

GENERAL ELECTIONS 2008

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PREFACE

The ninth general elections for the National and Provincial Assemblies of Pakistan were held on February 18, 2008. All major political parties (except Jamat-i-Islami and some minor parties) participated. The voter's turnout was 44.6 percent, which was 2.7 percent higher than previous election's 41.9 percent held in 2002. The total registered voters for the National Assembly were 80,910,318 (45,306,540 male and 35,603,778 female).

The number of contested seats for National Assembly was 268 in a house whose total strength, after adding 30 reserved seats for women and 10 for minorities, is 342. There were as many as 7335 contesting candidates for the National Assembly seats. Forty six political parties were allotted symbols to participate in the elections. Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarian (PPPP) emerged as the largest single party with 88 seats, followed by Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) with 66 seats, Pakistan Muslim League (PML) with 38 seats, Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) 19 seats, Awami National Party (ANP) 10 seats, Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) five seats, Pakistan Muslim League Functional (PML-F) four seats and independents including all others captured the remaining 38 seats. Only two parties, PPPP and PML (PML-Q), were represented in all provinces and no single party could secure an overall majority in the National Assembly.

Similarly, in provinces, except for Sindh where PPPP emerged as the majority party with 77 seats, no single party succeeded in securing an overall majority. PML-N was the largest single party in the Punjab and won both seats of the Federal Capital, ANP was the largest party in the North West Frontier Province, and PML (PML-Q) in Balochistan. These elections would result in the formation of coalition governments both at the Centre and in the provinces, except perhaps Sindh. As per general perception/observation, the elections were fair, transparent and peaceful and were acclaimed both nationwide and internationally.

The *Factfile* includes excerpts from the manifestoes of major political parties, election results and selected media coverage.

March 10, 2008

Noor ul Haq

ELECTORAL SYSTEM IN PAKISTAN - A BRIEF

Introduction

The Parliament of Pakistan consists of the President and two Houses to be known respectively as National Assembly and the Senate. The National Assembly consists of 342 Seats including 60 seats reserved for Women and 10 Seats reserved for Non-Muslims. The Senate consists of 100 Members including 17 Seats reserved for Women and 17 Seats reserved for Technocrats and Ulema. The Members of the National Assembly are elected for a term of 5 years whereas the Members of the Senate are elected for a term of 6 years with staggered elections every 3 years.

Election Commission of Pakistan

For the purpose of elections to both Houses of Parliament, Provincial Assemblies and for election of such other public offices as may be specified by law or until such law is made by the Parliament by Order of the President, a permanent Election Commission is constituted by the President comprising the Chief Election Commissioner as its Chairman and 4 Members, each of whom is a Judge of High Court, appointed by the President after consultation with the Chief Justice of High Court concerned and with the Chief Election Commissioner.

Duties of Election Commission

The Election Commission constituted in relation to an election has been charged with the duty to organize and conduct the election and to make such arrangements as are necessary to ensure that the election is conducted honestly, justly, fairly and in accordance with law and that corrupt practices are guarded against.

Chief Election Commissioner

The Chief Election Commissioner is appointed by the President, in his discretion, for a term of 3 years. A person who is or has been, a Judge of Supreme Court or is, or has been a Judge of a High Court and is qualified to be appointed as a Judge of the Supreme Court of Pakistan is appointed as Chief Election Commissioner. The Chief Election Commissioner enjoys security of tenure and financial autonomy.

Duties of the Chief Election Commissioner

Under the Constitution, the Chief Election Commissioner has been charged with the duty of –

- a) preparing electoral rolls for election to the National Assembly, Provincial Assemblies and Local Government Institutions. It is

also the duty of the Chief Election Commissioner to revise such rolls annually;

- b) organizing and conducting election to the Senate or to fill casual vacancies in a House or a Provincial Assembly; and
- c) appointing Election Tribunals; and
- d) conduct of Local Government Elections.

Election to the National/Provincial Assemblies

Members of the National Assembly and Provincial Assemblies are elected by direct voting in a constituency on first-past-the-post system through a secret ballot. A candidate who obtains the highest number of votes in a constituency, is declared elected as a Member of National or a Provincial Assembly. The constituency-wise detail of seats in the National Assembly and Provincial Assemblies is as under:-

National Assembly

NUMBER OF SEATS				
Province/Area	General Seats	Seats reserved for		Total
		Non-Muslims	Women	
Federal Capital	2	10		2
Punjab	148		35	183
Sindh	61		14	75
NWFP	35		8	43
FATAs	12		--	12
Balochistan	14		3	17
Total:	272	10	60	332+10=342

Provincial Assemblies

NUMBER OF SEATS				
Province/Area	General Seats	Seats reserved for		Total
		Non-Muslims	Women	
Punjab	297	8	66	371
Sindh	130	9	29	168
NWFP	99	3	22	124
Balochistan	51	3	11	65
Total:	577	23	128	728

The Seats in the National Assembly are allocated to each Province, the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATAs) and the Federal Capital on the basis of population in accordance with the last preceding Census officially published.

Members to the Seats reserved for Women and Non-Muslims, are elected in accordance with law through proportional representation system of political party's lists of candidates on the basis of total number of General Seats secured by each political party in the National Assembly or a Provincial Assembly.

Election to the Senate

The Senate consists of 100 members, of whom 14 members are elected by each Provincial Assembly, 8 members are elected from Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATAs) by the Members of National Assembly from these areas, 2 members, 1 woman and 1 Technocrat is elected from the Federal Capital by the Members of National Assembly, 4 women and 4 Technocrats are elected by the members of each Provincial Assembly. The breakup of seats allocated to each Province, Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATAs), Federal Capital, Women and Ulema/Technocrats, is as under:

Senate				
NUMBER OF SEATS				
Province/Area	General Seats	Seats reserved for		Total
		Women	Technocrats and Ulema	
Federal Capital	2	1	1	4
Punjab	14	4	4	22
Sindh	14	4	4	22
NWFP	14	4	4	22
FATAs	8	-	-	8
Balochistan	14	4	4	22
Total:	66	17	17	100

It is the responsibility of the Chief Election Commissioner to hold and make arrangements for the Senate elections in accordance with the system of proportional representation by means of a single transferable vote through electoral colleges.

The term of the members of the Senate is 6 years. However, the term of the first group of the Senators, who shall retire after completion of first 3 years of the Senate, is determined by drawing of lots by the Chief Election Commissioner.

Election to the Office of the President

The President of Pakistan is chosen by a secret ballot through an Electoral College comprising the Members of the Senate, National Assembly and the Provincial Assemblies. A person who is a Muslim and not less than 45 years of age and is qualified to be elected as a Member of the National Assembly can contest the Presidential election. The President is elected for a term of 5 years. It is the duty of Chief Election Commissioner to conduct elections to the office of the President in a special session of Parliament and all the Provincial Assemblies in accordance with the provisions of Second Schedule to the Constitution.

Qualification for Membership of the Parliament and Provincial Assemblies

A person who is a citizen of Pakistan, is enrolled as a voter in any electoral roll and in case of National/Provincial Assemblies is not less than 25 years of age and in case of Senate not less than 30 years of age, is of good character and is not commonly known as one who violates Islamic injunctions, has adequate knowledge of Islamic teachings and practices, obligatory duties prescribed by Islam as well as abstains from major sin, is sagacious, righteous and non-profligate, honest and ameen, has not been convicted for a crime involving moral turpitude or for giving false evidence, and has not, after establishment of Pakistan, worked against the integrity of the country or opposed the ideology of Pakistan and is graduate, can contest the elections and become a member of the Parliament or a Provincial Assembly.

Elections to the Local Government Institutions

In order to decentralize administrative and financial authority to be accountable to Local Governments, for good governance, effective delivery of services and transparent decision making through institutionalized participation of the people at grassroots level, elections to the local government institutions are held after every 4 years on non party basis by the Chief Election Commissioner of Pakistan. Members of Union Council including Union Nazim and Naib Union Nazim are elected through direct elections based on adult franchise and on the basis of joint electorate. The electoral college for election of Zila Nazim and reserved seats of women, Peasants and Workers and Minorities in the Zila Council shall be all the members of Union Councils in the district including Union Nazim and Naib Union Nazims. The electoral college for the election of a Tehsil Nazim, Town Nazim and reserved seats of Women, Peasants and Workers, and Minorities in the Tehsil council and Town Council shall be all the members of the Union Councils in Tehsil or, as the case may be Town, including Union Nazims and Naib Union Nazims. However, for the election to the reserved seats for

Women in Zila council proportionately divided among Tehsils or Towns shall be all members of the Union Councils in a Tehsil or Town. It is the responsibility of the Chief Election Commissioner to organize and conduct these elections. The categories wise total number of seats in a Union Council as well as all the Union Councils is as under:

Category-wise Number of Seats in a Union Council

SR.No.	Category	Number of Seats
1.	Nazim/Naib Nazim	2
2.	Muslim (General)	4
3.	Muslim (Women)	2
4.	Peasants/Workers	3
5.	Peasants/Workers (Women)	1
6.	Minority Communities	1
Total :		13

Category-wise Total Number of Seats in All Union Councils

SR.No.	Category	Number of Seats
1.	Nazim	6,125
2.	Naib Nazim	6,125
3.	Muslim (General)	24,500
4.	Muslim (Women)	12,250
5.	Peasants/Workers	12,250
6.	Peasants/Workers (Women)	12,250
7.	Minority Communities	6,125
Total :		79,625

Qualification of a Voter

A person, who is a citizen of Pakistan, is not less than 18 years of age on the first day of January of the year in which the rolls are prepared or revised, is not declared by a competent court to be of un-sound mind and is or is deemed to be a resident of an electoral area, can get himself enrolled as a voter in that electoral area. The citizens registered on the electoral rolls are only eligible to cast their votes.

Electoral Procedure

For the conduct of elections to the National and Provincial Assemblies, the Election Commission appoints a District Returning Officer for each District and a Returning Officer for each constituency, who are drawn from amongst

the officers of the Judiciary, the Federal/Provincial Government and Local Authorities. Returning Officers are mostly Additional District & Sessions Judges.

The list of polling stations is prepared by the Returning Officers and approved by the District Returning Officer. No polling station can be located in the premises of a candidate.

The list of Presiding Officers, Assistant Presiding Officers and polling staff is prepared by the Returning Officer and sent to the District Returning Officer for approval at least 15 days before the polls. The Presiding Officer is responsible for conducting polls at the Polling Station and maintaining law and order. He is assisted by the Assistant Presiding Officers and Polling Officer.

After the publication of Election Schedule by the Election Commission, nomination papers are invited from interested contesting candidates.

Scrutiny of nomination papers is carried out by the Returning Officers and nomination papers are accepted/rejected.

Appeals against rejection/acceptance of nomination papers are filed with the appellate tribunal, who decide such appeals summarily within such time as may be notified by the Commission and any order passed thereon shall be final.

Final list of contesting candidates is prepared and published in the prescribed manner by the Returning Officer after incorporation of the decisions on appeals and after withdrawal of candidature by the candidates if any.

Election Symbols are also allocated to the candidates by the Returning Officer according to their party affiliation or as an individual candidate, from the list of Election Symbols approved by the Election Commission. The Returning Officer also publishes the names of the contesting candidates arranged in the Urdu alphabetical order specifying against each the symbol allocated to him.

The Election Commission of Pakistan provides each Returning Officer with copies of voter's list for his constituency who distributes it amongst the Presiding Officers in accordance with the polling scheme and assignment of voters to each polling station/booth.

Voters cast their votes at specified polling stations according to their names in an electoral rolls. Since the election for both National and Provincial Assemblies constituencies are held on the same day, the voter is issued two separate ballot papers for each National Assembly and Provincial Assembly constituency.

When an elector presents himself at the polling station to vote, the Presiding Officer shall issue a ballot paper to the elector after satisfying himself about the identity of the elector through his identity card.

Polling is held for nine hours on the polling day without any break.

