

Pakistan: Princess Ferragamo at the Barricades

It's all about "regime change"

By [Mike Whitney](#)

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It doesn't take a genius to figure out why the crooked Princess Ferragamo-Benazir Bhutto—has returned to Pakistan. Bhutto's been traipsing all over Washington trying to garner support from think-tank heavies and establishment powerbrokers to help her stage a political come-back in Islamabad. She even hired a high-powered public relations firm to polish her image so the media wouldn't focus too much attention on her past transgressions. Allegations of money laundering and corruption have haunted Bhutto ever since she was driven from office in 1996. Last month, General Musharraf cut a deal with Bhutto which freed her from the prospect of criminal prosecution and allowed her to return home. The arrangement ignored the judicial system entirely. The \$1.5 billion that she and her husband allegedly "received in a variety of criminal enterprises" has simply disappeared down the memory hole.

Another tidbit the media seems to breezily disregard is Bhutto's role in supporting Islamic extremism; the very dragon she is now expected to slay. According to Wikipedia: "It was during Bhutto's rule that the Taliban took power in Kabul and gained prominence in Afghanistan. She viewed the Taliban as a group that could stabilize Afghanistan and enable trade across the Central Asia republics. Her government provided military and financial support for the Taliban, even sending a small unit of the Pakistani army into Afghanistan."

But, then, anyone can make a mistake and Bhutto has since offered her sincere regrets and promised to rid Pakistan of the 'scourge of terrorism'. This must be music to the ears of her new patrons in Washington.

It's astonishing how quickly one can "see the light" when their career depends on changing their point-of-view.

US historian, Arthur Herman, in a letter published in the Wall Street Journal, described Bhutto as "One of the most incompetent leaders in the history of South Asia;" adding that she and other Pakistani elites hated Musarraf because he is "muhajir", born of Indian Muslims. Herman claims, "Although it was muhajirs who agitated for the creation of Pakistan in the first place, many native Pakistanis view them with contempt and treat them as third-class citizens."

Herman makes an interesting point. Perhaps, Bhutto saw the footage of Hurricane Katrina—where the mostly poor, black Americans were herded cattle-like into the Superdome at gunpoint—and realized she could find common-ground with the Washington political class. After all, she matriculated at Harvard and Oxford, so we can expect that her views are not that different from other "bluebloods" who regularly defend discrimination,

waterboarding, endless war and other shocking abuses on the op-ed pages of Americans leading newspapers. In any event, she was certainly persuasive when she addressed members of the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) on Aug 15, 2007. She seemed to fit right in with the gathering of corporate chieftains, media bigwigs and other assorted political elites. There was plenty of back-slapping and jocularly as CFR President Richard Haass introduced his distinguished guest, Bhutto, to the assembled throng:

· “It’s hard to imagine someone better placed to speak about the current situation in Pakistan than Benazir Bhutto. She was born into one of Pakistan’s leading political families. She was educated at both Harvard and Oxford. And — full confession — let me say that she and I met some — at the risk of being less than gallant — 30 years ago or so at Oxford. We would have met even earlier than that, at Harvard, except she got accepted and I did not. (Laughter.) And of such things history is made. (Laughter.) I’m almost over it, by the way. (Laughter.)” <http://www.cfr.org/publication/14041/>·

· Ha, ha, ha. Allow me to extract this silver spoon from my mouth long enough to assure you that Madame Bhutto has an acceptable pedigree to oversee our colony in Pakistan and will execute our military plans to expand the war into the tribal areas of Waziristan spreading suffering and death to another corner of the world which hasn’t yet been thoroughly obliterated by our ambition for global domination. Ha, ha ha.

Bhutto was asked directly about the so-called Miranshah agreement which Musharraf worked out so that he could withdrawal Pakistani troops from North Waziristan where his army was sustaining heavy losses. Musharraf had only won minor concessions from the tribal leaders who were supposed to limit their support for the Taliban. The treaty was a complete hoax designed to extricate Musharraf from an “unwinnable” war that was universally unpopular with Pakistanis. Unfortunately, the treaty turned out to be Musharraf’s death sentence. When it became clear to Bush and his neocon colleagues that Musharraf would not carry out their war agenda; they began to sharpen their daggers and plan for his removal. That is why Bhutto was exhumed from her Dubai mausoleum long enough to play a part in this latest Bush comic operetta. This has nothing to do with “democracy promotion”. It’s just another grim chapter in the “color-coded revolution” digest. The whole performance is being staged courtesy of the US intelligence agencies and the compliant establishment media. Bush doesn’t care about democracy any more than Bhutto. What he’s looking for is someone who’ll take on the Taliban in Waziristan. That’s it. And that’s why Musarraff’s day’s are numbered.

