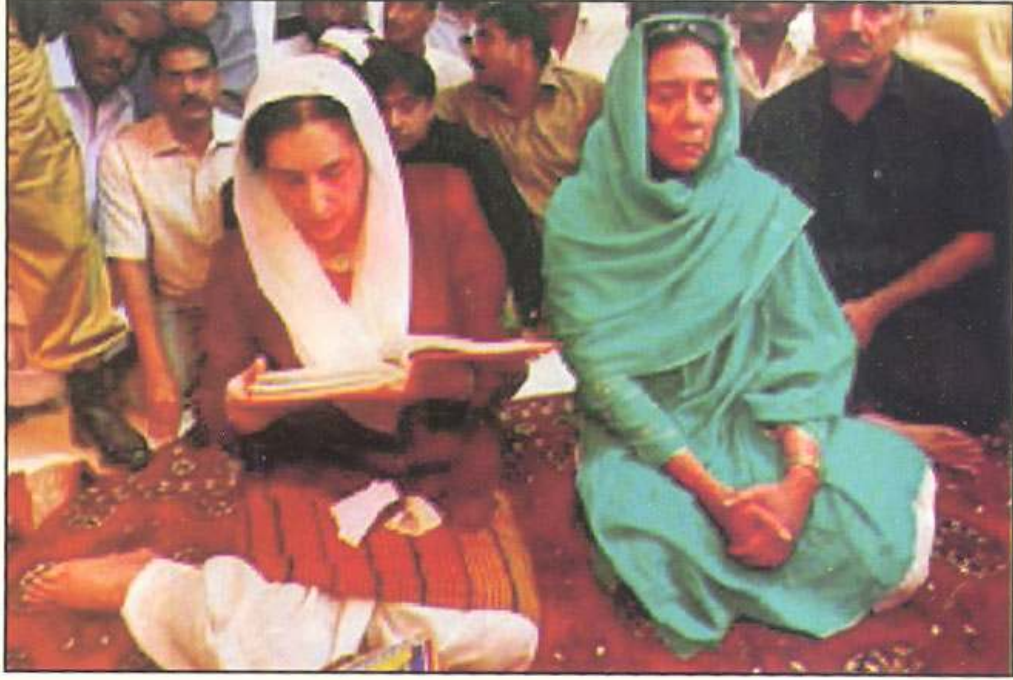
3 دسمبر 2007ء شہادت سے چند دن قبل ترکی کے صدر عبداللہ گل سے ملاقات



محترمہ بے نظیر بھٹو شہید اپنے بچوں کے ساتھ لائڈھی جیل میں
اپنے خاوند آصف علی زرداری سے ملاقات کے بعد آ رہی ہیں



محترمہ بے نظیر بھٹو شہید، بچوں کے ہمراہ خوشگوار موڈ میں



محترمہ بے نظیر بھٹو شہید، اپنے والد ذوالفقار علی بھٹو
کی قبر پر قرآن مجید پڑھ رہی ہیں، ناہید خان ساتھ بیٹھی ہیں



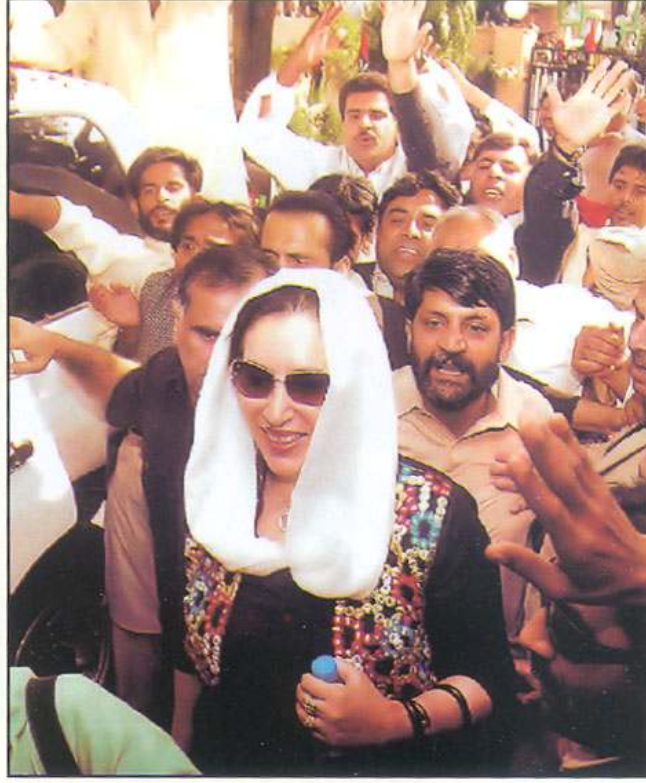
محترمہ بے نظیر بھٹو شہادت سے کچھ لمحے قبل خوشگوار موڈ میں