Immediately after the close of the poll votes are counted at the polling stations by the Presiding Officers in presence of the candidates, their Election Agents, and Polling Agents.

After counting the ballot papers the Presiding Officer prepares a statement of the count indicating the number of votes secured by a candidate, and send it to the Returning Officer alongwith the election material, un-used ballot papers, spoilt ballot papers, tendered ballot papers, challenged ballot papers, marked copies of the electoral rolls, the counter-foils of used ballot papers, the tendered votes lists, and the challenged votes lists.

The Presiding Officers also announce the result of count at the polling stations and paste a copy of the result out-side the polling stations.

After the receipt of statement of counts from the Presiding Officers of the polling stations, the Returning Officer compiles the preliminary un-official result and intimates the results to the Election Commission through fax for announcement on print/electronic media.

After the announcement of un-official result, the Returning Officer serves a notice to all the contesting candidates and their election agents regarding the day, time and place fixed for consolidation of the result. In the presence of the contesting candidates and election agents, the Returning Officer consolidates the results of the count furnished by the Presiding Officers in the prescribed manner including postal ballot received by him before the polling day.

Immediately after preparing the consolidated statement the Returning Officer submits a copy to the Election Commission in the prescribed form which publishes the names of the returned candidates in the official Gazette.

Election Commission of Pakistan,
<http://www.ecp.gov.pk/content/ERSYS.html>

POLLING SCHEME

General Elections, 2007-08

Sl. No	Province	Total Number of Registered Voters			Total Number of				
		Male	Female	Total	Polling Stations	Polling Booths	Presiding Officers	Assistant Presiding Officers	Polling Officers
	Area								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	Islamabad	261697	221104	482801	382	1023	382	2046	1023
2	Punjab	24481520	20004376	44485896	37636	97270	37636	194540	97270
3	Sindh	10894176	8612297	19506473	13406	39329	13406	78658	39329
4	NWFP	6324182	4337030	10661212	8173	21476	8173	42952	21476
5	FATAs	985994	424332	1410326	1122	2744	1122	2744	2744
6	Balochistan	2358971	2004639	4363610	3457	8332	3457	16664	8332
Total:		45306540	35603778	80910318	64176	170174	64176	337604	170174

Election Commission of Pakistan,

<http://www.ecp.gov.pk/content/ERSYS.html>

PPP'S MANIFESTO: BENAZIR LAUNCHES PARTY MANIFESTO

PPP Chairperson Benazir Bhutto on Friday formally launched the party manifesto for the January 8 elections, focusing on “5 Es” namely employment, education, energy, environment and equality.

“We believe that the key to development lies in focusing on employment, education, energy, environment and equality and in the January 8 elections we are presenting a better future for the people of Pakistan,” said the former prime minister while unveiling the party manifesto 2008 at a crowded news conference on Friday.

PPP Parliamentarians Secretary General Raja Pervez Ashraf and Information Secretary Sherry Rehman were also present on the occasion. The focal point of the manifesto, however, remains the party’s popular slogan of “Roti, Kapra aur Makan” or “Food, Clothing and Shelter” with three additions of education, energy and employment.

Interestingly, the PPP has included all the 36 points of the Charter of Democracy in its manifesto. Briefing on the main focal points of the manifesto, Benazir Bhutto said in order to create employment, the educated youth would be given one-year employment on trial basis, micro-finance would be enhanced and the elderly would be given special concessions.

“After coming into power, we would construct small dams to overcome the water shortage in the country, power generation would be promoted and the menace of load-shedding would be ended,” she added.

Benazir Bhutto said that the PPP would remove the ban on student unions but at the same time would not allow arms on campuses and even in Madrassas. The education curriculum will also be revised in line with modern education.

Benazir said the PPP would not turn the religious seminaries into arms depots or military headquarters to impose their will on the people. She vowed to expand micro finance in the country so that as many as 5 million people could borrow money to generate incomes.

On equality, she said it was an important part of the manifesto and that every citizen had equal rights. She said, “We want to make Pakistan a moderate economic country, as we are living in a global world in order to fulfill its requirements we have to change our thinking but this will only be possible if the Constitution is held supreme and the judiciary is independent and the democracy prevails.”

Benazir said that the party would also empower the women and minorities through putting in place a national employment policy for women; through taking institutional initiatives to prevent crimes against women; through effective legislation to enable secure ownership of assets and resources for women; through establishing family courts led by women judges.

She said the PPP would provide protection to Pakistan's minorities through reviewing laws that discriminated against them. It will empower the minorities through job quotas and affirmative action programmes that entitled them to employment in the public sector, she added.

On environment, she said the PPP would support the Kyoto Protocol and it would be implemented in the country. Benazir also said that the housing credits would be provided to low and middle-income groups and for senior citizens the party would provide financial assistance.

In the health sector, she said that national insurance scheme would be launched for better health facilities for the people. On foreign policy the PPP says that it will support the right of self-determination for all people and it will support the rights of Kashmiri people and will pursue the composite dialogue process agenda that it initiated with India.

On terrorism, the PPP vowed to dismantle "the militant groups who seek to make hostage the foreign policy of the country and impose their writ through force on tribal areas of Pakistan and elsewhere and the distinctions between and amongst terrorist groups will no longer be maintained".

On defence, the PPP says that the educational curriculum in defence institutions will be revised to ensure respect for democracy, democratic institutions and elected officials. In addition, the PPP says that all newly-appointed services chiefs will be given a public oath of office, similar to the one taken at commissioner, prior to taking up their assignments.

On provincial autonomy, the PPP says it will abolish the concurrent legislative list, the provinces will be given due share in their natural resources, review the criteria of the NFC award while taking into account contribution of revenues, geographic size, backwardness and level of development as well as population, review the natural gas rates and royalty formula, provinces will be given part of sale proceeds in the sale of federal assets in their provinces.

Defence Pakistan, December 01, 2007

<<http://www.defence.pk/forums/strategic-geopolitical-issues/8506-ppps-manifesto.html>>

PML (N) MANIFESTO: PML-N MANIFESTO UNVEILED

PML-N Quaid Mian Nawaz Sharif on Friday announced manifesto of the party for the 2008 polls with a pledge of restoring the judiciary, democracy and eliminating military role in politics.

The seven-point manifesto focuses on the acronym RESTORE in which R stands for restoration of the judiciary, democracy and the 1973 Constitution, E for elimination of military's role in politics, S for security of life and property of the people, T for tolerant and pluralistic society, O for overall national reconciliation and institutional development, R for relief for

the poor through poverty alleviation and finally E which stands for employment, education and health facility to the citizens.

The manifesto was launched at a press conference held at the Model Town residence of the party chief attended by party President Shahbaz Sharif, former federal ministers Ishaq Dar, Sartaj Aziz and party leader Siddiq al-Farooq.

The manifesto was prepared by a 16-member committee chaired by Sartaj Aziz. It rules out role of the military in the political affairs of the country and stresses to resume a pure professional role, as it is in other democratic countries. It also promises to appoint a commission to identify the causes and fix responsibility for the Kargil crisis in 1999.

The PML-N manifesto pledges that a Truth and Reconciliation Commission would be constituted to examine and report its findings on military coups and illegal removal of government in the past two decades and acknowledges victims of torture, imprisonments, state-sponsored persecution, targeted legislation and politically-motivated accountability.

The manifesto also promises good governance by ensuring security of service, revamp NAB and appoint its chairman in consultation with the leader of the opposition, bring military under the purview of accountability, abolish National Security Council and bring defence budget within the purview of parliament for approval. It also promises to restore military's honour and respect as a professional and a political institution.

It also voices for protection, independence and dignity of the judicial system through effective measures and promises to strength the lower judiciary for speedy delivering of justice to the people while announcing the manifesto. The manifesto mentions extremism and terrorism as a menace and assures to intensify efforts to curb it. The party makes commitment to increase minimum wages to Rs 5000/month and conform labour laws to ILO conventions. It also expressed its resolve to work for resolution of Kashmir dispute in line with UN resolutions and aspirations of Kashmiri people. It focuses to respect the principle of provincial autonomy and bring FATA into the mainstream of country's political, economic and cultural life.

Later, talking to the newsmen, Mian Nawaz Sharif regretted that Pakistan was the most unfortunate country, as it had been dictatorship repeatedly. He said the 'country could prosper only when the military's role in politics comes to an end for good.'

He said restoration of sacked judges and judiciary to its pre-Nov 3 position is the prime agenda of the party for which it would continue struggle. Nawaz also urged PPP Chairperson Benazir Bhutto to adopt soft attitude towards the sacked judges, while saying that 'criticizing those judges who refused to take oath under the PCO is unfair, as they are the real heroes and stars of nation.' He also urged Benazir and Maulana Fazlur Rahman to sign an

undertaking for continuing struggle for restoration of sacked judges and pre-Nov 3 judiciary.

PML-N Quaid said President Musharraf twice imposed martial law during his rule which shows that he had himself admitted that he was responsible for making Pakistan a 'failed state.' He said the country was passing through the worst kind of crisis where the poor don't even have enough money to buy medicine for their ill children or to provide them sufficient food, as everything has gone beyond their reach. Nawaz said his party would resist "every unconstitutional act of President Musharraf."

He said Musharraf had put the entire country at stake by preferring himself to Pakistan. "He is equating himself with Pakistan," said Nawaz. He said the country witnessed no development during the eight years rule of Musharraf. He said the seven-point agenda of Pervez Musharraf proved nothing, but a failure as neither he could create harmony among provinces nor could he bring economic prosperity in the country. He said the government claimed to have broken 'Kashkol' (begging bowl) but instead the country was still under the burden of foreign and domestic loans.

He said the PML-N government must be credited for the huge development in the country as it initiated several development projects during its past tenures. He said our government launched Ghazi Barotha Project which was inaugurated by this government. No step was taken to solve the power crisis and improve communication structure, he said. Nawaz said the country was in crisis because of repeated dictatorships, adding 'the worst democracy is better than the best dictatorship.'

On a question about poll boycott, Nawaz said he never wanted to boycott the polls partially and added that he was in favour of unanimous boycott. On a question about accepting turncoats in the party, Nawaz said the party was only considering selective cases, adding that there is no chance of party's handshake with the PML-Q. On a question of seat adjustment with the PPP, Nawaz said the party would be decided after consultations. He also said the party had almost decided its candidates from all parts of the country but in Sindh, the candidates couldn't be fielded from all seats. On a question, he said he never accepted any foreign pressure whether it was exerted by the US or any other foreign power.

When asked who would be the party candidate for the prime ministership of the country and chief ministership of Punjab, Nawaz smiled and pointing towards Shahbaz said 'Previously, both of us were for the slots, but now the papers have been rejected and the matter would be consulted later.'

The News, December 19, 2007

http://www.thenews.com.pk/top_story_detail.asp?Id=11738

PML(Q) MANIFESTO

PML MANIFESTO PROMOTES FIVE 'DS': DEMOCRACY, DEVELOPMENT, DEVOLUTION, DIVERSITY AND DEFENCE

The PML launched its manifesto for the 2008 Elections at a press conference at the PML House here, which was jointly addressed by PML President Chaudhry Shujat Hussain and PML Secretary General Mushahid Hussain Sayed.

The manifesto contains a number new ideas and innovative initiatives revolving around the five 'Ds' that were termed as the "PML Vision". These are **Democracy, Development, Devolution, Diversity and Defence**.

The two PML leaders underlined that the Party deliberately choose December 10 to launch the PML Manifesto since it coincided with the International Human Rights Day and the Party wanted to reaffirm its commitment to **Human Rights** as a major policy priority.

The PML manifesto also unveiled two mottos of the Party, "Live and Let Live", to focus on promoting **tolerance and harmony in politics** and the other, "**Giving Hope to the Hopeless**".

The PML President underlined that a lot of work had gone into preparations of the Party manifesto and he had entrusted the initial task of giving input to a Committee headed by Senator S.M. Zafar. Then there had been consultations within the Party and outside as well, and the final product was a result of brain storming between the Party President and the Secretary General during the last one week.

