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NATION BUILDING IN BANGLADESH: THE PROCESS OF INSTITUTION BUILDING

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Nation Building: A Multidimensional Concept and a Complex Task

Most of the Third world countries, old and new in their striving to become a modern nation are faced with the task of nation building because in many cases "they have the form but not the substance of nationhood."¹ A nation, according to Karl Friedrich, is a sizable population which can be called: independent; cohesive politically organised: autonomous and internally legitimate.² And nation building is "a matter of building group cohesion and group loyalty for international representation and domestic planning".³ The concept of nation building is associated with ideals like national development, political modernisation, political development, nationalism, and national identity.⁴

Many competent scholars have dealt with the problem of nation building specially in developing countries but as yet there has evolved

3. Ibid., p. 10
no systematic theory of nation building of universal applicability because of the belief that political development and nation building process are phenomena deeply rooted in the political culture of a particular country and can not always be rationally planned.

The world culture of modernisation is based on the concept of nation state as a critical unit of human social organisation. Implicit in it are certain fundamental standards of government which are prerequisites of statehood such as the existence of certain political and authoritative institutions which are essential for the steady development and viability of the nation.

Thus nation building is rooted in the need for creating more effective, more adaptive, more complex and rational organisations. It involves more than just the establishment of efficient machinery of state but also the creation of a host of other organisations and institutions in the society to articulate and aggregate the various interests and establish a feed-back between the state machinery and the people.

This approach seems to have little relevance for understanding the problems of nation building in developing countries, specially the post-colonial countries where the formal authoritative structures of the government were arbitrarily introduced from abroad by colonial powers and where the input organisations were too poorly organised to put little direct impact upon the government or its decisions.

8. Colonial rulers gave emphasis on the development of authoritative institutions like bureaucracy, military, governmental organs and not on institutions like political parties, mass media and the like.
Though the new states are increasingly absorbing the aspects of the 'modern world culture' based upon science and technology they need to be assimilated in the indigenous culture to evolve what might call a civic culture—a combination of modernity with tradition to suit the nation building process in a new country.

As the nation building process is thought to be associated with the particular genius of a people, the task of nation building in a developing country is not merely a choice between rational or traditional and modern or primitive ways of life and pattern of behaviour but a fusion of the old and new patterns of behaviour, value systems, role characteristics, institutional pattern and so on. This needs special efforts and initiative on the part of the governing elites as the nation building process can hardly be called autonomous and as the people, specially in developing countries rarely can play an active role in the nation building process.

Input institutions like political parties, mass media communication, pressure groups and the like and authoritative institutions such as governmental organs, civil-military bureaucracy, loyal authorities play important role in the nation building process. It would perhaps be unrealistic to suggest that in a new state the inherited institutions, mostly authoritative, from the colonial time should be completely overthrown and new institutions should be created instead to suit the genius of the people and the political culture of the nation, though some of them in their original form and

10. Almond and Verba, *op. cit.*, p. 5
orientation might be considered inimical to the needs of a self-governing developing country.¹⁴

Today all countries in varying degrees are partners of the world culture tradition. There is also a limitation of human ingenuity in building new institutions. Today, for example, it is hardly possible to build a different institution which would be expected to perform the task of a modern bureaucracy.

As a result the initiative for nation building and change in such societies must come from those in command of the inherited institutions which often were arbitrarily introduced.¹⁵ Herein lies the crucial role of the bureaucratic-military elites and political leaders, specially the nationalist leaders in the nation building process of a developing country. They are to use their art and skill of political manipulation to forge a sense of national identity and create a viable polity based on consensus on the fundamentals.

This task requires the reorganization and reorientation of existing input and output institutions and the creation of new institutions wherever necessary. In developing countries where the governing elites fail to meet this role expectations the prospects of nation building in those countries seem to be rather very bleak.

In the light of the preceding conceptual framework we shall attempt to discuss, in brief, the political process of Bangladesh with a view to assessing the position and status of the institutions considered vital for nation building and the role of the governing elites, specially the nationalist and military leaders in the total

¹⁴ For example the inherited administrative system of Pakistan was considered by Rowland Egger as unsuited to the needs of a self-governing developing country. See A. N. Shamsul Hoque, Administrative Reform in Pakistan (Dhaka: NIPA, 1970), pp. 100-101
institution building and nation building process during the several regimes in the political history of Bangladesh.

The success of nation building in Bangladesh would greatly depend upon the creation and maintenance of effective and autonomous institutions which would function according to their respective role expectations and that one institution would not arrogate the role of other. Unfortunately the experiences in Bangladesh seem to have been otherwise. Institution building process in Bangladesh seem to have been counter-productive for nation building.

