

Operation Clean-up

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Operation Clean-up (other codename: **Operation Blue Fox**), was an armed military intelligence program led by the Pakistan Rangers, with an additional assistance from the Pakistan Army and its related intelligence agencies. Planned by the FIA, Intelligence Bureau and launched under the directives of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in 1992, the program was more roughly pursued by upcoming Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto in 1993–94, as part of her internal policies.

Its objective was to "cleans" the Karachi city of "anti-social" elements. The program targeted the Muttahida Qaumi Movement over the controversy regarding the Jinnahpur plan— a plan that supposedly planned on having the city of Karachi break away from Pakistan. The program came under extensive criticism and its tactical operational results remain inconclusive.

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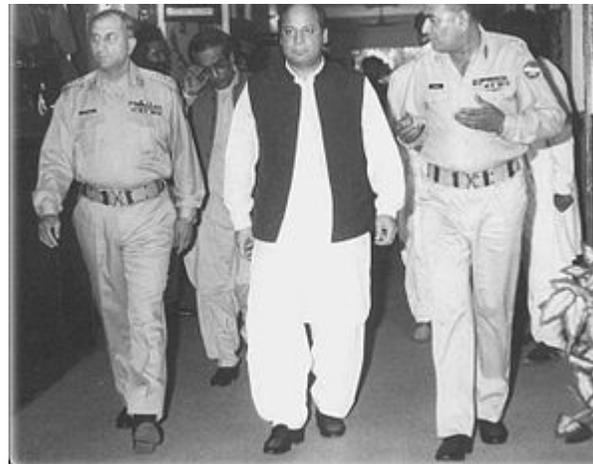
Program overview

Political dynamics in 1980s

The Muttahida Qaumi Movement (denoted as *MQM*) is a centre-left and liberal political party which was founded in 1984 by its activist leader, Altaf Hussain who was the student at the University of Karachi in the 1970s.^[1] According to the memoirs of General Mirza Beg, the MQM had its support from President General Zia-ul-Haq since its very early foundation in 1984, in a view to sideline the *JeI* in Karachi and PPP in rural Sindh.^[1] Such claims had been dismissed by party's convener Imran Farooq.^{[2][3]} MQM took part in local government elections and participated well in 1985 general elections, initially becoming part of military–

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Part of Sectarian violence in Pakistan



Nawaz Sharif along with Chief of Army Staff Gen. Asif Nawaz and Corps Commander Lt. Naseer Akhter visiting core head quarters to get briefing on 19th June 1992 operation preparations.

Location	Karachi, Sindh Province, Pakistan
Planned by	Intelligence Bureau
Target	MQM interests
Date	19 June 1992 – 16 August 1994 (2 years, 1 month and 3 weeks)
Executed by	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Pakistan Rangers ■ Pakistan Army
Outcome	Undetermined
Casualties	Thousands killed Thousands injured

technocratic government of President General Zia-ul-Haq. After death of President Zia-ul-Haq, MQM contested in 1988 general elections, acquiring considerable political leverage with 13 seats in parliament.^[4] MQM was part of PPP-led government of Benazir Bhutto but its repressive persuasion of repatriation of *Biharis* from Bangladesh camps soured the relations between each other.^[4] MQM went on to support the "vote of no confidence" against Benazir Bhutto took the incumbency by surprise.^[4] As early as 1988–89, the political problems in Karachi began to arise and reached its climax in 1990 when Sindh Police opened fire on *Muhajir* locale in Hyderabad city. The ensuing violence led to the events dismissing Benazir Bhutto from the office.^[4]

After coming in power as a result of 1990 general elections, MQM redemonstrated its political power in Sindh as part of IDA government led by Nawaz Sharif.^[4] During this time, the violence arose with the disagreements between one faction led by Afaq Ahmed and Altaf Hussain of MQM. MQM was later subdued by Nawaz Sharif in 1991 due to a brief clash of ideology.^[4]

Persuasive studies

In 1992, the program's studies were concluded under the Director-General of the Intelligence Bureau, Brigadier (retired) Imtiaz Ahmed as codename: Operation *Clean-up*, recommending the protocol. On personal initiatives of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, *Clean-up* protocol was initiated under Imtiaz Ahmed and the Pakistan Rangers, focusing on taking measures against the decoits in rural Sindh, not specific political parties.^[4] According to the sources, the program's protocol was to last six months, deadline was until June 1992.^[5]

The program went in cold storage after Sharif was dismissed but again came in effect and revival after the 1993 general elections which saw Benazir Bhutto coming in power and MQM winning the provisional elections decisively.^[4] The proposal was put forward and Benazir Bhutto renamed the program's protocol as "*Blue Fox* in 1993 and more aggressively persuade with the program.^[6] Among the reasons given for the launching of the *Blue Fox* were the Jinnahpur affair and the Major Kaleem Case in Karachi that occurred in 1993.^[7] The street fighting with the PPP continued in rural Karachi with the PPP's controversial decision of forming of Malir District in 1994.^[4]

Initiation of protocol

The program's protocol actually took place during the Government of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto.^{[7][8]} The diameter and focus of the program was widened to Pakistan Armed Forces when the 25th Mechanized Division of V Corps (for ground support) and the ISI (on intelligence) was invited by Benazir Bhutto. The army's search and destroy operation led to the discovery of arm caches and tortured chambers in elsewhere in Karachi.^[4] The gun and street fighting in Karachi increased the Muhajir Sindh violence.^[4] Lieutenant-General Naseer Akhtar and Major-General Safdar Ali Khan, assisting Brigadier Imtiaz Ahmed, directly reported to the government on the course of actions. In December 1993, Defence minister Aftab Mirani maintained that the army operation in Sindh "will continue as long as it is needed."^[9] In a press release in January 1994, Interior Minister, Major-General (retired) Naseerullah Babar, added in that "Operation *Clean-Up*" was likely to continue until June.^[10]

During its final phases on 19 May 1994, Prime minister Benazir Bhutto chaired a meeting with Chief minister of Sindh Muzafar Hussain, Interior minister Naseerullah Babar, chief of army staff General Waheed Kakar and other key civilian and military officials at General Headquarters (GHQ) to decide on the modalities of Operation Clean-up in Sindh; operation to be carried out by the Army Rangers with full backing by the

Army.^[11]

Halt and legacy

Ending in 1994, the period is regarded as the bloodiest period in Karachi's history, with thousands killed or gone missing in the fighting. In May 1995, arm clashes again broke out between the MQM and the Sindh Police managed by the PPP.^[4] Benazir Bhutto's steps towards the counterinsurgency did, however, brought some calm in Karachi by the spring of 1996.^[4] Over this issue, Murtaza Bhutto was notably gunned down in a police encounter with the Sindh Police. Within seven week, President Farooq Leghari dismissed the government of Benazir Bhutto, primarily charging the issue of Murtaza Bhutto and the killings of MQM workers.^[4] MQM again participated well in 1997 general elections and redemonstrated its political leverage in the parliament.^[4] Furthermore, the program came to its final halt in end years of 1996 after the dismissal of Benazir Bhutto's government.^[4]

Although 19 years have passed since the alleged arrest or disappearance of MQM workers, families of the missing people are still hopeful after registering the cases in the Supreme Court of Pakistan.^[12]

See also

- Jinnahpur

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External links

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