Chaudhry Shujat Hussain underlined that the PML was the only Party that did not believe in the cult of personality, rather it draws its inspiration from the **Vision of Pakistan's founding fathers**, Quaid-e-Azam and Allama Iqbal. The attractively produced manifesto has a number of quotations from the Quaid-e-Azam on different themes. Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed said that new initiatives proposed in the PML charter were "**doable and Poor Friendly**". He also said that great care had been taken to ensure that the manifesto reaches out to all sections of Pakistan's population and society, particularly the poor and voiceless. For instance there are projects for the disabled, youth, women, teachers, prisoners, senior citizens, widows and orphans, as well as journalists, artists, poets and writers, and overseas Pakistanis.

For instance, the PML is proposing a "**National Teachers Day**" to honour the profession of teaching, and it proposes to raise the **retirement age of teachers to 65**.

Chaudhry Shujat Hussain also underlined that PML was committed to a "democratic political culture based on culture of conciliation rejecting the culture of revenge". He also emphasized the need for "democracy within

political parties including the right of dissent and difference of opinion”. In a new initiative, the PML **manifesto calls for a constitutional amendment to allow representation of overseas Pakistanis in the parliament.**

Speaking on defence and foreign policy, Senator Mushahid Hussain said the PML wishes to **“redefine the concept of national security** so that, apart from military might civilian components are also highlighted”. These include “respect for the Rule of Law and Human Rights, political parties and provincial autonomy, economy and education, civil society, independent media and judiciary and a sovereign parliament”. The PML manifesto rules out “allowing any intrusion into its Nuclear Program or provide access to any of its nuclear installations and scientists to outsiders”.

The PML has also proposed a **Task Force** for examining the causes of extremism and it has stated its position on such issues as Kashmir, Afghanistan, Iraq, Palestine and the Iranian nuclear program. The PML also “Recognizes the APHC as representing the voice of the Oppressed Kashmiri people”. The manifesto also calls for the **Foreign Office to be more “people friendly”**.

Summing up the manifesto, PML President Chaudhry Shujat Hussain said that the manifesto has taken major initiatives that will benefit the majority of Pakistanis, particularly the poor and those living in the rural areas. In this regard, he referred to the **Village Development Initiative** for integrated development of Rural communities, promoting self reliance through a **Skills Promotion Trust** giving access to easily available small loans for persons keen to transform their skills for generating income on self help basis as well as revolutionary program for provision of **“Low Cost Housing** under what is termed as **“Cheap Homes Initiative”**.

Concluding, the PML Secretary General Senator Mushahid Hussain urged the political parties that instead of resorting to negativism and pessimism they should come out with alternative policies aimed at benefiting the great majority of the people of Pakistan. He said that “PML has done that through its Manifesto and our message is a positive one based on optimism and its motto of “Giving Hope to the Hopeless”. The manifesto also included a new initiative for improving the image of Pakistan through a **Cultural Ambassador** and recognizing the diversity of the Pakistan Federation. The manifesto defines extremism, terrorism and sectarianism “as the **biggest security threats to Pakistan**” and it is also focused on moral values and character building including rejection of **“Sifarshi Culture and Khushamdi Culture”**.

Pakistan Muslim League, December 10, 2007

<http://www.pml.org.pk/details.aspx?id=8e07e3f0-94fc-41ab-ae63-b9bcb382ed4c&cha=1&cat=...>

ANP ELECTION MANIFESTO

ASAFANDYAR ANNOUNCES ANP ELECTION MANIFESTO

PESHAWAR, Pakistan, Dec 16 (APP):- Announcing the silent features of election manifesto of Awami National Party at a Press conference, central leader of ANP Senator Asfandiyar Wali Khan Sunday said that concrete measures would be taken for promotion of undiluted democracy, establishment of independence judiciary, free media and elimination of poverty. He said protection of human rights, and economic, social and political development would be the top priority of ANP. The manifesto vowed better relations with time tested friend China, neighbouring India and United States of America besides solving the core issue of Jammu and Kashmir through dialogue. If voted to power, he said the party would change the name of the province as 'Pukhtunkhwa', merge FATA with the province with due representation in NWFP assembly. Senator Asfandiyar Wali said that that his party will work for establishment of peaceful, progressive, moderate and balanced society besides ensuring equal rights to federating units.

Dawn, December 16, 2007

<http://www.dawn.com/2007/12/16/rss.htm>

MQM MANIFESTO

MQM ANNOUNCES 17-POINT MANIFESTO

The MQM has announced a 17-point manifesto for the elections in which its banner slogan is “Empowerment for All.”

“Amn, Taraqi, Khushhali,” (“Peace, Progress, and Prosperity”) is also a slogan part of the MQM’s campaign. But the 3 Ps have created confusion since they also stand for the PPP. The MQM’s Dr Farooq Sattar read out the manifesto at a press conference at Lal Qila Ground near the party headquarters Nine Zero on Thursday.

The second largest party of Sindh has focussed on provincial autonomy for all the federating units in its 16-page manifesto that starts with a quote by party founder Altaf Hussain. “The MQM demands provincial autonomy for all the federating units of Pakistan as defined in the resolution passed by the All India Muslim League on the 23rd of March 1940 in Lahore which is known as the Pakistan Resolution,” Altaf urged.

Sattar said provincial autonomy is sine qua non for a federation and the lack of it is the biggest cause of disharmony and distrust between the units. The MQM wants a national dialogue and consensus among the units to settle this issue in a way that fulfils the aspirations of the people of the smaller provinces in particular. “The MQM wants the federation to retain Defence, Foreign Affairs and Currency. All other subjects should fall in the domain of

the units,” Sattar said, adding that this might be attained through constitutional measures.

The MQM also proposed an Inter-Provincial Council.

Education is second on the manifesto with the MQM wanting 2.2% of the GDP for its budget increased to 5% during the next five years. “A minimum of 20% of the provincial and district government revenue expenditure should be allocated for education,” Sattar urged. Education should be compulsory for each child and free till Matriculation. The proposed salary for teachers must be revised to above 3% inflation each year.

The manifesto’s third point on Health includes a pledge that expenditure would be increased from 0.6% to 4% of GDP during the next five years.

Sattar said ‘Health for All’ remained a slogan that needed to be shaped into projects such as a Liver Institute, Trauma Centre and Telemedicine service, Mother and Child Care Centres with breast-screening facility in each district, cadaver banks, the restoration of 2,400 unused Basic Health Units and Rural Health Centres and the abolition of import taxes on medicines and customs duties for medical equipment. He said that the government would negotiate with multinational pharmaceutical companies for a reduction in prices.

In the fourth point, the prevailing feudal system should be abolished and effective land reforms be made by fixing a reasonable ceiling. Proposed agricultural reforms include a 60% share of cultivators (Haris/Muzaray), district-level microfinance credit, government land for landless cultivators, revision of the agricultural tenancy laws, promotion for agro-based industries in rural areas with incentives, the lining of water channels and the remodelling of the irrigation system, the computerisation of revenue records, the protection and promotion of forestry, incentives for live-stock breeding, development of inland and marine fisheries, etc. New dams should be constructed with consensus. The gap between wage rise and inflation must be narrowed and the government should focus on distribution of assets, economic opportunities for all. Social security schemes would be introduced.

City nazims: The party wants unity of command for urban centres with the city district nazim controlling traffic, municipal services and revenue collection.

The party wants an independent, impartial and autonomous judiciary, proposes community policing and that the police work under an elected police commissioner. Environment friendly buses and a privately-run but regulated rapid mass transit system are also proposed.

Equal concentration will be paid to manufacturing consumer goods and light and heavy industries to encourage investment. Reduction of non-development expenditure, an increase in the ratio of direct taxes to indirect taxes, provincial collection of GST and Excise Tax, an independent National

Finance Commission and a reversal of written-off loans are pledged in eighth point.

The federal and provincial cabinets, instead of the PM and CMs, need to take all policy decisions, said the ninth point. The party also vowed representation to minorities - at least 5% of the total strength in the assemblies. There must be an independent foreign policy with a pledge to promote close, friendly and honourable relations with all countries especially our neighbours, including the settlement of the Kashmir issue through meaningful and sincere dialogue according to the wishes of the Kashmiri people.

Daily Times, December 14, 2007
http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2007\12\14\story_14-12-2007_pg7_10

MMA MANIFESTO

MMA MANIFESTO SILENT ON RESTORATION OF JUDICIARY

In a marked shift from its oft-repeated stance on the restoration of the sacked judges of the superior judiciary, the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) has restricted itself merely to promising an independent judiciary in its yet-to-be-announced manifesto, Daily Times learnt on Sunday.

The MMA Supreme Council has approved the manifesto that has been prepared by a six-member committee consisting of Prof Sajid Mir, Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Haideri, Liaquat Baloch, Allama Syed Abdul Jalil Naqvi, Pir Ejaz Hashmi and Maulana Abdul Shakoor Naqshbandi.

In the document, the alliance promises an end to the role of the military and intelligence agencies in the country's political affairs. It states that it will give 'due' status to the detained nuclear scientists after coming into power. The alliance also promises to restore the 1973 Constitution to its original form and claims to discourage the re-employment of retired civil and military officers. The manifesto's salient features deal with constitutional reforms, the judiciary, law and order, women's rights protection, and the country's defence, foreign and finance policies.

Constitutional reforms: The manifesto contains a heavy agenda of constitutional reforms, which includes restoring the 1973 Constitution to its original form, the establishment of an independent Election Commission, and achieving a balance between the powers of the president and prime minister.

It also advocates appointing judges to the superior judiciary based on merit instead of political considerations and the constitution of a high level committee consisting of the president, the prime minister, the leader of the

opposition in the National Assembly and the chief justice of Pakistan, to appoint superior court judges.

Law and order: The manifesto says that the MMA would rid the country of sectarianism and bring peace to the Tribal Areas and Balochistan through dialogue. The alliance was also silent on its previous demand to kill the Women's Protection Act of 2006 and instead stressed upon the establishment of a special department to solve the problems being faced by women. azaz syed

Daily Times, December 17, 2007

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2007\12\17\story_17-12-2007_pg7_37

JAMIAT ULEMA-I-ISLAM (SAMIUL HAQ) MANIFESTO ELECTION MANIFESTO LAUNCHED

The Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam (Samiul Haq) issued its election manifesto on Saturday, which promised support for movements for the promulgation of Sharia in Muslim countries.

The manifesto declared that only men were eligible to become presidents and prime ministers and non-Muslims could not be appointed to key posts. Islam, it said, would be declared as the state religion, while all Muslims would be required to undergo military training.

The manifesto, released from the party's secretariat in Akora Khattak in Nowshera, said education would be free for all up to the secondary level and co-education would be discouraged. The party would set up separate institutions for women, including universities, across the country.

Arabic would be declared a compulsory subject while English would be an optional one. The party, if it came to power, would ban usury and introduce an Islamic banking system.