Bangladesh: The Mujib Regime—Transformation of Democracy to One Party Authoritarianism

Inspite of some difficulties and dislocation during the initial days of her independence caused by the violent war of liberation Bangladesh had a rather promising start as a self-respecting and proud democracy. Though the government of Acting President Syed Nazrul Islam and Prime Minister Tajuddin Ahmed had a difficult time to consolidate its position throughout the country but the situation greatly improved after the return of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to Dhaka on January 10, 1972 from Pakistani prison. The legend of Sk. Mujib, his charisma and his hold over the people greatly helped the government to stabilise the situation.16

As President, under the Proclamation of Independence 1971,17 Mujib took a number of immediate measures. He issued a Presidential order on January 11, 1972 called the Provisional Constitution of Bangladesh Order 197218 which changed the form of government from Presidential to Parliamentary type. This Order among other

18. Ibid, Appendix C, p. 270
things, defined the Constituent Assembly and clearly envisaged that it would frame the Constitution of the country. Mujib himself assumed the office of the Prime Minister and Justice Abu Sayeed Chowdhury was installed as the President. The change in the form of government was perhaps motivated by the commitment of Awami League (AL) and Mujib’s own commitment, to the system and the “manifest aspiration of the people of Bangladesh” to establish a parliamentary democracy.

The government of Sk. Mujib faced a number of immediate problems such as restoration of law and order, straightening the administrative machinery, handling the freedom fighters many of whom still possessed arms, the question of collaborators and so on.

The government took several steps to tackle the situation such as the taking over of abandoned properties, nationalisation of banks, insurance companies and major industries, initiation of relief and rehabilitation programmes, and dissolution of local bodies, establishment of relief committees, the issue of collaborators (special Tribunal) order, 1972 and banning of religion-based parties. The government also had to adopt measures to restore law and order which deteriorated greatly, check smuggling and straighten the civil administration. Some of these measures adopted by the government later proved to be

20. See Preamble of the Provisional Constitutional Order, 1972 in Moudud, op. cit., Appendix C.
21. For details see ibid., p. 12
23. Nationalisation measures were adopted ostensibly to further socialism but in reality if benefited the AL party men.
25. Bangladesh Collaborators (Special Tribunal) Order, 1972 (P. C. No. 8 of 1972)
counter-productive and detrimental to the political process of the country.26

The government established a paramilitary force—the Jatiya Rakkhi Bahini27 under direct political control, which combined the power of the police and the army. Though the performances of the regime in these areas were not entirely satisfactory as they heavily favoured the AL party supporters, still the government was able to maintain a semblance of order and stability.28

One of the greatest achievements of the AL regime was the framing of a constitution within a period of one year from independence and within 8 months of the establishment of the Constituent Assembly (CA) on March 23, 1972.29 In the background of the 9 months War of Liberation and virtually without any opposition in the CA, the constitution was passed without any meaningful discussion and debate even on the major issues which seemed to have undermined its legitimacy.

On the commencement of the Constitution the CA was dissolved and the government announced the date of General Election to be held on March 7, 1973. In the meantime some opposition grew against the government. Maulana Bhashani formed a 7-party Action Committee opposing the government. The Jatiya Samajtantric Dal (JSD) also gained in strength. But the National Awami Party (NAP) (Muzaffar) and Communist Party (CP-Moni Sigh) took a rather conciliatory view towards the government. However, Sk. Mujib at the height of his popularity ignored all opposition demands and went to the polls as scheduled and won a landslide victory in the election, winning 282 out of 289 seats for which election were held.30 Later,

26. For detailed discussion see Moudud, op. cit., pp. 13-34.
27. Jatiya Rakkhi Bahini Order, March 7, 1972 (P. O. No. 21, 1972)
28. See Moudud, op. cit., pp. 39-83
30. For election results see, Bangladesh Election Commission, Report on the First General Election to Parliament in Bangladesh 1973, Dhaka, 1973, Table 8, p. 53

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the AL got 9 more seats raising its total membership in the Parliament to 306 including the 15 women reserved seats.

Inspite of AL's massive popularity the leaders and workers made it a prestige issue not to allow any opposition leader to win the election. There were also allegations of vote rigging, threats, malpractices in constituencies where AL candidates would have won any way. The achievements of the AL regime during the first two years was not entirely unsatisfactory. It could bring some stability to the polity and the economy though the process of socialist transformation could not make much head way. The threats of 1971 and 1972 famine could be avoided and the returnees from India could be rehabilitated. General Amnesty to collaborators was declared on November 30, 1973.

In the meantime opposition to the government was growing due to conflict of parties within the country and the government's relation with India. The main opposition came from the pro-Peking left parties. To counter the opposition the government formed Gano Oikhya Jote (GOJ) with NAP (M) and BCP (Moni Singh) in October 1973 to fight the radical left revolutionary parties.

