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ACTION SA-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AID-00	AMAD-00	CIAE-00	INL-00	DOEE-00
	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-00	FBIE-00	UTED-00	VC-00	H-01
	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	LAB-01	L-00	VCE-00	AC-01
	NEA-00	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OIC-02	OMB-01	OPIC-01	PA-00
	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	SCT-00	SP-00	STR-00
	TEST-00	TRSE-00	USIE-00	IIP-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	PRM-00
	DRL-02	G-00	NFAT-00	SAS-00	/009W		
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P 110934Z SEP 02
 FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
 TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1430
 INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO PRIORITY
 AMEMBASSY DHAKA PRIORITY
 AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU PRIORITY
 AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY
 AMCONSUL KARACHI PRIORITY
 AMCONSUL LAHORE PRIORITY
 AMCONSUL PESHAWAR PRIORITY
 SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

RELEASED IN FULL

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ISLAMABAD 007555

E.O. 12958: N/A
 TAGS: PGOV, PHUM, PK
 SUBJECT: PAKISTAN'S ELECTIONS: A PRIMER

1. THE FOLLOWING IS A GUIDE TO INTERPRETING PAKISTAN'S
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 OCTOBER 12 ELECTIONS. IT IS PRIMARILY INTENDED FOR OFFICERS
 WHO HAVE RECENTLY ASSUMED RESPONSIBILITY FOR PAKISTAN.

 THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

2. THE NEW NATIONAL ASSEMBLY WILL COMPROMISE 342 MEMBERS:

272 DIRECTLY ELECTED SEATS
 60 RESERVED SEATS FOR WOMEN
 10 AT LARGE SEATS FOR MINORITIES (E.G.: CHRISTIANS, HINDUS)
 342 TOTAL SEATS

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
 REVIEW AUTHORITY: ARCHIE M BOLSTER
 DATE/CASE ID: 13 APR 2011 200800198

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3. BREAKDOWN OF SEATS BY PROVINCE (GENERAL PLUS WOMEN'S SEATS):

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PUNJAB:	183 (55.12 PERCENT)
SINDH:	75 (22.59 PERCENT)
BALUCHISTAN:	17 (5.12 PERCENT)
NWFP:	43 (12.95 PERCENT)
FATA:	12 (3.61 PERCENT)
FEDERAL:	2 (0.61 PERCENT)

TOTAL: 332
PLUS 10 AT LARGE MINORITY SEATS. BRINGING THE TOTAL TO 342.

4. TWO REGIONS HAVE NO REPRESENTATION IN THE ASSEMBLY: AZAD KASHMIR, WHICH HAS ITS OWN ASSEMBLY AND PRIME MINISTER, AND THE NORTHERN TERRITORIES WHICH INCLUDE GILGIT AND HUNZA.

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MAIN POLITICAL PARTIES

5. HISTORICALLY, PAKISTAN'S ELECTIONS HAVE BEEN FOUGHT BY THE PPP AND THE PML. MUSHARRAF'S FOSTERING OF A SPLIT IN THE PML, HIS AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION, AND CANDIDATE ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS HAVE REPLACED THE EMERGING TWO PARTY SYSTEM IN PAKISTAN. FOUR MAIN PARTIES ARE NOW COMPETING: THE PPP, THE PML-N AND Q, AND THE MMA.

- PML-N: AN OFFSHOOT OF THE ORIGINAL PAKISTAN MUSLIM LEAGUE, HISTORICALLY PRO-MILITARY BUT OPPOSES MUSHARRAF BECAUSE OF HIS 1999 COUP AGAINST ITS LEADER THEN-PRIME MINISTER NAWAZ SHARIF.

- PML-Q. THE SO-CALLED KING'S PARTY, AN OFFSHOOT OF PML-N. MOST MEMBERS ARE MUSHARRAF SUPPORTERS WHO BROKE FROM PML-N AFTER THE COUP. INCLUDES SEVERAL POWERFUL PUNJABI POLITICIANS BUT STRENGTH REMAINS UNTESTED.