Minimum wages would be Rs3,000 a month. The judicial system would be brought into conformity with the Sharia laws, said the manifesto.—
Bureau Report

Dawn, December 09, 2007

<http://www.dawn.com/2007/12/09/nat6.htm>

TEXT OF THE CHARTER OF DEMOCRACY

The following is the text of the Charter of Democracy signed by former prime ministers Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif here on Sunday:

We the elected leaders of Pakistan have deliberated on the political crisis in our beloved homeland, the threats to its survival, the erosion of the federation's unity, the military's subordination of all state institutions, the marginalisation of civil society, the mockery of the Constitution and representative institutions, growing poverty, unemployment and inequality, brutalisation of society, breakdown of rule of law and, the unprecedented hardships facing our people under a military dictatorship, which has pushed our beloved country to the brink of a total disaster;

Noting the most devastating and traumatic experiences that our nation experienced under military dictatorships that played havoc with the nation's destiny and created conditions disallowing the progress of our people and the flowering of democracy. Even after removal from office they undermined the people's mandate and the sovereign will of the people;

Drawing history's lesson that the military dictatorship and the nation cannot co-exist – as military involvement adversely affect the economy and the democratic institutions as well as the defence capabilities, and the integrity of the country - the nation needs a new direction different from a militaristic and regimental approach of the Bonapartist regimes, as the current one;

Taking serious exception to the vilification campaign against the representatives of the people, in particular, and the civilians, in general, the victimisation of political leaders/workers and their media trials under a Draconian law in the name of accountability, in order to divide and eliminate the representative political parties, to Gerrymander a king's party and concoct legitimacy to prolong the military rule;

Noting our responsibility to our people to set an alternative direction for the country saving it from its present predicaments on an economically sustainable, socially progressive, politically democratic and pluralist, federally cooperative, ideologically tolerant, internationally respectable and regionally peaceful basis in the larger interests of the peoples of Pakistan to decide once for all that only the people and no one else has the sovereign right to govern through their elected representatives, as conceived by the democrat par excellence, Father of the Nation Quaid-i-Azam Mohammed Ali Jinnah;

Reaffirming our commitment to undiluted democracy and universally recognised fundamental rights, the rights of a vibrant opposition, internal party democracy, ideological/political tolerance, bipartisan working of the parliament through powerful committee system, a cooperative federation with no discrimination against federating units, the decentralisation and devolution of power, maximum provincial autonomy, the empowerment of the people at the grassroots level, the emancipation of our people from poverty, ignorance, want and disease, the uplift of women and minorities, the elimination of klashnikov culture, a free and independent media, an independent judiciary, a neutral civil service, rule of law and merit, the settlement of disputes with the neighbours through peaceful means, honouring international contracts,

laws/covenants and sovereign guarantees, so as to achieve a responsible and civilised status in the comity of nations through a foreign policy that suits our national interests;

Calling upon the people of Pakistan to join hands to save our motherland from the clutches of military dictatorship and to defend their fundamental, social, political and economic rights and for a democratic, federal, modern and progressive Pakistan as dreamt by the Founder of the nation; have adopted the following, “Charter of Democracy”;

A. Constitutional Amendments

1. The 1973 Constitution as on 12th October 1999 before the military coup shall be restored with the provisions of joint electorates, minorities, and women reserved seats on closed party list in the Parliament, the lowering of the voting age, and the increase in seats in parliament and the Legal Framework Order, 2000 and the Seventeenth Constitutional Amendment shall be repealed accordingly.

2. The appointment of the governors, three services chiefs and the CJCSC shall be made by the chief executive who is the prime minister, as per the 1973 Constitution.

3. (a) The recommendations for appointment of judges to superior judiciary shall be formulated through a commission, which shall comprise of the following: i. The chairman shall be a chief justice, who has never previously taken oath under the PCO. ii. The members of the commission shall be the chief justices of the provincial high courts who have not taken oath under the PCO, failing which the senior most judge of that high court who has not taken oath shall be the member iii. Vice-Chairmen of Pakistan and Vice-Chairmen of Provincial Bar Association with respect to the appointment of judges to their concerned province iv. President of Supreme Court Bar Association v. Presidents of High Court Bar Associations of Karachi, Lahore, Peshawar, and Quetta with respect to the appointment of judges to their concerned province vi. Federal Minister for Law and Justice vi. Attorney General of Pakistan (a-i) The commission shall forward a panel of three names for each vacancy to the prime minister, who shall forward one name for confirmation to joint parliamentary committee for confirmation of the nomination through a transparent public hearing process. (a-ii) The joint parliamentary committee shall comprise of 50 per cent members from the treasury benches and the remaining 50 per cent from opposition parties based on their strength in the parliament nominated by respective parliamentary leaders. (b) No judge shall take oath under any Provisional Constitutional Order or any other oath that is contradictory to the exact language of the original oath prescribed in the Constitution of 1973. (c) Administrative mechanism will be instituted for the prevention of misconduct,

implementation of code of ethics, and removal of judges on such charges brought to its attention by any citizen through the proposed commission for appointment of Judges. (d) All special courts including anti-terrorism and accountability courts shall be abolished and such cases be tried in ordinary courts. Further to create a set of rules and procedures whereby, the arbitrary powers of the chief justices over the assignment of cases to various judges and the transfer of judges to various benches such powers shall be exercised by the Chief Justice and two senior most judges sitting together.

4. A Federal Constitutional Court will be set up to resolve constitutional issues, giving equal representation to each of the federating units, whose members may be judges or persons qualified to be judges of the Supreme Court, constituted for a six-year period. The Supreme and High Courts will hear regular civil and criminal cases. The appointment of judges shall be made in the same manner as for judges of higher judiciary.

5. The Concurrent List in the Constitution will be abolished. A new NFC award will be announced.

6. The reserved seats for women in the national and provincial assemblies will be allocated to the parties on the basis of the number of votes polled in the general elections by each party.

7. The strength of the Senate of Pakistan shall be increased to give representation to minorities in the Senate.

8. FATA shall be included in the NWFP province in consultation with them.

9. Northern Areas shall be developed by giving it a special status and further empowering the Northern Areas Legislative Council to provide people of Northern Areas access to justice and human rights.

10. Local bodies election will be held on party basis through provincial election commissions in respective provinces and constitutional protection will be given to the local bodies to make them autonomous and answerable to their respective assemblies as well as to the people through regular courts of law.

B. Code of Conduct

11. National Security Council will be abolished. Defence Cabinet Committee will be headed by prime minister and will have a permanent secretariat. The prime minister may appoint a federal security adviser to process intelligence reports for the prime minister. The efficacy of the higher defence and security structure, created two decades ago, will be reviewed. The Joint Services Command structure will be strengthened and made more effective and headed in rotation among the three services by law. 12. The ban on a 'prime minister not being eligible for a third term of office' will be abolished.

13. (a) Truth and Reconciliation Commission be established to acknowledge victims of torture, imprisonment, state-sponsored persecution, targeted legislation, and politically motivated accountability. The commission will also examine and report its findings on military coups and civil removals of governments from 1996. (b) A commission shall also examine and identify the causes of and fix responsibility and make recommendations in the light thereof for incidences such as Kargil. (c) Accountability of NAB and other Ehtesab operators to identify and hold accountable abuse of office by NAB operators through purgery and perversion of justice and violation of human rights since its establishment. (d) To replace politically motivated NAB with an independent accountability commission, whose chairman shall be nominated by the prime minister in consultation with the leader of opposition and confirmed by a joint parliamentary committee with 50 per cent members from treasury benches and remaining 50 per cent from opposition parties in same manner as appointment of judges through transparent public hearing. The confirmed nominee shall meet the standard of political impartiality, judicial propriety, moderate views expressed through his judgements and would have not dealt.

14. The press and electronic media will be allowed its independence. Access to information will become law after parliamentary debate and public scrutiny.

15. The chairmen of public accounts committee in the national and provincial assemblies will be appointed by the leaders of opposition in the concerned assemblies.

16. An effective Nuclear Command and Control system under the Defence Cabinet Committee will be put in place to avoid any possibility of leakage or proliferation.

17. Peaceful relations with India and Afghanistan will be pursued without prejudice to outstanding disputes.

18. Kashmir dispute should be settled in accordance with the UN Resolutions and the aspirations of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

19. Governance will be improved to help the common citizen, by giving access to quality social services like education, health, job generation, curbing price hike, combating illegal redundancies, and curbing lavish spendings in civil and military establishments as ostentious causes great resentment amongst the teeming millions. We pledge to promote and practice simplicity, at all levels.

20. Women, minorities, and the under privileged will be provided equal opportunities in all walks of life.

21. We will respect the electoral mandate of representative governments that accepts the due role of the opposition and declare neither shall undermine each other through extra constitutional ways.

22. We shall not join a military regime or any military sponsored government. No party shall solicit the support of military to come into power or to dislodge a democratic government.

23. To prevent corruption and floor crossing all votes for the Senate and indirect seats will be by open identifiable ballot. Those violating the party discipline in the poll shall stand disqualified by a letter from the parliamentary party leader to the concerned Speaker or the Chairman Senate with a copy to the Election Commission for notification purposes within 14 days of receipt of letter failing which it will be deemed to have been notified on the expiry of that period.

24. All military and judicial officers will be required to file annual assets and income declarations like Parliamentarians to make them accountable to the public.

25. National Democracy Commission shall be established to promote and develop a democratic culture in the country and provide assistance to political parties for capacity building on the basis of their seats in parliament in a transparent manner.

26. Terrorism and militancy are by-products of military dictatorship, negation of democracy, are strongly condemned, and will be vigorously confronted.

C. Free and Fair Elections

27. There shall be an independent, autonomous, and impartial election commission. The prime minister shall in consultation with leader of opposition forward up to three names for each position of chief election commissioner, members of election commission, and secretary to joint parliamentary committee, constituted on the same pattern as for appointment of judges in superior judiciary, through transparent public hearing process. In case of no consensus, both prime minister and leader of opposition shall forward separate lists to the joint parliamentary committee for consideration. Provincial election commissioner shall be appointed on the same pattern by committees of respective provincial assemblies.

28. All contesting political parties will be ensured a level playing field in the elections by the release of all political prisoners and the unconditional return of all political exiles. Elections shall be open to all political parties and political personalities. The graduation requirement of eligibility which has led to corruption and fake degrees will be repealed.

29. Local bodies elections will be held within three months of the holding of general elections.

30. The concerned election authority shall suspend and appoint neutral administrators for all local bodies from the date of formation of a caretaker government for holding of general elections till the elections are held.

31. There shall be a neutral caretaker government to hold free, fair, and transparent elections. The members of the said government and their immediate relatives shall not contest elections.

D. Civil - Military Relations

32. The ISI, MI and other security agencies shall be accountable to the elected government through Prime Minister Sectt, Ministry of Defence, and Cabinet Division respectively. Their budgets will be approved by DCC after recommendations are prepared by the respective ministry. The political wings of all intelligence agencies will be disbanded. A committee will be formed to cut waste and bloat in the armed forces and security agencies in the interest of the defence and security of the country. All senior postings in these agencies shall be made with the approval of the government through respective ministry.

33. All indemnities and savings introduced by military regimes in the constitution shall be reviewed.

34. Defence budget shall be placed before the parliament for debate and approval.

35. Military land allotment and cantonment jurisdictions will come under the purview of defence ministry. A commission shall be set up to review, scrutinise, and examine the legitimacy of all such land allotment rules, regulations, and policies, along with all cases of state land allotment including those of military urban and agricultural land allotments since 12th October, 1999 to hold those accountable who have indulged in malpractices, profiteering, and favouritism.

36. Rules of business of the federal and provincial governments shall be reviewed to bring them in conformity with parliamentary form of government.

Dawn, May 16, 2006

<http://www.dawn.com/2006/05/16/local23.htm>

TEXT OF NATIONAL RECONCILIATION ORDINANCE

President General Pervez Musharraf on Friday promulgated an ordinance to promote national reconciliation. This ordinance shall be called the National Reconciliation Ordinance 2007 and shall come into force at once. Following is the text of the ordinance:

“AN ORDINANCE to promote national reconciliation”

WHEREAS it is expedient to promote national reconciliation, foster mutual trust and confidence amongst holders of public office and remove the vestiges of political vendetta and victimisation, to make the election process more

transparent and to amend certain laws for that purpose and for matters connected therewith and ancillary thereto:

AND WHEREAS the National Assembly is not in session and the president is satisfied that circumstances exist, which render it necessary to take immediate action;

NOW, THEREFORE, in exercise of the powers conferred by clause (1) of Article (89) of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the president is pleased to make and promulgate the following Ordinance:

1 Short title and commencement.

(1) This ordinance may be called the National Reconciliation Ordinance, 2007

(2) It shall come into force at once.