To suppress the polarisation of politics between the government and the left revolutionaries the government amended the constitution and declared Emergency in the country by a Proclamation Order on December 28, 1974. This was perhaps done with a political motive to bring about more fundamental changes in the Constitution and the political system by the Fourth Amendment of the Constitution which rejected and reversed all the principles for which Sk. Mujib

32. The Bangladesh Observer (Dhaka), December 31, 1973
33. For AL strategy to meet the leftist challenge see, Maniruzzaman, op. cit., pp. 175-76.
and the AL so long stood for. The Bill of such a great importance was passed within one hour of its introduction in the Parliament without any debate or discussion—unprecedented in the history of law-making.\textsuperscript{35} It introduced a one party Presidential system of government. The President become the chief executive having supremacy over all organs of government—executive, legislature and the judiciary. \textit{Sk. Mujib was made the President by the Amendment itself and he could hold office for unlimited terms.}

It took away the sovereignty of the Parliament. Now the President could withhold assent to any bill.\textsuperscript{36} The powers, functions and status of the judiciary was greatly curtailed. A judge of the Supreme Court could now be removed by the President by an order on the grounds of misbehaviour and incapacity.\textsuperscript{37} The President could also appoint an additional judge of the Supreme Court without any consultation with Chief Justice.\textsuperscript{38} The Amendment also took away the power of the Supreme Court over the subordinate courts.\textsuperscript{39} The power of Supreme Court to enforce Fundamental Rights under Article 44 and Article 120 of the original constitutions was given to a Constitutional Court and the High Court’s power of enforcing Fundamental Rights was withdrawn by the Fourth Amendment.\textsuperscript{40}

The Amendment provided for the creation of a National Party and the dissolution of all political parties. The President was empowered to establish the National Party. It was compulsory for a member of the Parliament to join the party. Only the National Party could nominate a candidate for Presidency and membership of Parliament.\textsuperscript{41}

\textsuperscript{35} Fourth Amendment, see \textit{ibid.}
\textsuperscript{36} Para 12 of Fourth Amendment, \textit{ibid.}
\textsuperscript{37} Para 15, \textit{ibid.}
\textsuperscript{38} Para 14, \textit{ibid.}
\textsuperscript{39} Para 19 and 20, \textit{ibid.}
\textsuperscript{40} See Art. 44 and Art 102 of the \textit{Constitution of Bangladesh} (as amended upto January 25, 1975).
\textsuperscript{41} Part VIA and Art 117 A were added to the Constitution, see \textit{ibid.}
Accordingly, Sk. Mujib constituted the National Party known as Bangladesh Krishak Sramik Awami League (BAKSAL) on June 6, 1975 under Art. 117A of the amended constitution.

The government system introduced by the Fourth Amendment of the Constitution was publicised as Second Revolution aimed at realising Mujibbad by Sk. Mujib himself and the proponents of the system. Some scholars termed it as a constitutional coup which at a stroke eliminated all the ideals and institutions Bangladesh Revolution stood for. It introduced a one party authoritarian regime and transferred all powers of the government and the party to Sk. Mujib. In fact it became a one man personal rule. All the institutions—political and governmental—lost their autonomy and significance and became dependent on the supreme leader, Sk. Mujib, thus giving rise to personality cult of leadership.

What was the motivation behind this constitutional coup for assuming supreme power while Sk. Mujib was the undisputed leader of Bangladesh and the ‘Father of the Nation’? Many theories such as weakness of the government, leftist threat to the government, Soviet advice and so on have been advanced. All these might have some elements of truth but the only plausible reason seems to be sheer love of personal power and glory.

The regime of Sk. Mujib, though in complete control of the situation, did not survive the killing of its leader because his power was personal and not institutional. There was no line of succession either in the government or in the party which could take over the reigns of authority after Mujib. AL regime might have been declining in popularity but Mujib’s killing cannot be attributed to it. It was

42. The Four point Programme of Mujib’s Second Revolution were, building self-reliant economy; controlling population growth; weeding out corruption and unity of Bengali nationalism. See also Moudud, op. cit., p. 247;
43. See Maniruzzaman, op. cit., pp. 179-182.
an act of personal vengence, not a military coup in the classical sense of the term.

Zia Regime: Departure from the Past and Bangladeshi Revolution?

The killing of Sk. Mujib and the successive coup of November 3, led by Brigadiar Khaled Musharraf and the Sepoy Revolution of November 7, 1975 brought Major General Ziaur Rahman to power. During the initial days he tried to maintain a low profile gradually consolidating his position.

The post-November 7 regime of Bangladesh was a mixed regime consisting of a civilian President, Chief Justice Sayem who was also the Chief Martial Law Administrator (CMLA) and a Council of Advisors consisting of civilian and military personnel. Zia was the Chief of Staff of the Army and one of the three Deputy Chief Martial Law Administrators (DCMLA) but he was the key figure in the regime.45

The regime faced threats from inside and outside the country. Zia could suppress the extreme left in the army, the Biplobi Gano Bahini by arresting their leaders, allocating more money for the armed forces and other security forces, accepting some of the 12-point charter of demands of the Jawans circulated by the Biplobi Sainik Sangsth on November 7, 1975.46 He also could successfully suppress the dissenters in the army by disbanding tank regiment, instrumental in the killing of Sk. Mujib; dismissing a large number of Jawans and trying some of them, and by secret trial of some JSD leaders.