محترمہ بے نظیر بھٹو شہید، اپنی زندگی کے آخری جلسہ میں



محترمہ بے نظیر بھٹو شہید، کی میت کو لے جایا جا رہا ہے



نومبر 2007ء پیپلز پارٹی سنٹرل سیکرٹریٹ میں ملک میں
ایمرجنسی کے خلاف پریس کانفرنس کے لیے آرہی ہیں



نومبر 2007ء محترمہ بے نظیر بھٹو شہید انڈین ہائی کمشنر سیتا براتا پال سے ملاقات کے دوران



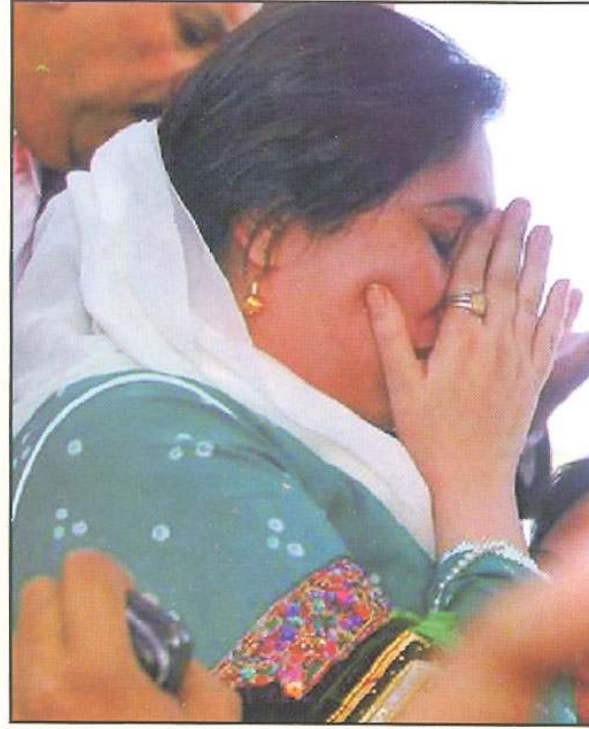
محترمہ بے نظیر بھٹو شہید، کارکنوں سے خطاب کر رہی ہیں، شیریں رحمان بھی ہمراہ ہیں



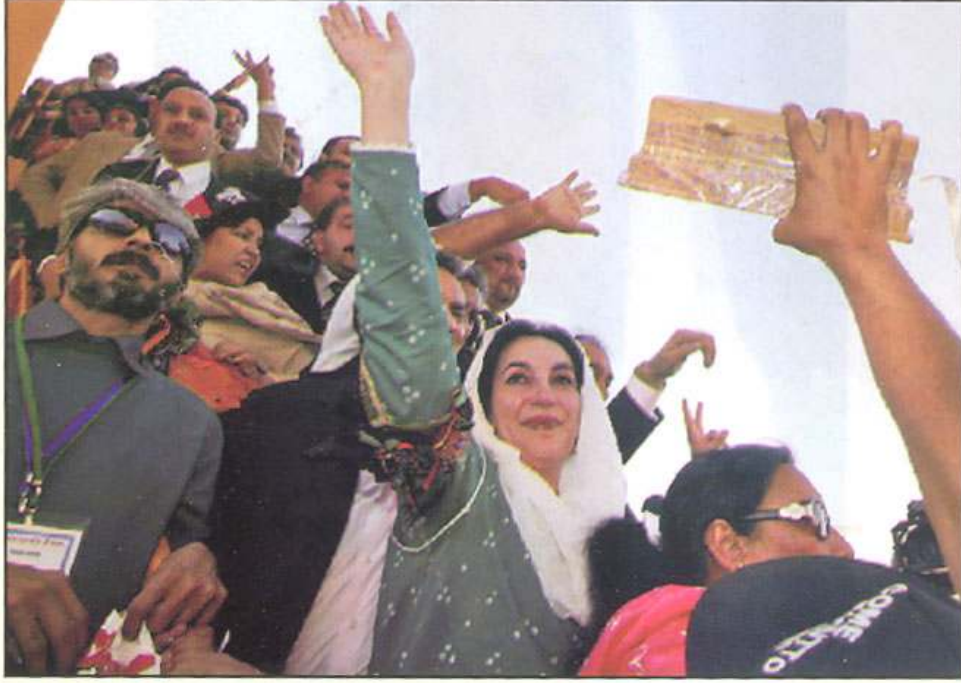
محترمہ بے نظیر بھٹو شہید، کی جہانگیر بدر کے ہمراہ فوٹو



18 اکتوبر 2007ء: دہلی میں اپنے گھر میں پاکستان کے لیے روانگی سے پہلے



پاکستان پہنچنے پر اللہ تعالیٰ کا آنسوؤں سے شکریہ ادا کرتے ہوئے



کراچی ایئرپورٹ پر عوام کو ہاتھ ہلاتے ہوئے



کراچی میں استقبال کی ایک تصویر



دختر مشرق سابق وزیر اعظم محترمہ بے نظیر بھٹو شہید



دختر مشرق سابق وزیر اعظم محترمہ بے نظیر بھٹو شہید کی خوب صورت تصویر