2. Amendment of section 494, Act V of 1898.

In the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898 (Act V of 1898), section 494 shall be renumbered as sub-section

(1) thereof and after sub-section (1) renumbered as aforesaid, the following sub-section (2) and (3) shall be added, namely:

(2) Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in sub-section(1), the federal government or a provincial government may, before the judgment is pronounced by a trial court, withdraw from the prosecution of any person including an absconding accused who is found to be falsely involved for political reasons or through political victimization in any case initiated between 1st day of January, 1986 to 12th day of October, 1999 and upon such withdrawal clause (a) and clause (b) of sub-section (1) shall apply.

(3) For the purposes of exercise of powers under sub-section (2) the federal government and the provincial government may each constitute a review board to review the entire record of the case and furnish recommendations as to their withdrawal or otherwise.

(4) The review board in case of Federal Government shall be headed by a retired judge of the Supreme Court with Attorney-General and Federal Law Secretary as its members and in case of Provincial Government it shall be headed by a retired judge of the high court with Advocate-General and/or Prosecutor-General and Provincial Law Secretary as its members.

(5) A review board undertaking review of a case may direct the public prosecutor or any other authority concerned to furnish to it the record of the case.”

3. Amendment of section 39, Act LXXXV of 1976.- (1) In the Representation of the People Act, 1976 (LXXXV of 1976), in section 39, after sub-section (6), the following new sub-section (7) shall be added, namely:

“(7) After consolidation of results the Returning Officer shall give to such contesting candidates and their election agents as are present during the consolidation proceedings, a copy of the result of the count notified to the commission immediately against proper receipt and shall also post a copy thereof to the other candidates and election agents”.

4. Amendment of section 18, Ordinance XVIII of 1999.

In the National Accountability Ordinance, 1999 (XVIII of 1999), hereinafter referred to as the said Ordinance, in section 18, in clause (e), for the full stop at the end a colon shall be substituted and thereafter the following proviso shall be added, namely:

“Provided that no sitting member of Parliament or a Provincial Assembly shall be arrested without taking into consideration the recommendations of the Special Parliamentary Committee on Ethics referred to in clause (aa) or Special Committee of the Provincial Assembly on Ethics referred to in clause (aaa) of section 24, respectively.”

5. Amendment of section 24, Ordinance XVIII of 1999.

In the said ordinance, in section 24, (i) in clause (a) for the full stop at the end a colon shall be substituted and thereafter the following proviso shall be inserted, namely.

“Provided that no sitting member of Parliament or a Provincial Assembly shall be arrested without taking into consideration the recommendations of Special Parliamentary Committee on Ethics or Special Committee of the Provincial Assembly on Ethics referred to in clause (aa) and (aaa), respectively, before which the entire material and evidence shall be placed by the chairman, NAB.”; and (ii) after clause (a), amended as aforesaid, the following new clauses (aa) and (aaa) shall be inserted, namely;

(aa) The Special Parliamentary Committee on Ethics referred to in the proviso to clause (a) above shall consist of a chairman who shall be a member of either House of Parliament and eight members each from the National Assembly and Senate to be selected by the Speaker, National Assembly and Chairman Senate, respectively, on the recommendations of Leader of the House and Leader of the Opposition of their respective houses, with equal representation from both sides.

(aaa) The Special Committee of the Provincial Assembly on Ethics shall consist of a chairman and eight members to be selected by the Speaker of the Provincial Assembly on the recommendation of Leader of the House and Leader of the Opposition, with equal representation from both sides.”

6. Amendment of section 31A, Ordinance XVIII of 1999.

In the said Ordinance, in section 31A, in clause (a), for the full stop at the end a colon shall be substituted and thereafter the following new clause (aa) shall be inserted, namely:

“(aa) An order or judgment passed by the Court in absentia against an accused is void ab initio and shall not be acted upon.”

7. Insertion of new section, Ordinance, XVIII of 1999.

In the said Ordinance, after section 33, the following new section shall be inserted, namely:

“33A. Withdrawal and termination of prolonged pending proceedings initiated prior to 12th October, 1999.

(1) Notwithstanding anything contained in this Ordinance or any other law for the time being in force, proceedings under investigation or pending in any court including a high court and the Supreme Court of Pakistan initiated by or on a reference by the National Accountability Bureau inside or outside Pakistan, including proceedings continued under section 33, requests for mutual assistance and civil party to proceedings initiated by the Federal Government before the 12th day of October, 1999 against holders of public office stand withdrawn and terminated with immediate effect and such holders of public office shall also not be liable to any action in future as well under this Ordinance for acts having been done in good faith before the said date;

Provided that those proceedings shall not be withdrawn and terminated which relate to cases registered in connection with the cooperative societies and other financial and investment companies or in which no appeal, revision or constitutional petition has been filed against final judgment and order of the Court or in which an appellate or provisional order or an order in constitutional petition has become final or in which voluntary return or plea bargain has been accepted by the Chairman, National Accountability Bureau under section 25 or recommendations of the Conciliation Committee have been accepted by the Governor, State bank of Pakistan under section 25A.

(2) No action or claim by way of suit, prosecution, complaint or other civil or criminal proceeding shall lie against the Federal, Provincial or Local Government, the National Accountability Bureau or any of their officers and functionaries for any act or thing done or intended to be done in good faith pursuant to the withdrawal and termination of cases under sub-section (1) unless they have deliberately misused authority in violation of law.”

The News, October 11, 2007

http://www.thenews.com.pk/daily_detail.asp?id=75001

MUSHARRAF DECLARES STATE OF EMERGENCY

The Pakistani leader, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, declared a state of emergency on Saturday night, suspending the country's Constitution, blacking out all independent television news reports and filling the streets of the capital with police officers and soldiers.

The move appeared to be an effort by General Musharraf to reassert his fading power in the face of growing opposition from the country's

Supreme Court, civilian political parties and hard-line Islamists. Pakistan's Supreme Court was expected to rule within days on the legality of General Musharraf's re-election last month as the country's president, which opposition groups have said was improper.

The emergency declaration was in direct defiance of repeated calls this week from senior American officials, including Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, not to do so. A day earlier, the senior American military commander in the Middle East, Admiral William J. Fallon, told General Musharraf and his top generals in a meeting here that declaring emergency rule would jeopardize the extensive American financial support for the Pakistani military.

Ms. Rice personally intervened twice in the past four months to try to keep General Musharraf from imposing emergency rule, telephoning him at 2 a.m. Pakistani time in August. On Saturday, while traveling to Turkey for an Iraq security conference, she reinforced that message, saying, "I think it would be quite obvious that the United States wouldn't be supportive of extra-constitutional means."

Soon after independent television stations went blank in the capital, just after 5 p.m., dozens of police forces surrounded the Supreme Court building, with justices still inside, as well as the chief justice's home. The justices were ordered to sign a "provisional constitutional order" enabling the emergency decree, according to Western diplomats, with the government leaving implicit that any justices failing to do so would be dismissed.

At least 6 of the court's 11 justices gathered in the court and rejected the order, according to an aide to Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry. Aitzaz Ahsan, a prominent lawyer, who led protests against General Musharraf this spring, was detained by the police after saying that opposition groups would announce a schedule on Monday of nationwide strikes and protests.

Before being detained, he accused General Musharraf of "criminal flouting of the Constitution," adding that "the people and the lawyers cannot be suspended."

General Musharraf was expected to speak on national television late on Saturday evening. Pakistani government officials said Friday that emergency rule could be justified because of clashes in the past week between security forces and Islamic militants in the Swat Valley, in the North-West Frontier Province, and because of the increasing number of suicide attacks against military and police installations.

As of 9 p.m., Chief Justice Chaudhry and the other justices had gone to their homes, surrounded by police and with the phone lines cut, witnesses and officials said.

Analysts said the emergency-rule decree in effect was the declaring of martial law, because there were no constitutional provisions allowing for such an order. "This is the imposition of real military rule, because there is no Constitution and Pakistan is being run under provisional constitutional order

issued by Musharraf as the army chief, not as the president of Pakistan,” said Hasan Askari Rizvi, an expert on Pakistani military affairs.

General Musharraf resorted to military power to gain the presidency in October 1999 when he staged a bloodless coup, and Mr. Rizvi said this was a return to those measures. “This is the first time Musharraf has brought in military rule to sustain himself in power,” he said. “He felt threatened by the Supreme Court.”

Mr. Chaudhry has been the focal point of the opposition to General Musharraf since the president fired him from the post last year. Boosted by support from lawyers, judges and a wide public following, Mr. Chaudhry led a street-style political campaign against his summary firing that helped fuel the growing popular sentiment against General Musharraf.

The Supreme Court reinstated Mr. Chaudhry this summer, and in September the Supreme Court ruled in favor of General Musharraf, saying he could run for re-election while still in uniform.

But the focus was again on Mr. Chaudhry this week as the deadline drew closer for a decision on the legality of General Musharraf's re-election on Oct. 6 by the national Parliament and four provincial assemblies.

Rumors were rife in Islamabad, the capital, all week that the court might decide against the president or give a muddled verdict that would leave his position as president unclear.

This evening, several lawyers and journalists said they believed that the opposition leader, Benazir Bhutto, left Pakistan on Thursday for Dubai in the United Arab Emirates after realizing that General Musharraf was planning some form of martial law.

Aides to Ms. Bhutto said she planned to fly back to Pakistan on Wednesday evening, immediately after hearing the emergency declaration was made. Members of her political party condemned the emergency order.

Ms. Bhutto, who returned to Pakistan in mid-October under an arrangement brokered by the United States and Britain, warned the government on Wednesday that she was opposed to emergency rule. “If emergency is imposed, people will come out and resist it,” she said.

She returned to Pakistan on Oct. 18 for the first time in eight years on the understanding that she would take part in elections expected early next year. The Bush administration hoped that Ms. Bhutto would bring a democratic face to Pakistan even as it continued under the rule of General Musharraf, who has pledged to give up his military post after being sworn in for another presidential term on Nov. 15.

Jane Perlez contributed reporting from Lahore, Pakistan, and Helene Cooper from Istanbul.

The New York Times, November 03, 2007

<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/11/03/world/asia/04pakistan.html?ex=1351742400&en=77ea207aa448027d&ei=5088&partner=rssnyt&emc=rss>

SOOMRO TAKES OATH AS INTERIM PM TODAY

Senate Chairman Muhammadmian Soomro will take oath as caretaker prime minister (PM) today (Friday).

President General Pervez Musharraf will administer the oath under the interim Constitutional order, which will be followed by oaths from the interim cabinet, which stands at around 12 to 15 people.

Soomro, 57, a member of Musharraf's ruling Pakistan Muslim League, will be responsible for guiding an interim administration to prepare for elections promised by Musharraf by January 9.

Cabinet consultations: Sources said that President Musharraf met with Soomro and consulted him regarding possible candidates for cabinet positions.

Earlier, the possible candidatures of former State Bank governor Dr Ishrat Hussain, former privatisation minister Hafeez Sheikh, Pakistan's ambassador to the UAE Ahsanullah Khan and his brother Irshadullah Khan, Moeen Afzal and Iftikhar Hussain Shah, were being speculated for the post of caretaker PM, but after careful and intensive consultations, the Senate chairman was deemed the most suitable, reported Online.

Sources said the cabinet would include renowned names such as Senator Nisar Memon as minister of information and broadcasting, Lt Gen (r) Hamid Nawaz as interior minister, Dr Ishrat Hussain as finance minister, Inamul Haq as foreign minister, Syed Afzal Haider as minister for law, Abbas Sarfaraz as minister for Kashmir Affairs and Northern Areas, Saleem Abbas Jilani as minister for defence, former WAPDA chairman Tariq Hameed as minister for water and power and Salman Taseer as minister for information and technology. Besides these, names of Raja Tridev Roy, former secretary Ejaz Rahim, Hameed Darecho and Pir of Taunsa Sharif could also form part of the caretaker cabinet. They would be allocated ministries later.

The name of Justice (r) Ijaz Nisar, a retired chief justice of the Lahore High Court, have also figured in the discussions for a top slot in the Punjab staff report

Daily Times, November 16, 2007

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2007\11\16\story_16-11-2007_pg1_1

ELECTION PROCESS STARTS FROM TODAY

The country will vote for the general elections on January 8, Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Justice (r) Qazi Muhammad Farooq announced on Tuesday.