The regime also could normalise relations with India, establish relations with Islamic countries and improve relations with other countries like China and Pakistan. The regime was also helped by a boost in the economy in 1975-76 which continued through 1976-77 and 1977-78.

45. Maniruzzaman, op. cit., p. 199.
But the military regime could not rule the country for a long time without consensus and effective civilian leadership.\textsuperscript{47} Zia also felt the need for civilianisation and creation of a self-sustaining political process.\textsuperscript{48} He was willing to go ahead with the election in February 1977 as promised by the government of Khondkar Mushtaq who was installed as President after the killing of Sk. Mujib. There was a divided opinion regarding the holding of election in February, 1977, the Mushtaq group and the Islamic rightists were in favour while the leftists opposed it. The army leaders at first decided to hold the election under the ‘rules of the game’ framed by them. Consequently the President promulgated the Political Parties Regulation (PPR)\textsuperscript{49} which required the political parties to seek government approval for their programmes for the first phase of politics called ‘indoor politics’ thus giving birth to a style of politics in Bangladesh which is still in vogue.\textsuperscript{50} Later the army leaders in November 1976 decided not to hold election as scheduled on grounds of pressure on the border and internal subversive activities and so on.

Zia took over as CMLA on November 30, 1976. This move was supported by all sections of the armed forces which encouraged Zia to take over as President of Bangladesh on April 21, 1977. Zia pledged general election on the basis of adult franchise in December 1978 and reaffirmed his faith in democracy in his address to the nation on April 22, 1977.\textsuperscript{51} He also promised referendum on the assumption of Presidency on May 30, 1977.

\textsuperscript{49} See \textit{The Bangladesh Times}, July 29, August 5, 1976.
\textsuperscript{50} The present regime has permitted “indoor politics” again from October 1, 1985 as a prelude to election which might be held some time in 1986.
\textsuperscript{51} \textit{The Bangladesh Observer}, April 23, 1977.
Next he brought about some fundamental changes in the suspended constitution by the Proclamations (Amendment) Order 1977\textsuperscript{52} on April 23, 1977 which inserted some Islamic symbol in place of secularism, redefined socialism, guaranteed property rights and expressed solidarity with the Muslim states. These provisions gave the government an Islamic orientation and marked its departure from the Mujib regime, though Zia preferred to retain the Presidential form of the government.

Zia announced his 19-point Programme on April 30, 1977\textsuperscript{53} and went ahead with the preparation for the referendum on May 30, 1977. Almost all political parties publicly supported Zia except AL which maintained silence and the JSD dubbed the referendum as a political bluff. It was a confidence vote in the programmes of President Zia and the voters were asked to say, yes or no. The outcome of the referendum was a casting of 88.05 per cent of votes of which Zia received 98.88 per cent.\textsuperscript{54} Zia was popular no doubt, but the result seemed to be hardly credible. Thus, the attempt to legitimise the rule through referendum remained in doubt.

For further legitimisation of the regime, Zia encouraged Vice-President Justice Satter to launch a political party, keeping himself ostensibly aloof from it. The *Jatiyatabadi Ganatantrik Dal* (JAGA DAL) was launched in February 1978. In the meantime as Zia was preparing for the Presidential election of June 1978 he himself went for the formation of a Political Front with six political parties, known as the Jatiyatabadi Front (JF).\textsuperscript{55} Six other moderate and left secular

\textsuperscript{52} The Proclamations (Amendment) Order, 1977 (Proclamation Order No. 1 of 1967).

\textsuperscript{53} For details of the 19-point Programme see, The Bangladesh Observer, May 1, 1977.


\textsuperscript{55} The component parties of the JF were the Jatiyatabadi Ganotantric Dal, NAP (Pro-Peking), U.P.P., Bangladesh Muslim League, Schedule Caste Federation and Bangladesh Labour Party.
parties formed another front named *Ganatantrik Oikkyay Jote* (GOJ). There was a third front known as the *Jatiya Jukta Front* (JIF) also a six-party alliance under the leadership of Ataur Rahman Khan.57 But in the election only two candidates, General Zia from JF and General Osmani from GOJ contested in which Zia came out victorious with 76.63 per cent of the 53.34 per cent of votes cast in the election.58

The next steps in the legitimisation and civilianisation process of the regime were the formation of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) headed by Zia as President and the holding of General Election of February 18, 1979.59

In the General Election 14 major parties and 2125 candidates contested for 300 seats in the Parliament in which the BNP secured on overwhelming majority with 207 seats.60

President General Zia was fairly successful in consolidating his power and maintaining the regime. Inspite of democratisation and civilianisation of his regime through the Presidential referendum of 1977, Presidential election of 1978 and the Parliamentary General Election of 1979, it essentially remained a personal rule as was the case in the Mujib regime.

