

## A “Soft Revolution” is developing in Pakistan

By [Liaqat Toor](#)

Region: [Asia](#)

Global Research, December 09, 2011

[pakobserver.net](http://pakobserver.net) 9 December 2011

*Zardari treads safe passage to avoid treason charges, Bilawal takes over party leadership, Gilani trying to control situation*

Islamabad—A soft revolution is developing in Pakistan as President Asif Ali Zardari, who suddenly departed from the President House to avoid treason charges in the Memogate Scandal on Tuesday evening has been silently replaced by his son Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, who took over the charge of PPP without wasting any time.

The next 72 hours are very crucial as more changes and developments are expected in the disturbed rank and file of the government, shaken by the Memogate issue, NRO verdict by apex court, deepening economic issues and departure of stalwarts from the ruling party.

According to sources privy to the developments said President Zardari was under great stress over the Memogate issue, particularly after issuing of notice to him by the apex court to reply in fifteen days. Such notices were also issued to Army Chief and head of ISI and alleged key player Husain Haqqani to respond in two weeks on the issue relating to sovereignty and security of Pakistan.

The verdict was issued on December 1 and replies are expected by Dec. 15. Zardari, smelling something wrong in this situation decided to choose a safe passage by departing from President House on health grounds to avoid treason charges.

He has been admitted to a Dubai hospital for examination. The gap was immediately filled and Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, who is chairman of PPP, was summoned immediately who took over the command of party. He chaired very important meeting of party seniors on Wednesday night taking stock of the latest developments and took important decisions.

This a soft revolution taking place in the country, the sources said. The sources were of the view that if “danger” for Zardari is averted, he can come back. But, the situation at present is very disturbing for him, the sources said. On Thursday, hectic activities were witnessed in the capital as sources further said the four governors can also be changed besides recalling of Wajid Shamsul Hassan, ambassador of Pakistan to UK.

Major changes in bureaucracy, diplomatic missions and the Cabinet are also expected. The President’s address to the joint session of the Parliament has already been postponed.

A panic-like situation existed in the capital throughout the day as rumours were rife about the government and its future. Conflicting statements being made by the ruling party leaders are also generating speculations and confusion while coalition partners are witnessing the situation as spectators.

Prime Minister Gilani is trying to control the situation but it is slipping out of his hand.

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