He said the election process would start today (Wednesday) with the Election Commission (EC) accepting nomination papers from November 21 till November 26. He said elections of both the national and provincial assemblies would occur simultaneously. The scrutiny of nomination papers will last from November 27 till December 3. Appeals against the nominations can be filed till December 7. Decisions on these appeals will be announced by December 14. The candidates will then be allowed to withdraw nominations by December 15 and the final list of candidates will be published on December 16.

Impartial polls: Announcing the date on state television, the CEC said his officials would ensure fair and impartial polls. "I appeal to the participants and the voters to cooperate with the EC in holding the elections peacefully," he said. He asked people to vote without fear and urged women to use their right to vote.

Farooq said international observers were welcome to monitor the election process. "They will be allowed to visit all polling stations," he added. He said the EC would, for the first time, use 430,000 transparent ballot boxes procured through funding from USAID.

Prisoner release: Separately, the EC ordered the release of all political prisoners who want to take part in the elections.

President General Pervez Musharraf issued an ordinance on Oct 19, 2002, making it mandatory for candidates to appear in person before the returning official at the time of filing nomination papers. No exiled leaders, including former premier Nawaz Sharif and Shahbaz Sharif, will be able to contest the coming elections if they do not return home by November 26.

Irfan Ghani, *Daily Times*, November 21, 2007
http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2007\11\21\story_21-11-2007_pg1_4

EC INVITES APPLICATIONS FOR ELECTION SYMBOLS

The Election Commission (EC) of Pakistan has invited applications from the political parties for allocation of symbols for the January 8, 2008 general elections.

The EC, in a press statement, said the applications for allocation of one of the symbols prescribed under Rule 9 of the Representation of the

People (Conduct of Elections) Rules, 1977, signed by the party leader, should reach the EC secretary on or before November 28.

The EC will allocate symbols to the applicants on the December 3. The EC press statement further says that the applications should contain the list of symbols applied for in order of preference, symbol or symbols if any allocated to the political party during the previous general elections. It said every application should be signed by the party leader. Besides address of the head office of the political party, name of party president, secretary-general and other office-bearers of the central executive committee and the numerical strength of its members should also be mentioned in the application. The applicants should also attach a copy of party manifesto and constitution of the party and if the party was represented by a member or members in the National Assembly or a provincial assembly, their names and other particulars should also be provided along with the application.

Every party would also have to mention if it had conducted the intra-party elections as required under Article 12 of the Political Parties Order, 2002. The EC statement says that incomplete applications or requests through fax will not be entertained. All such parties, who have applied prior to this notification, would have to forward fresh applications. staff report

Daily Times, November 21, 2007

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2007\11\21\story_21-11-2007_pg7_45

BOYCOTT OPTION STILL OPEN: BB

Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Chairwoman Benazir Bhutto on Wednesday expressed serious reservations about the transparency of the upcoming general elections and said her party was keeping the option of boycott open.

The former premier expressed her reservations during a series of meetings with the ambassadors of 21 countries, including 18 from Muslim countries.

The foreign envoys met Benazir to discuss the country's political scenario after the formation of a joint committee by the APDM and the ARD to chalk out a charter of demands to ensure transparent polls or to boycott the process.

"Benazir briefed the ambassadors on Pakistan's election history and the various pre-poll and post-poll maneuvers and manipulations that the establishment has used to obtain the results of their choice," sources privy to the meeting told *Daily Times*.

Rigging plans: They said Benazir had also informed the foreign envoys about the 'massive' rigging plan initiated by the government. "She talked about judicial transfers and postings, partial caretaker setup, the Election

Commission, as well as previous chief ministers continuing to enjoy executive powers,” sources said.

She also told the foreign envoys that the PPP was participating in the polls in protest and was keeping the option of boycott open because her party was “being pushed to the wall” by the regime. “We do not want to boycott the election process but at the same time, we want a level playing field for all stakeholders in transparent elections,” she was quoted as saying to US Ambassador Anne W Patterson.

Advocate participation: The sources said that the foreign envoys had advocated that the PPP participate in the polls for a smooth transition to democracy and transfer of power in the country.

According to Online’s sources, the main objective behind the meetings was to create a consensus on a one-point agenda between the government and the opposition parties, regarding the upcoming general elections in the country.

During the meetings, the former premier underlined that the PPP valued Pakistan’s relations with other Islamic countries, adding that during her tenure as premier of Pakistan, she had played a constructive role for the betterment of Islamic Ummah.

During her talk with the US envoy, Benazir emphasised that the plague of terrorism could not be countered without the restoration of democracy. Online reported that Benazir said that following the finalising of the charter of demands, “the ball will be in Musharraf’s court. If he fails to meet our demands, then we can go for other options including boycotting the elections”.

Meanwhile, a press release issued by the PPP Media Centre stated that Benazir had met several ambassadors from a number of countries at her residence in Islamabad and had exchanged views on matters of common interest.

She first met the ambassadors of 18 Arab countries, who called on her at her house. These included ambassadors from Saudi Arabia, Oman, Syria, Egypt, Jordan, Bahrain, Morocco, Iraq, Sudan, Algeria, Lebanon, Qatar and Yemen. Later, British High Commissioner Robert Edward Brinkley and Spanish ambassador Jose Maria Robles Graga also called on her separately.

Benazir met the US ambassador in Islamabad at the ambassador’s residence, the release added.

1,444 CANDIDATES FROM BALOCHISTAN TO CONTEST POLLS

As many as 1,372 candidates from Balochistan will be contesting for 82 seats of the national and provincial assemblies after the acceptance of their nomination papers by the provincial office of Election Commission (EC) of Pakistan, while another 72 candidates' nomination papers have been accepted for the seats reserved for women and minorities.

Besides Zubaida Jalal – who served as a federal minister for eight consecutive years – the other 16 women who will contest for three reserved seats for women in the National Assembly (NA) include Dr Noor Jahan Panezai, Faryal Hussain Khan, Samina Khan, Rehana Bibi, Yasmin Bibi, Nazish Ayaz, Spozmai Achakzai, Sarita Devi, Farah Azeem Shah, Bibi Zuhra, Neelam Zalaand, Farhana Nawaz, Bilquees Saif, Asiya Nasir and Aliya Kamran.

The 35 women whose papers are excepted for the 11 reserved seats in the Balochistan Assembly (BA) include Samia Baloch, Rahila Hameed Khan Durrani, Sobia Kiran Kibzai, Nuzhat Iftikhar, Shama Parveen Magsi, Rubina Irfan, Jamila Sultana, Dr Fozia Nazeer Marri, Bibi Zarina, Samina Khan, Dr Shama Ishaque, Samina Raziq, Shazia Naz, Dr Ruqayya Saeed Hashmi, Rukhsana Gul Kakar, Uzma Ahad, Rehana Bibi, Zeenat Baloch, Yasmin Bibi, Nazish Ayaz, Fareeda Kakar, Salima Panezai, Halima Changezi, Spozmai Achakzai, Ghazala Gola Begum, Saba Raisani, Professor Naela Quadri, Samina Saeed, Shabana Anjum, Rukhsana Tariq, Shahida Rauf, Azra Syed, Rabia Ambar Adnan and Hafza Qazi.

The 308 people contesting the elections for 14 NA seats hail from the following constituencies:

NA-259, Quetta (35 people have had their nomination papers approved here); NA-260, Quetta-cum-Chagai-cum-Nushki (28); NA-261, Pishin-cum-Ziarat (24), NA-262, Qila Abdullah (16); NA-263, Loralai-cum-Musakhel-cum-Barkhan (23); NA-264, Zhob-cum-Sherani-cum-Qila Saifullah (19); NA-265, Sibi-cum-Kohlu-cum-Dera Bugti-cum-Hernai (12); NA-266, Nasirabad-cum-Jaffarabad (30); NA-267, Bolan-cum-Jhal Magsi (9); NA-268, Kalat-cum-Mastung (21); NA-269, Khuzdar (25); NA-270, Awaran-cum-Lasbela (15); NA-271, Kharan-cum-Washuk-cum-Panjgur (25); NA-272 and Kech-cum-Gwadar (26). The numbers of nomination papers filed in 51 constituencies of Balochistan are as follows, PB-1, Quetta-I (33); PB-2, Quetta-II (22); PB-3, Quetta-III (21); PB-4, Quetta-IV (38); PB-5, Quetta-V (42); PB-6, Quetta-VI (51); PB-7, Ziarat (17); PB-8, Pishin-I (23); PB-9, Pishin-II (21); PB-10, Pishin-III (31); PB-11, Qila Abdullah-I (15); PB-12, Qila Abdullah-II (6); PB-13, Qila Abdullah-III (9); PB-14, Loralai-I (15); PB-15, Musakhel (19); PB-16, Loralai-II (24); PB-17, Barkhan (11); PB-18, Sherani-

cum-Zhob (19); PB-19, Zhob (20); PB-20, Qila Saifullah (28); PB-21, Sibi (16); PB-22, Harnai-cum-Sibi (18); PB-23, Kohlu (14); PB-24, Dera Bugti (4); PB-25, Jaffarabad-I.(21); PB-26, Jaffarabad-II (34); PB-27, Jaffarabad-III (26); PB-28, Nasirabad-I (38); PB-29, Nasirabad-II (32); PB-30, Bolan-I (17); PB-31, Bolan-II (7); PB-32, Jhal Magsi (11); PB-33, Khuzdar-I (15); PB-34, Khuzdar-II (37); PB-35, Khuzdar-III (19); PB-36, Kalat-I (21); PB-37, Kalat-II (22); PB-38, Mastung-cum-Quetta (20); PB-39, Chagai-I (13); PB-40, Nushki (17); PB-41, Awaran (10); PB-42, Panjgur-I (15); PB-43, Panjgur-II (11); PB-44, Lasbela-I (8); PB-45, Lasbela-II (13); PB-46, Kharan (22); PB-47, Washuk (21); PB-48, Kech-I (26); PB-49, Kech-II (23); PB-50, Kech-III (21) and PB-51-Gwadar (27).

Twenty-one non-Muslims have been given the green signal to run for three reserved seats for minorities in the BA. malik siraj akbar.

Daily Times, December 06, 2007

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2007\12\06\story_6-12-2007_pg7_19

46 PARTIES ALLOTTED ELECTION SYMBOLS

The Election Commission (EC) on Sunday allotted symbols to 46 political parties for the January 8 election.

Major political parties — such as the Pakistan Muslim League (PML-Q), the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), the Pakistan Muslim League-Functional (PML-F) and the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) — received the 'bicycle', the 'arrow', the 'tiger', the 'flower' and the 'kite', respectively.

The Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal Pakistan (MMAP) was allotted the 'book' as a symbol after a heated debate.

The symbols were allotted during a meeting chaired by Chief Election Commissioner Qazi Muhammad Farooq. EC members Justice Nasim Sikandar and Justice Ahmed Khan Lashari, and representatives of over 43 political parties attended the meeting.

The EC allotted symbols under Section 21 of the Representation of the People Act, 1976, read with Rule 9 of the Representation of the People (Conduct of Election) Rules, 1977 and also Allocation of Symbols Order, 2002.

A total of 54 political parties had applied for symbols. The applications of 12 parties were rejected for being incomplete. Eighteen parties and alliances were allotted the same symbols as in the 2002 polls, while seven parties had applied for the symbol of the 'moon', which was finally awarded to the Hazara Democratic Party after a draw.