Zia seemed to have not succeeded in creating a stable polity. There was no consensus among the political elites about the political system, the rules of the political game, the question of national

56. The component parties of the GOJ were the Bangladesh Awami League, NAP (Pro-Moscow), Janata Party, Bangladesh People’s League, Gano Azadi League and CPB.
57. The component parties of JIF were JL, BJD, KSP, DL, a faction of IDL and a faction of Muslim League.
59. The BNP consisted of the JAGODAL, NAP (B) and sections of each of the BML, UPP, BLP and JIF.
identity and so on. All controversial issues which seemed to have been settled with Liberation, in fact, remained open.

Like the Mujib Regime, the Regime, of Zia also could not survive the death of its leader in the unsuccessful coup of Major General Abul Manzur at Chittagong on May 30, 1981, though the regime was not immediately taken over by the military and continued upto March 24, 1982 when the military seized the State power in a bloodless coup.

Why the regime failed to continue after the death of Zia inspite of its apparent stability during Zia’s life time? One of the reasons may be that his authority was essentially personal not shared by any organ and institution. The institutions including the party he built were his hand-made. This left no scope or chance of orderly succession of authority.

The Political Process and Institution Building in Bangladesh

The political process of Bangladesh during the three regimes of the country’s political history is marked by certain characteristics such as: the rise of charismatic and dominant leaders; ideological and symbolic approaches to solve the nation’s problems; lack of respect for continuity of fundamental institutions; politics of patronage and corruption; politics of landslide victory and perversion of electoral process; imbalance in institution building; ground stand approach to do much too quickly; and lack of commitment and exodus of politicians.

All these factors seem to have impeded the growth of viable institutions in the country with adverse effect on the nation building process.

Rise of Dominant Leaders: “Politics by leadership is one of the distinguishing features of the twentieth century”62. A democracy

provides for open recruitment to leadership role and the orderly continuity and succession of leadership. But in developing countries the political process is such that there politics by leadership gives rise to personal rule by charismatic and dominant leaders which make no room for continuity and orderly succession. The rise of personality cult means the negation of political process.

In Bangladesh we have witnessed the rise of nationalist leader like Sk. Mujib who originally derived his power from politics and the party. Subsequently his massive hold over the people and his charismatic appeal brought about a psychological metamorphosis in his leadership⁶³ which perhaps induced him to assume supreme power and subordinate all the institutions to his personal authority.

General Zia though had some nationalistic background, originally derived his authority from the backing of the military. Later he tried to legitimise and civilianise his rule through elections and building of political institutions. His personal appeal and charisma also helped him to acquire personal power. But he could not completely sever his army connections. Thus the civilian institutions he created served as his political power base as they were entirely dependent on him for their existence and sustenance. This lack of autonomy of the political institutions may be one of the reasons for the failure of the regime after the demise of its supreme leader.

General Ershad derived his authority with the help of the military but he started with the disadvantage that he was not associated with the liberation movement. His political style, in many respects similar to that of General Zia, and his military support, have given him enough power which is also essentially personal. He has started a process of legitimisation and civilianisation of his regime⁶⁴ which is rather familiar. It is perhaps too early to comment on the possible

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A measure of his success in building the nation and establishing a viable polity in which powers will be shared by the various political institutions. But if things go on as they are, one should not expect too much.

**Symbolic Approach to Nation Building:** The rise of personality cult of leadership naturally leads to ideological and symbolic rather than problematic solution of vital national problems. Sk. Mujib took recourse to *Mujibbad*, Second Revolution, nationalism, secularism, socialism and democracy in his efforts to nation building though these terms did not mean much in terms of concrete state policy.

General Zia revived Islamic symbols and slogans,65 floated a 19-point programme, promised spread of mass literacy, introduced canal digging and building of roads.

General Ershad seems to be pursuing further the Islamic orientation and symbols initiated by Zia. In addition, administrative decentralisation and people's participation seem to be the catchword of the regime66 for nation building. There is enough room for scepticism in the symbolic approach to nation building process.

**Lack of Continuity of Institutions:** Nation building process in Bangladesh suffered greatly due to lack of continuity of institutions like the Constitution, governmental system, local government institution, providing for parliamentary democracy, guarantee of Fundamental Rights, working party system, independence of the Judiciary and so on, but he changed it so drastically by the Fourth and other amendments that it became completely different from the original and the resulting governmental system became a hybrid. The local

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66. The system of decentralised administration at *Upazila* was introduced on the basis of the *Report of the Committee for Administrative Reorganisation*, June 1982, Dhaka, 1982.
government system was drastically changed to suit the needs of a one party personal rule. He did not have the patience to give the existing institutions a chance to try.

During the initial period of Zia’s regime the Constitution remained suspended. He repealed some of the provisions introduced by the Fourth amendment but preferred to retain the Presidential system and the hybrid executive system. He also brought about fundamental changes in the principles of state policy.