Bhutto, addressing the CFR crowd:

“I rejected that ceasefire of September 2006 — the peace treaty — and we rejected the ceasefires before that. In fact, we were appalled that the tribal region of our country was handed over to foreigners, because Afghan Taliban, Afghans and al Qaeda are added to the Chechens and the Uzbeks. And this is Pakistani territory, and Pakistan has to protect its own territory.

So we’ve been absolutely appalled by that. And we think the first thing the government of Pakistan has to do is to take the territory back. We’ve ceded authority of our own territory, and it’s not enough to satisfy the agenda of the Afghan Taliban or the Arab al Qaeda or the Central Asian Uzbek-Chechen. They’re now knocking on the doors of our frontier province. “

So there it is—Bhutto’s Faustian bargain in black and white—‘Get rid of Musharraf and I’ll fight your bloody war.’ What could be clearer?

Bhutto also promised her audience that she would promote democracy, but not democracy that creates a “ Hamas-type solution.” Oh no; that would be carrying democracy too far. Besides, it is so upsetting to go through all the trouble of conducting “free elections” when, right after, the errant voters have to be starved and randomly bombarded for choosing the wrong party. What Bhutto wants—and what the membership of the CFR wants—is managed elections that produce “real democracy”, the type that increases Washington’s power over its subjects.

An article in Counterpunch by Bhutto’s niece, Fatima, summed up Bhutto’s real feelings about democracy like this:

“Ms. Bhutto’s political posturing is sheer pantomime. Her negotiations with the military and her unseemly willingness until just a few days ago to take part in Musharraf’s regime have signaled once and for all to the growing legions of fundamentalists across South Asia that democracy is just a guise for dictatorship.” (Fatima Bhutto, “Aunt Benazir’s False Promises”, counterpunch.org)

Indeed. Although, now, Bhutto has been given a media make-over and is being portrayed as a Pakistani Joan of Arc pumping her fist into the air defiantly and barking patriotic slogans into her bullhorn for her motley collection of devotees. Meanwhile, her arch-nemesis Musharraf has morphed into this month’s Adolph Hitler; temporarily edging out Hugo Chavez, Vladimir Putin and Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

Over and over we hear the same worn mantra: Musharraf arrested the lawyers. Musharraf suspended the constitution. Musharraf declared martial law. Musharraf is a tyrant.

Of course, all of these are completely irrelevant. The only reason Musharraf has come under fire is because the Bush administration has decided that its time for regime change in Islamabad. Now, some critics are saying that Musharraf is worse than Saddam. That may be true. But it also proves our point.

Let’s consider the effects of the Iraq war before evaluating the wisdom of regime change. If one likes the results, then they should support the policy. But they should also mull over the broader implications of their choice. By supporting regime change we are tacitly endorsing the Bush Doctrine and everything connected to it. We are endorsing the clandestine interventions which destabilized Lebanon, Georgia, Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Belarus. We are endorsing the coups d’états in Haiti and Venezuela. We are endorsing the aggression against Afghanistan, Iraq and Somalia. We are endorsing the ethnic cleansing, the collective punishment, the killing of civilians, the cultural annihilation, Shock and Awe, Abu Ghraib, Guantanamo Bay, Falluja, and the utter destruction of Iraqi society. We are endorsing the claim that one nation has the right to unilaterally violate the national sovereignty of another country, without authorization from the United Nations, simply to advance its own geopolitical ambitions.

That’s what regime change really means and after 7 years of unrelenting violence—one million dead Iraqi civilians, 4 million refugees, and entire region of the world in chaos—it is a wonder that any sane person can knowingly support this same bloody policy?

The media will undoubtedly continue this cruel farce. In fact, they are already ratcheting up the pressure by suggesting that the US must play a more active role in “protecting Pakistan’s nuclear arsenal” (No mention of yellowcake uranium, yet) Even NPR’s so-called “liberal” commentator Daniel Schorr has lent his voice to the usual crowd of media alarmists:

In a recent commentary Schorr warned:

“The magnitude of the martial law crackdown suggests a deeper fear. Some analysts suspect that the fear is nuclear that Al Qaida terrorists may somehow gain access to Pakistan’s nuclear arsenal and wage , what some have called, nuclear jihad; nuclear Holy War....Until recently the Pakistan nuclear arsenal has been considered safe...According to the Washington Post the US learned in 2001 that Pakistani scientists had shared secrets with Al Qaida... Officials have long believed that the likeliest source of a nuclear leak would be Pakistan. Those fears have come alive again.”

Good work, Dan, “nuclear jihad”; very clever. Now explain to me how the uncorroborated fear-mongering of NPR’s “senior analyst” is any different from the incoherent ravings of David Horowitz?

They are identical. The media is, once again, creating the rationale for meddling in the domestic affairs of a sovereign foreign nation. We’re being told that Pakistan is “too critical to America’s national security” for us to simply remain on the sidelines. We are being set up for another foreign policy fiasco.

When will we learn to stop butting into other people’s business?

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