- PPP. STILL THE LARGEST POLITICAL PARTY IN PAKISTAN BUT HAS LOST STRENGTH SINCE THE MID 1990'S. WITH BENAZIR BHUTTO IN EXILE IT IS UNCERTAIN WHETHER THE PARTY WILL BE ABLE TO GALVANIZE THE LIBERAL SECULAR ELITE, OR THE RURAL LOWER CLASS, WHICH HAVE BEEN ITS MAINSTAYS. THE PPPP, A SHADOW GROUP OF THE PPP, WAS FORMED AFTER PPP WAS BANNED FROM RUNNING WITH BENAZIR AS ITS PRESIDENT.

6. THERE ARE TWO MAIN REGIONAL PARTIES: THE MQM IN SINDH AND

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THE AWAMI NATIONAL PARTY (ANP) IN NWFP. MQM IS THE SECOND LARGEST PARTY IN SINDH AFTER PPP. ITS MAIN CONSTITUENTS ARE MOHAJIRS, DESCENDANTS OF MUSLIMS WHO MIGRATED TO INDIA AFTER THE 1947 PARTITION, CENTERED IN URBAN KARACHI AND HYDERABAD. MQM IS LIKELY TO WIN THESE TWO CITIES. THE ANP IS A SMALL, MOSTLY PASHTUN PARTY, IN NWFP AND IS SPLITTING ITS SEATS WITH PPP AND OTHERS TO KEEP ITSELF A VIABLE PLAYER IN THE ELECTIONS.

COALITIONS

7. A NEW PHENOMENON IS THE MMA, AN AMALGAM OF SIX RELIGIOUS PARTIES, CONTESTING FOR THE FIRST TIME UNDER ONE UMBRELLA. THEIR PLATFORM IS STRONGLY ANTI-US. PRINCIPAL MEMBERS ARE THE JAMAT-I-ISLAMI (JI) AND THE JAMAT-ULEMA-ISLAMI FAZLUR REHMAN GROUP (JUI-F).

8. THE ALLIANCE FOR THE RESTORATION OF DEMOCRACY (ARD), A GROUP OF 15 ANTI-MUSHARRAF PARTIES UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF NAWABZADA NASRULLAH KHAN, UNTIL HE RESIGNED SEPTEMBER 10 OVER HEALTH REASONS. ARD HAS GARNERED LITTLE SUPPORT WITH THE GENERAL PUBLIC. IT INCLUDES THE PPP AND THE PML-N BUT NOT THE

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NEA-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 OIC-02 OMB-01 OPIC-01 PA-00
PM-00 PRS-00 ACE-00 P-00 SCT-00 SP-00 STR-00
TEST-00 TRSE-00 USIE-00 IIP-00 PMB-00 DSCC-00 PRM-00
DRL-02 G-00 NFAT-00 SAS-00 /009W

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P 110934Z SEP 02
FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
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MMA, ANP OR MQM.

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9. THE GRAND ALLIANCE CONSISTS OF THE NATIONAL ALLIANCE AND THE PML-Q. THE NATIONAL ALLIANCE INCLUDES SEVERAL PRO-MUSHARRAF PARTIES, OTHER THAN THE PML-Q, SUCH AS FAROOQ LEGHARI'S MILLAT PARTY, AND THE NATIONAL PEOPLE'S PARTY HEADED BY GHULAM MUSTAFA Jatoi. THE COALITION HAS NOT HAD MUCH IMPACT SINCE ITS CREATION IN DECEMBER 2001.

THE ROLE OF PUNJAB

10. PUNJAB, PAKISTAN'S CENTER PIECE, ALWAYS PLAYS A PIVOTAL ROLE IN PAKISTANI ELECTIONS. MORE THAN HALF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SEATS RAE FROM PUNJAB. HOME TO THE LARGEST NUMBER OF POLITICAL PARTY HEADQUARTERS, THIS IS WHERE THE WHEELING AND DEALING BETWEEN AND WITHIN THE PARTIES MOST OFTEN TAKES PLACE. EMBLEMATIC PUNJAB IS ITS CONTROL OVER WATER RIGHTS, AGRICULTURE, AND PAKISTAN'S TEXTILE INDUSTRY.