The present regime has also kept the Constitution under suspended animation. It generally functions under the system adopted by Zia but changes the constitutional provisions by Martial Law Orders to suit the needs of the regime. The regime has also started experimentation with the local government system. If and when the regime revive the Constitution it is likely to amend the Constitution to give the military some role in administrative through constitutional arrangements.

Politics of Patronage and Corruption: Politics of patronage is one of the most important characteristics of the political system of Bangladesh pursued by all the regimes in different forms and with different intents. Sk. Mujib distributed patronage in the forms of permits, licenses, dealerships, opportunities to undertake illegal economic activities, appointment to high posts in nationalised industries and so on to his party men and supporters out of his attachment to his party and to give them an opportunity to build some capital as they suffered much for the nation’s freedom. Zia also followed the politics of patronage to buy support from the politicians. The present government also does not seem to be-

67. Arts. 59 and 60 of the Constitution of 1972 were omitted by the Fourth Amendment 1975. The government by a Presidential ordinance on June 21, 1975 created 61 Districts and introduced the system of District Governorship under the direct control of the President. The scheme however could not be implemented.
have differently. The net result of the politics of patronage is that politics has now become a profession for making money and amassing wealth. It has spread corruption in the society as a whole. Though corruption is not a new phenomenon but it has assumed disproportionate dimension in Bangladesh. The tasks of nation building is vitally affected by it but nobody seems to know where and how to stop the menace of corruption.

Electoral Management: Bangladesh is a country of landslide victory and disastrous defeat in elections. The results of the election of 1970 in the then East Pakistan, the general election of 1973, the referendum on Zia’s Presidency in 1977, the election of President Zia in 1978, the Parliamentary election of Justice Sattar in 1981 and the Presidential referendum of General Ershad of March 1985 prove the fact. The results in most of the elections depended upon the management of electoral politics which involved use of intimidation, threats, vote rigging, official malpractices and so on. The system of management of electoral politics has thoroughly subverted the electoral process in Bangladesh. Election results are now accepted as fait accompli. There seem to be little confidence in election results. The consequence of the people’s power to determine the outcome of the election has also made them politically apathetic, whereas active participation of the people in the political process is considered to be essential for nation building.

Asymmetrical Development of Institutions: Symmetrical development of institutions is a requirement for nation building. But most of the post-colonial countries inherit more developed authoritative institutions like the bureaucracy, army and police as compared to political institutions like political parties, mass media and pressure

68. Financial benefits to military officers, appointment of military officers in key positions in all sectors of administration. In fact they are militarising the civil administration.

69. The thin turn out of voters in the Referendum of March 21, 1985 may be an indication of this fact. See also Eulau, op. cit., p. 207.
groups which are relatively less developed. Bangladesh perhaps is no exception. Sk. Mujib attempted to build his party, AL at the cost of bureaucracy, army and the party system in the country as a whole. Zia regime restored the bureaucracy and the army to their pre-independence eminence except their autonomy. His management of the party system and the creation of the BNP party led to complete break-down of the working party system in the country. Present regime seems to be following Zia’s strategy regarding the authoritative institutions and the party building process. The country must have a workable party system to function as a viable polity. There seems to be little difference between a single party and many fragmented parties with one party dominance so far as the political process is concerned.

Exodus of Politicians: Modern governments—democratic or otherwise—need parties to function. It is essential that members of a party should have some ideology or at least commitment to some programme. It is not to say that the ideology or commitment of a person may not change over time. But change of party affiliation by persons for reasons other than conviction or commitment or for more power and wealth may be counter-productive to the regime they support. During the Mujib regime politicians and others flocked to join the BAKSAL. During the Zia regime there was an exodus of politicians from various parties of diverse persuasions to join the BNP—the party of the ruling regime. The same process is working to-day in the formation of the political front by General Ershad.

71. The Proclamation of the PPR and Zia’s policy of breaking down parties created too many parties to function as a working party system.
72. Politicians of the opposition parties were waiting too long for power. They took the opportunity to join BNP to get a share of power and the consequent benefits.
73. The partners of the former political Front of General Ershad are from BNP, UPP, AL, ML and of course, the Jana Dal.
The diverse political elements joining the front may ultimately be rehabilitated in the party of the regime in future. Parties formed in this process and with such politicians can not help evolve stable government with survival power in crises like the assassination of Sk. Mujib and General Zia, and serve the cause of nation building.

The Civil-Military Bureaucracy in Bangladesh and the Regimes' Policy

Civil Bureaucracy: It is generally accepted that bureaucracy inherited from a colonial administration needs reorganisation and reorientation to serve the needs of a democratic self-governing country. The AL government considered the inherited civil-military bureaucracy as a colonial legacy and a threat to political leadership and democracy. Hence the government of Sk. Mujib proceeded to bring them under complete political control and destroy their elitist character so that they really became the servants of the people.

