

ASIEN 92 (Juli 2004)

Abstract

Parteiführung mittels Fernanweisung -Benazir Bhutto und die Pakistan Peoples Party

Hein G. Kiessling

Since April 1999 Benazir Bhutto has been living in political exile in Dubai, from where she tries to direct and consolidate the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP). For the first three years she was able to do this. After the elections in Pakistan in October 2002, however, the first signs of division in the party became visible. The PPP appeared to face the same fate as the Pakistan Muslim League (PML) where, already a few months after the coup d'état of General Musharraf in October 1999, many former party colleagues of Nawaz Sharif were offering themselves as new political alternatives to the generals. The PML finally became divided into two independent fractions, PML-QA (Quaid-e-Azam) and PML-N (Nawaz). Today the party exists as a main bloc, namely PPP-Parliamentarians, which still follow Benazir Bhutto, and a smaller bloc called PPP-Patriots. The latter voted, after the elections in Parliament, in favour of a government headed by Prime Minister Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali and thus enabled President Musharraf to continue with his policies. They were rewarded with six ministerial posts in the Federal Cabinet and for some of them pending court cases against them were withdrawn. The PPP, although polling the highest percentage (29%) of the votes, could not form a government, neither in Islamabad nor in the Sindh province, a stronghold of the PPP and the Bhutto family. Now in the Opposition her main allies are the Islamic Mutahidda Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) and the PML-Nawaz, comprising the rest of the Nawaz Sharif group. Until now the PPP is in total opposition to the policy of President Musharraf and Prime Minister Jamali. As the PPP is presently unable to lure the masses on to the streets, thereby putting pressure on Musharraf, its opposition policy will, most likely, be harmful to the Party and Benazir Bhutto. The defection of more party members can be expected. Furthermore, regarding the PPP, probably the only strong democratic factor in the post-General Musharraf era, as comrades-in-arms of the Islamic MMA, is a case of ideological absurdity. Therefore, the need of the hour is for Benazir Bhutto and her followers to calibrate its strategy, to adopt a case-by-case policy in Parliament and to attempt to lower the resentments of the military regime towards the party by working on the basis of a realistic and pragmatic outlook.