11. FIFTY PERCENT OF PUNJAB'S SEATS ARE IN URBAN AREA, WHERE VOTERS ARE LESS LIKELY TO BE SWAYED BY PATRONAGE AND FAMILIAL LINKS, AND SEATS ARE HOTLY CONTESTED BY PPP AND PML-N CANDIDATES. BOTH PREDICT A MAJORITY WIN. PUNJAB'S SIZE AND POWER FUEL RESENTMENT ELSEWHERE IN PAKISTAN. LAHORE ALONE ACCOUNTS FOR 13 SEATS JUST ONE SEAT SHORT OF ALL SEATS IN BALUCHISTAN.

OTHER REGIONS

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12. SINDH IS THE HOME BASE FOR THE PPP AND MQM. BOTH HAVE A HISTORY OF STRONG COMPETITION IN THE PROVINCE. KARACHI AND HYDERABAD, BOTH MQM STRONGHOLDS, CONSTITUTE APPROXIMATELY 35 PERCENT OF SINDH'S TOTAL SEATS. NEITHER PML FACTION HAS A STRONG PRESENCE IN SINDH, BUT THE MMA HAS A STRONG FOLLOWING IN KARACHI. MQM, IN COMBINATION WITH THE GOVERNMENT BACKED SINDH DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE (SDA), MAY WIN CONTROL OF THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER. OF ALL THE PROVINCES SINDH IS THE MOST ALIENATED. ELECTION RELATED TURMOIL IS MOST LIKELY TO TAKE PLACE HERE.

13. NWFP, PERHAPS THE PROVINCE WHICH HAS MOST KEENLY FELT THE IMPACT OF THE WAR AGAINST TERRORISM IN AFGHANISTAN, IS A PASHTUN DOMINATED REGION WHERE THE ANP HOLDS SWAY. THE PPP AND THE PML-Q ARE MAKING STRONG INROADS AND COULD POTENTIALLY SWAY THE OUTCOME. THE MMA IS STRONG IN POCKETS.

14. FATA, REMOTE REGIONS ON THE AFGHAN FRONTIER, IS SENDING 12 SEATS TO THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. THE MMA HAS A STRONG FOLLOWING IN THIS REGION MAINLY DUE TO THE STRONG ANTI-AMERICAN SENTIMENT. INDEPENDENT MALIKS ARE ALSO STRONG.

15. BALUCHISTAN, PAKISTAN'S LARGEST PROVINCE IN SIZE AND SMALLEST IN POPULATION. IT HAS 14 GENERAL SEATS WHICH ARE BEING CONTESTED BY THE BALUCHIS IN THE SOUTH AND THE PASHTUNS IN THE NORTH. BALUCHISTAN HAS OFTEN SENT INDEPENDENTS TO THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY BUT THIS YEAR ALL MAJOR PARTIES ARE TRYING TO MAKE INROADS AND WIN SEATS.

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NEW FACTORS

16. MUSHARRAF'S CANDIDATE DISQUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS, SUCH AS PROOF OF A GRADUATE DEGREE, HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO A SEA OF UNTESTED NEW FACES. HOW WELL THEY WILL PERFORM IS UNCLEAR.

17. ENFRANCHISED FOR THE FIRST TIME, THE 18-21 YEAR OLD VOTE WILL MOST LIKELY BE MOST IMPORTANT IN THE URBAN AREAS. PARTIES ARE VYING FOR THIS VOTE BANK, BUT IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN HOW THEY WILL RESPOND.

18. FINALLY, MINORITIES WILL VOTE AS A SEPARATE ELECTORATE FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE 1977. THESE MINORITIES - MOSTLY CHRISTIANS AND HINDUS - CONSTITUTE ABOUT 5 PERCENT OF THE ELECTORATE. THEY ARE LIKELY TO HAVE THE GREATEST IMPACT IN SINDH AND SOUTHERN PUNJAB.

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19. CONSULATES PESHAWAR AND LAHORE
REPORT.

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