The first action of the government in this direction was a pay-cut of the officials specially of the higher civil bureaucracy. The next important step, aimed at reorganisation of the entire administrative machinery was the issuance of President's Order No. 9 of 1972 which empowered the government to remove any employee without assigning any reason whatsoever. Some other measures like the Bangladesh Public Servants' (Retirement) Order, 1972 which fixed the retirement age at 55 years, the Bangladesh (Services Screening) Order, 1972 and the Government of Bangladesh (Services Screening) (Amendment) Order, 1972 were issued by the government.

The fear generated by these orders specially the P.O. No. 9, completely demoralised the civil bureaucracy, destroyed their initiative.

76. Bangladesh Public Servants (Retirement) Order, 1972, ibid., October 9, 1972.
and made them subservient to the government. The Constitution of 1972 also empowered the government to reorganise the bureaucracy.87

The Zia regime restored the power of the bureaucratic elites. The regime itself was a collaboration of the military and civil bureaucratic elites. The P.O. No. 9 was omitted, Officers of the CSP (former Civil Service of Pakistan) cadre were posted in most of the top positions in the government and public corporations. A new Planning Commission was constituted with bureaucrats and technocrats. The higher civil servants were given a prominent role in national policy making. The elite civil servants again became prominent as in Pakistan days.79 In the process, the civil bureaucracy became politicised and remained subservient to the government.

The bureaucratic situation in the present regime is not much different from what it was in the Zia regime. The regime has revived the provisions of the P.O. No. 9 of 1972 by Martial Law Order No. 9.80 The shifts in the regime’s policy towards civil bureaucracy from dependence to ascendency were equally dysfunctional for the nation building process.

The Armed Forces: At independence the armed forces were disorganised due to dislocation caused by the war of liberation. A large section of them were in West Pakistan during the liberation struggle. Sk. Mujib did not give much attention in rebuilding the armed forces. Perhaps he was aware and apprehensive of the role of the armed forces in politics of the developing countries resulting in military take over of politics. Mujib’s policy was to bring the armed forces under political control. Instead of rebuilding and reequipping the armed forces Sk. Mujib formed a special para-military

78. See para 10 of Fourth Schedule of the Constitution of Bangladesh (as modified upto January 25, 1975).
80. The present regime has revived substantially the provisions of P. O. No. 9 of 1972 by Martial Law Order No. 9.

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force with persons loyal to him called Jatiya Rakkhi Bahini. This was a move to counter the armed forces which caused serious discontent in the armed forces.

The situation changed radically during the Zia regime. The budget for defence and internal security forces was increased. A new army division, the 9th Division was raised. The Bangladesh Rifles, Defence Forces Intelligence were strengthened. Many senior retired army officers were appointed in high and controlling positions in government. The situation of the armed forces in the present regime is much better. They are in controlling position in almost all sectors of the government. They even may expect a permanent position in the political system in future.

It may be necessary to have a well-ordered and disciplined armed force for a country's defence and security. But possible role of the army in the task of nation building in the conventional sense of the term may be complicated and debatable. It is also unlikely that a civil-military bureaucratic regime would gain legitimacy and acceptance to the people of Bangladesh who attained their independence by fighting against similar regime in the past.

The Party Process in Bangladesh: A Scramble for Power and Fortune

After independence Awami League emerged as the victorious nationalists party and formed the government. Islamic national parties were banned soon after independence on charges of collaboration with the Pakistani forces. There were a number of other leftist parties, some pro-Moscow and some pro-Peking, most of which

84. See Jahan, *op. cit.*, p. 201.
specially the pro-Peking factions, were underground parties. The list may be as follows:

Bangladesh Communist Party (Leninbadi) later termed as United People's Party (U.P.P.); East Bengal Communist Party (M-L) later called Bangladesh Communist Party (BCP); Sarbahara Party; Samyobadi Dal; East Pakistan Communist Party (M-L).

There were also the National Awami Party, NAP (Bhashani) and NAP (Muzaffar).

In the meantime, there was a split in the Student League, student wing of the AL. The breakaway faction later formed the Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) with Major (rtd.) Jalil and A.S.M. Abdur Rab as President and General Secretary respectively which turned to be a major opposition force against the AL.

The party process during the early part of the Mujib regime seem to be rather wavy and complicated. But the main opposition to the Mujib regime came from the JSD and left Peking parties. The pro-Moscow parties generally sided with the regime. There developed a political polarisation between the government and its supporters and the opposition left parties which wanted to overthrow the government by force. To counter the left challenge the government declared general amnesty to collaborators without formally withdrawing ban of the Islamic parties and formed a Gano Oikyta Jote with NAP (M) and BCP (pro-Moscow) parties. There also developed factionalism in the AL itself, a faction of which under late Sk. Moni formed the Jubo League.