The remaining parties which were allotted symbols include the Awami National Party (lantern), the Pakistan People's Party-Sherpao (lamp), the

Pakistan Muslim Alliance (fish), the Pakistan Ghareeb Party (chair), the Pakistan Ittehad-e-Tehreek (butterfly), the Pakhtoonkhawa Milli Awami Party (tree), the National People's Party (tractor), the Pakistan Aman Party (dove), the Pakistan Qaumi League (knife), the Sindh United Party (car), the Pasban party (horse), the Bedar Pakistan party (ship), the Pakistan Citizens Movement (tower), the Sunni Tehreek party (table lamp), the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Inqelab (star), the Pakistan Bachao Party (pen), the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (ladder), the Pakistan Awami Party (bulb), the Tehreek-e-Istiqlal (sickle), the National Muslim League Mohasba (eagle), the Mohajir Kashmir Movement (candle), the Pakistan Labour Party (apple), the Tameer-e-Pakistan Party (hammer), the Tehreek-e-Istiqlal Rehmat-Khan Wardag (helicopter), the Awami Himayat Tehreek Pakistan (hockey), the Jamaat-e-Ahl Hadith Pakistan-Elahi Zaheer (revolver), the Pakistan Qaumi League (key), the Bedar Party (airplane), the Pakistan Social Justice Party (map), the Pakistan Qaumi Party (turban), the Azad Pakistan Party (cow), the Pakistan Muhafiz Party (peacock), the National Party (saw), the Markazi Jamiat Ulema Pakistan-FK (cap), the Balochistan National Party (axe), the Pakistan Brohi Party (slingshot) and the Roshan Pakistan Party (bat).

'Book' allotted to MMA: Earlier, the EC had not released the final notification of allotting the 'book' symbol to the MMA, after the ANP, the PPP and the PkMAP raised objections that the symbol had been misused during the 2002 polls as the holy Quran to exploit the religious emotions of the voters, reported APP.

"They described the book symbol as the holy Quran and sought votes in the name of the holy Book," PPP MNA candidate from Rawalpindi, Amir Fida Piracha, objected during the process of symbols' allocation.

PkMAP Senator Raza Muhammad Raza also raised an objection, which was seconded by the ANP representative, demanding that the 'book' not be considered as a symbol for the MMA.

Symbols for the remaining parties were issued during the day and the decision to allocate the symbol of the 'book' to the MMA was announced when the EC issued the final list of the political parties who were given symbols. The EC, in its notification, said that if the MMA decided to boycott the polls, then the 'book' symbol would be allocated to the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl. It said, in that eventuality, the JUI-F head would issue certificates with regard to the symbol in question to the contesting candidates.

Similarly, when the EC accepted the PML-Q's request for the 'bicycle' symbol, the PML-N and the PML-F raised the objection that it should not be called the Pakistan Muslim League, as the party had contested the 2002 elections as the PML (Quaid-e-Azam). "It was allotted the symbol in the 2002 elections under the name of the Pakistan Muslim League (Quaid-e-Azam or Q). Writing it as Pakistan Muslim League would be confusing and damage the cause of the other PML factions," said Syed Zafar Ali Shah.

The PML-Q representative contested that the party has been registered with the EC as Pakistan Muslim League. The CEC observed that the name of the party as written on the symbols list is the same as the name the party is registered under.

The EC, however, did not allot any election symbols to four political parties. According to Online, the Jamhoori Watan Party, the Qaumi Mohaz Pakistan party, the Pakistan Muslim League-Qasim, and the Qaumi Mohaz Party were not awarded any symbols because their papers were incomplete.

With the allocation of the symbols, the EC has completed the third phase after filing of nomination papers and their scrutiny. The process of hearing the appeals by the tribunals against acceptance or rejection of nomination continues and would be completed by December 14. December 15 is the date for withdrawal of candidature with EC issuing the final list of the candidates on December 16, which would lead to a fully fledged election campaign till the day of polling on January 08, 2008. staff report/agencies.

Daily Times, December 10, 2007

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2007\12\10\story_10-12-2007_pg7_1

COALITION WITH N POSSIBLE BUT NOT WITH Q: BENAZIR

Former prime minister Benazir Bhutto expects the Pakistan People's Party to pick up additional seats in the January elections, but will have to enter into a coalition to create a ruling majority, Reuters quoted The Washington Times as reporting on Wednesday.

Benazir said coalition with the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz would be possible, but ruled out an alliance with those controlled by President Pervez Musharraf or Muslim clerics, the newspaper reported.

"No one will accept a Q victory," she said, referring to Musharraf's wing of the Pakistan Muslim League.

"He has no support in the country. They [Musharraf and allies] must ask the police, utilities and hospital staff to come to rallies," Online reported Benazir as telling the newspaper amid a campaign appearance in Mardan.

This was Benazir's first interview since the Election Commission struck down challenges to her candidacy on Monday. She expressed satisfaction - but not surprise - that the commission cleared away the last obstacle to her returning for office. "I have not been convicted of any crime," she said, rejecting all accusations against her and her family as being "politically motivated".

Musharraf said he was ready to cooperate with any party.

"I would like to try to work with anyone who comes to power after the elections," Reuters quoted him as telling Al Jazeera.

Illegal support: Benazir said the only way the president's party would pick up votes is with illegal support from government officials, and repeated frequent demand that the elections be carefully supervised, The Washington Times reported.

The newspaper said Benazir stressed that both her party and the PML-N remain sceptical that the January 8 balloting will be free and fair. "It takes more than the lifting of the emergency," she said. Agencies.

Daily Times, December 13, 2007
http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2007\12\13\story_13-12-2007_pg1_1

JUI-S ANNOUNCES POLLS BOYCOTT

Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Sami (JUI-S) on Friday announced to boycott the January 8 elections.

"We have decided to boycott the Jan 8 elections because we believe that in the absence of an independent judiciary and election commission one can't even imagine free and fair elections," said JUI-S chief Maulana Samiul Haq at a press conference here at Parliament House.

Sami said he had taken the decision after consulting his party. He accused that Pakistan People's Party, Pakistan Muslim League (N), Pakistan Muslim League, Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), Awami National Party (ANP) and Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) were following the secular agenda of President Pervez Musharraf. He said the breakup of MMA and Nawaz Sharif's U-turn on elections boycott showed that international powers were pursuing a hidden agenda in Pakistan.

Referring to a statement of US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice that the US would prefer organizing moderates to extremists, Sami said it clearly showed that elections were being held on US directions. Answering a question, Sami said he was ready to join any opposition alliance including the All Parties Democratic Movement (APDM), which was struggling for restoration of the Constitution and democracy in the country.

Daily Times, December 15, 2007
http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2007\12\15\story_15-12-2007_pg7_15

AROUND 127 JI CANDIDATES TO WITHDRAW NOMINATIONS TODAY

Following the directives of Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Chief Qazi Hussain Ahmad, around 127 party candidates from the provincial and tribal areas will withdraw their nomination papers today (Saturday).

Around 80 party candidates for the NWFP Assembly, 35 for the National Assembly, and 12 JI contenders from FATA for the National Assembly will withdraw their papers across the frontier province. Similarly, dozens of Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf (PTI) candidates and Frontier lawyers will withdraw their nomination papers submitted for national and provincial assemblies.

“JI Ameer Qazi Hussain Ahmad has directed all JI candidates across the country to withdraw their nomination papers at 10 am on Saturday,”

WFP JI Naib Ameer Mushtaq Ahmad Khan said. “I am on the way to Swabi to withdraw my nomination papers filed for PF-32 and NA-12,” Mushtaq told Daily Times.

JI Provincial General Secretary and former MNA Shabir Ahmad Khan will lead the JI candidates’ procession from the party office at Nishtar Abad to the lower courts, from where the candidates will approach the concerned returning officers to withdraw their nominations.

“Yes, we will stage protests on the premises of the returning officers’ courts in all districts of the province to boycott the unlawful January elections,” Shabir Ahmad Khan, a JI-candidate from NA-1, told Daily Times.

Following Imran Khan’s directives, PTI candidates across the NWFP will also withdraw their candidature for the national and provincial assembly seats.

PTI’s Advocate Mohammad Arshad, a candidate for PF-10, Peshawar, told Daily Times that all PTI candidates would withdraw their nomination papers across the province today to boycott the general elections as a protest.

Similarly, dozens of NWFP lawyers, who were planning to contest from opposition parties, will withdraw their nomination papers in protest against “President Pervaiz Musharraf’s extra-constitutional acts: removing judges, appointing new judges under the PCO, and declaring a state of emergency.”

Daily Times, December 15, 2007

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2007\12\15\story_15-12-2007_pg7_17

EMERGENCY GOES, CONSTITUTION RETURNS

President Pervez Musharraf lifted the state of emergency on Saturday, revoked the Provisional Constitution Order (PCO) and restored the 1973 Constitution with certain amendments that will be ratified by the next parliament through a legal framework order (LFO).

The removal of the PCO restored all the fundamental rights that had been suspended since the imposition of emergency 42 days ago.

The president issued three presidential orders — the Revocation of Proclamation of Emergency Order 2007, the Repeal of Provisional Constitution Order and the Revival of Constitution Order — which stated that the constitution, as amended through the Constitution (Amendment) Order, 2007, and the Constitution (Second Amendment) Order, 2007, will stand revived..

Nothing suspended: “The (1973) Constitution stands amended and nothing remains in suspension,” Attorney General (AG) Malik Qayyum told Daily Times when asked if any of the articles of the constitution were still suspended, even after the revocation of the PCO. During the 42-day suspension of the constitution, the president made several amendments that were all inculcated in the amended constitution. Qayyum claimed that none of these amendments needed parliament’s ratification. President Musharraf made amendments to the constitution on November 21 to provide legal cover to holding the constitution in abeyance, imposing emergency rule and issuing the PCO.

Saved the nation: Later, addressing the nation on radio and television, President Pervez Musharraf said that his emergency rule had saved Pakistan, as he vowed to hold free, fair and transparent elections on time and urged the political parties and the nation to avoid the politics of agitation.

Free and transparent: “It is my commitment to the entire nation and the world that the election on January 8 will be on time and will be absolutely free and transparent, he said. He regretted that some political parties have announced boycott of the election. “These political parties have no reason to boycott the election,” he said. He said some political leaders had started to talk of rigging even before the start of the election campaign. “This is all baseless and they must desist from it,” he added. He said the government would invite any number of foreign observers to come and watch the fairness of the polls.

He appealed to all the political parties to maintain peace during the election, and urged the nation not to participate in any street agitation. He also appealed to the nation to fully participate in the election.

The president said that those who lose the January 8 polls must avoid levelling baseless allegations. Referring to his decision to impose emergency and the PCO, he said he was very saddened that the smooth transition to

civilian democracy, underway in three stages from 1999, was obstructed through a conspiracy. He said the conspiracy was meant to destabilise the country.

Relief package: He said it was the first time in the country's history that emergency was being lifted after only 42 days. He said there has been considerable improvement in the past 42 days, adding that terrorism that had spread into NWFP had now been stopped. He also announced that a relief package would soon be announced for the people of Swat. He said now there was complete harmony among the three pillars of the state — the judiciary, the parliament and the executive.

Daily Times, December 16, 2007,
http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2007\12\16\story_16-12-2007_pg1_1

AITZAZ WITHDRAWS NOMINATION PAPERS

Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) President Chaudhry Aitzaz Ahsan on Saturday withdrew his nomination papers for NA-124 to protest the non-restoration of the sacked superior judiciary. Aitzaz's associate Advocate Shaukat Ali Javed and wife Bushra Aitzaz withdrew his papers as he is presently in jail. "Aitzaz has always preferred a collective cause over personal benefits," Bushra said to a query on election boycott viz-a-viz the Pakistan People's Party's stance, while talking to reporters at Aiwan-e-Adal courts. Separately in Rawalpindi, senior advocate Ali Ahmed Kurd withdrew his nomination papers filed for two NA constituencies, NA-55 and NA-56, in Rawalpindi, APP reported. Two other lawyers, Tariq Mehmood and Wasif Ali, also withdrew their papers. staff report/app

Daily Times, December 16, 2007,
http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2007\12\16\story_16-12-2007_pg7_2

NAHEED KHAN WITHDRAWS PAPERS

Political Secretary and close aide of PPP Chairwoman Benazir Bhutto Naheed Khan has withdrawn her nomination papers for the women's reserved seats in the elections in protest against the issuance of a party ticket to Farah Naz Isphahani, wife of Hussain Haqqani, it is learnt. "Naheed Khan has withdrawn her papers citing personal grounds, but in fact she withdrew her nomination in protest against the issuance of a ticket to Farah Naz Isphahani," a senior PPP member told *Daily Times* on Sunday. It is learnt that the PPP firebrand woman leader was upset over the party's decision to award a ticket to Isphani.