Zia's strategy in building his own party was to split the faction ridden parties into various groups and to pick up the support of some of the breakaway factions. As regards Zia's strategy regar-

85. For role of the left parties see, Maniruzzaman, op. cit., pp. 141-151.
86. Ibid., pp. 154-58.
In the short history of Bangladesh we have already witnessed the performances of two regimes with popular and charismatic leaders like Sk. Mujib and General Zia in their efforts to build the nation and evolve a viable political system based on identity and consensus. There is no reason to doubt their sincerity of purpose. But the experiences show that they failed. In some sense the failures were due to their own undoing and the weakness of the system they built. Ironically the task of nation building in developing countries passes into the hands of political actors and ultimately the dominant nationalistic leaders. People’s role in the process is limited to passive collaboration.

88. Already a number of prominent leaders from the various parties, to name only a few—Kazi Jasfar Ahmed, Korban Ali, Moudud Ahmed, Sirajul Hossain Khan, Capt. Halim Chowdhury, Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury, B. A. Siddiqui, Shah Azizur Rahman—have joined the front. Many of them are already in the Council of Ministers and Advisors of the Government.
Sk. Mujib had a golden opportunity as the undisputed nationalist leader of the country to forge a lasting national consensus and identity. The atmosphere created by the struggle for liberation sank many differences and settled many issues. There was no serious controversy over the adoption of the Constitution of 1972 and the principles enshrined in the document. He could successfully contain the civil-military bureaucracy which are considered as threats to nation building in a post-colonial country. He also had a well-organised party with considerable experience and a fairly long history. Inspite of all these advantages at his disposal Sk. Mujib failed and led the country into despair.

One of the reasons may be that he lacked the qualities of statesmanship to understand the dynamics of democratically working party politics. He perhaps lacked the spirit of self-sacrifices to share some of his powers with the institutions he created and to respect other's points of view. He subordinated all the institutions—the party, the civil-military bureaucracy, the judiciary, the mass-media, the local government institutions, to the needs of his personal power. Perhaps he meant well but did not realise the consequences of his action for the nation.

His attitude towards political opposition was one of hostility and not of accommodation and balance. He did not allow orderly party politics to grow. After all, a country belongs to the people and no one person knows what is best for them. By the Fourth Amendment of the Constitution he himself revived issues which were accepted by the nation at large as settled and stopped competitive politics altogether.

The regime failed to survive after his death perhaps mainly due to the weaknesses and ineffectivenesses of the institutions he left behind. At his death there was no Awami League but mostly a group of self-seeking politicians, the result of the politics of patronage. There was no leader who could stand for the ideals of the Bangladesh Revolution. In fact, there were many to enter into political office.
even with the backing of the army officers who killed their beloved leader.

General Zia also could not rise above the considerations of personal power because, as Bakunin contended, "... the possession of power transformed into a tyrant even the most devoted friend of liberty". To gain political support he cut fresh wounds in the body politic and revived issues which were taken as settled. He restored the civil-military bureaucracy to strengthen his power base and built a political party for gaining a show of popular legitimacy. The BNP he created was a party of diverse elements without any commitment. They joined politics for power and fortune and served as the instruments of Zia's personal power remaining completely subordinate to his authority. The BNP was not strong enough to counter the civil-military power and free the Zia regime from its civil-military dependence. As a result after Zia's death the party leaders had no faith left in them. Even though they could get the chance to go to another Presidential election with Justice Sattar they could not retain the regime and surrendered to the military.

The attitude of Zia regime to opposition parties and party politics was equally hostile and antagonistic. Zia also did not allow opposition to grow as an alternative political force. Through a strategy of political malpractices he divided the parties into so many factions that working party politics became impracticable and meaningless.

Had Mujib and Zia relinquished some of their powers to the institutions they created and if they could institutionalise their authority that could perhaps help evolve a political process providing for continuity and change. But "the abandonment of a public position obtained at the cost of great efforts and after many years of struggle is a luxury which only... a man exceptionally endowed with the spirit of self-sacrifice can afford. Such self-denial is too hard for the average man."

90. Ibid., p. 207.
At the moment the country is passing through a socio-political crisis of unprecedented scale. The possibility of evolving a stable polity capable of undertaking nation building tasks would depend upon the satisfactory solution of a number of crucial problems such as follows:

a) will the present regime be able and willing to share power with other political institutions?

b) will the regime be able to contain and institutionalise the civil-military bureaucracy and stop politicising them?

c) will the regime be allowed complete dependence on civilian support?

d) will the regime be able to create strong, effective and autonomous political institutions and will the political institutions including the mass media be allowed to function freely and competitively without being subversive?

e) will there be opportunities for spontaneous growth of local initiative and participation in the political process?

f) will the politicians be able to rise above their self interests and pursue national goals?

g) will the politicians be able to narrow their political differences and combine into smaller number of parties with commitment to ideology or programmes?

h) will the regime be able to check corruption in politics, administration and in society at large?

There can not be any easy or ready answer to such questions. Also no one person has the responsibility and ability to solve all these problems. It implicates all sectors of the society. Surely the task would need the services of honest, sincere and selfless leaders but the people must also change themselves and come forward.