I cannot sit with Ispahani in the parliament. I cannot bear this insult,” Naheed Khan was quoted as saying by the party member. The former MNA is known for giving tough time to the government in the National Assembly. Her husband, Safdar Abbasi, is also a member of the Upper House of the Parliament. Asked how Haqqani managed to arrange a party ticket for his wife, the sources said that Haqqani had developed great rapport with Asif Ali Zardari. “Haqqani has been hosting and facilitating senior party leaders during their visits to the US.” PPP’s spokesman Farhatullah Babar said Naheed Khan had withdrawn her papers due to party commitments. “I will remain committed to my party and leadership in any circumstances,” Babar quoted Ms Khan as saying. zulfiqar ghuman.

Daily Times, December 17, 2007

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2007\12\17\story_17-12-2007_pg7_3

PARTY MEN CONTINUE TO QUIT PML-Q

The Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q) candidates for the national and Sindh assemblies continue to refuse to contest the general elections on the party ticket.

For example, Ghulam Sarwar Sarki (candidate for NA-210 Kandhkot, Kashmore) announced that he was quitting the PML-Q and was instead contesting the elections from the platform of another group, the Kandhkot-Kashmore Awami Ittehad.

In Kambar-Shahdaddock district, Sultan Khuhawar, who was an advisor to the former chief minister of the PML-Q, made a similar announcement. He would stand as an independent candidate from the same constituency, PS-40. The PML-Q gave his ticket to Abdul Waheed Brohi.

In Tando Mohammad Khan, the PML-Q candidate on NA-234, Zakir Hussain Mari, quit to join the rival Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N). In Naushehro Feroz, PS-21’s Syed Manzoor Hussain Shah gave the PML-Q its ticket back and decided to join hands with the National Peoples Party (NPP). “Syed Manzoor Hussain Shah was with Ghulam Murtaza Jatoi today to submit his NPP ticket with the DRO,” the NPP’s Naeemur Rehman told Daily Times. For its part, the PML-Q has scoffed at the importance of these changes.

“It is not a big issue that our candidate is contesting from another platform,” the PML-Q’s Nadir Akmal Leghari told Daily Times. qazi asif

Daily Times, December 17, 2007

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2007\12\17\story_17-12-2007_pg7_11

JUI-F IN A TIGHT CORNER DUE TO JI'S ELECTION BOYCOTT

The withdrawal of nomination papers by Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) candidates has put the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F), its erstwhile ally in the NWFP government, in a fix with regard to the covering of all seats vacated by the former in the province. A total of 31 JI candidates had filed nomination papers for the National Assembly from NWFP while another 83 had done so for the provincial assembly. However, all of them withdrew their candidature as part of the poll boycott decision by the party leadership on Saturday. The JUI-F, which had fielded a maximum number of candidates for the national and provincial assembly seats from NWFP, is now facing problems in preparing all its nominees for a tough contest. daud khattak.

Daily Times, December 17, 2007,
http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2007\12\17\story_17-12-2007_pg7_42

PML-N FORMS BODY FOR SEAT ADJUSTMENT WITH PPP

Ruling out any alliance with the Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q), PML-Nawaz (PML-N) President Shahbaz Sharif on Monday said that a committee has been set up for seat-to-seat adjustments with the Pakistan People's Party (PPP).

Talking to reporters in Lahore, the PML-N president said that the committee would review the situation, and that the PML-N would support PPP candidates where they had a shot at winning, and vice-versa.

He said the PML-Q was a "dead party" and it had caused immense losses to the country, so there was no chance of a political alliance with it. He said that the PML-N had decided to participate in the upcoming general elections to save the country, not merely to come into power.

Meanwhile, PML-N chief Nawaz Sharif said that he would not compromise with the abrogators of the constitution, adding that the PML-N would remove them from power by contesting the upcoming elections.

Addressing public meetings at Chichawatni, Kasowal and Iqbal Nagar on Sunday, he said the doctrine of necessity had weakened the country. Had a stand been taken in 1960, the situation would be much different today, he added. He said the courts should have announced decisions according to law and the constitution rather than the doctrine of necessity to ensure that no dictator would dare dissolve the assemblies and abrogate the constitution. He regretted that the father of the nuclear programme, Dr Abdul Qadeer Khan, had been detained and tortured, reported Online.

The army is meant to defend the geographical borders of the country, he said, adding that it should not indulge in politics. “We will eliminate the role of generals from the political scene once and for all,” he said.

‘Under protest’: Nawaz claimed that President Pervez Musharraf had wanted the PML-N to boycott the elections, but “we are contesting elections under protest”. “My nomination papers and those of Shahbaz Sharif were rejected under a conspiracy,” he alleged.

Addressing rallies in Multan and Khanewal on Monday, he said that if voted to power his party would end the price hike. He said January 8 was actually a day of referendum and asked the people to vote for the restoration of the judiciary, reported APP. He urged the people to vote for PML-N candidates for the prosperity of the country. Agencies.

Daily Times, December 18, 2007,

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2007\12\18\story_18-12-2007_pg1_1

FORMER PM WARNS OF ANARCHY IF POLLS ARE NOT FAIR: PPP TO EMERGE FIRST IN POLLS, PML-N SECOND, SAYS BB

PPP chairwoman slams Musharraf for rise of extremism

Former premier Benazir Bhutto said on Monday that her Pakistan People’s Party (PPP) would emerge victorious in the January 8 general elections, while the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) would be second.

Addressing a public meeting in Hyderabad, she said that the PPP struggled to get former chief justice of Pakistan Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry restored when he had been suspended after a presidential reference against him.

“We hoped that Iftikhar would stop the presidential polls, but there might be some pressures on him for not doing that,” she said.

Anarchy: Benazir warned that extremism would spread unless the Jan 8 elections were fair, and that a rigged vote in favor of Musharraf could pitch Pakistan into “anarchy”, AP reported.

Musharraf slammed: Separately, Benazir in an interview published on Monday accused President Pervez Musharraf of presiding over a resurgence extremism and mismanaging a demoralised military, AFP reported.

“He’s got to answer this, because as far as I’m concerned, some of the people around him have sympathy for militants,” she said in an interview published in *The Washington Post* and *Newsweek*.

“Let’s not forget, when the Taliban came down from Tora Bora they were on the run — they were absolutely broken. But they have reorganised.

They could not do that unless there is some support from the government or intelligence,” she said..

Benazir added that she was “shocked” by the “embedded” support for extremists throughout the country. “People are scared to talk. They say I am polarising when I say militancy is a problem. A town calls for reinforcements but they are not sent in time. So the town falls,” she said. She said the military had been powerless to counter such incursions. “The army is being targeted and losing men and is getting demoralised because the public is not with them.” About the Jan 8 elections, Benazir said that she was worried that the elections would be rigged in favor of the Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid, Washington Post quoted her as saying.

“There are 148 seats in Punjab, the government has been told to give 108 seats [to the PML-Q]. That means we’ll only be fighting over 40 seats,” she said. She said the PML-Q was going to lose badly if the judiciary and the police refused to rig the polls or if the observers could mitigate against the rigging.

She said if the opposition could get election observers to ensure that the ballots didn’t get siphoned off then it would be a huge setback to the government’s rigging plans.

She said that the PPP would not buy into a situation where the PML-Q won the polls and prime minister was taken from the PPP.

About former premier Nawaz Sharif, she said he was playing a very positive role by running in the polls. Benazir doubted that Musharraf would restore sacked judges, adding that the government’s claim to hold the elections did not look good when the chief justice had been suspended. To a question about whether her government would be able to control the military, she said the military came under the president at the moment so that would depend on the level of cooperation the president was willing to extend in this regard. To a similar question about the tribal areas, she said, “The tribal areas are living in the medieval age. We think there should be reform of the madrassas. ...If we bring the modern age into this backward area, we can co-opt the local people in confronting the forces of terrorism.” agencies/daily times monitor /staff report.

Daily Times, December 18, 2007

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2007\12\18\story_18-12-2007_pg7_1

7,335 CANDIDATES UP FOR JANUARY 8 ELECTIONS

A total of 7,335 candidates are running for the January 8 elections – 2,252 for 272 general seats of the National Assembly and 5,083 for 577 general seats of provincial assemblies.

The Election Commission (EC) compiled final list of candidates on Monday after district returning officers finalized 1,003 candidates for 148 NA seats in the Punjab and 34 candidates for two NA seats in Islamabad.

In Sindh province, 627 candidates will contest for 61 NA seats; in North West Frontier Province (NWFP), 262 candidates will contest for 35 NA seats; in FATA, 183 candidates will contest for 12 NA seats and 143 will contest for 14 NA seats in Balochistan.

Punjab Assembly has 371 seats - 297 general, 66 reserved for women and eight for minorities. A total of 2,311 candidates are running for these seats. For 130 general seats in the Sindh Assembly, 1,468 candidates are in the field. According to Provincial Election Commission, 36 candidates in Sindh are contesting for 14 NA seats reserved for women. Thirty-one candidates are running for nine minorities' seats and 83 for 29 women's seats in the Sindh Assembly.

Seven hundred and sixty-three candidates are running for 99 general seats in NWFP Assembly, while 541 candidates will fight for 51 general seats in Balochistan Assembly. The printing of over 150 million ballot papers also started on Monday and will complete by January 5. EC sources told Daily Times the forms containing names of candidates and their election symbols had been sent to five sections of the Pakistan Printing Corporation.

They said names of the candidates would be printed on ballot papers alphabetically along with their respective election symbols. Transparent ballot boxes have already been in the custody of provincial election commissioners, deputy election commissioners and assistant election commissioners. The EC will use USAID-sponsored 430,000 transparent ballot boxes.

Daily Times, December 18, 2007

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2007\12\18\story_18-12-2007_pg7_11

PPP, PML-N COMPLETE ADJUSTMENT ON 25 SEATS

People's Party and Pakistan Muslim League-N have completed seat adjustment in 25 constituencies.

Pakistan Muslim League had won previous general elections in October 2002 and both the PPP and PML-N could not succeed to secure majority despite tall claims.

Both the parties had contested last elections in the absence of their leadership as Benazir Bhutto was in self exile while Mian Nawaz Sharif had left country after a pact with the government in 2000.

The sources said that both former rivals and prime ministers Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif this time seem to be serious enough to join hands for securing majority with each other's support.

“Benazir Bhutto has offered Nawaz Sharif for seat adjustment on various constituencies, especially in Punjab and the PML-N leader has conveyed BB a positive response,” the sources added.

PPP leader Makhdoom Amin Faheem and PML-N leader Senator Ishaq Dar are playing active role to create consensus for seat adjustment, sources said.

Pakistan Observer, December 19, 2006

<http://pakobserver.net/200712/19/news/topstories12.asp>

BENAZIR BHUTTO KILLED IN ATTACK

Pakistani former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has been assassinated in a suicide attack.

Ms Bhutto - the first woman PM in an Islamic state - was leaving an election rally in Rawalpindi when a gunman shot her in the neck and set off a bomb.

At least 20 other people died in the attack and several more were injured.

President Pervez Musharraf has urged people to remain calm but angry protests have gripped some cities, with at least 11 deaths reported.

Security forces have been placed on a state of "red alert" nationwide.

There were no immediate claims of responsibility for the attack. Analysts believe Islamist militants to be the most likely group behind it.

Ms Bhutto, leader of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), had served as prime minister from 1988-1990 and 1993-1996, and had been campaigning ahead of elections due on 8 January.

It was the second suicide attack against her in recent months and came amid a wave of bombings targeting security and government officials.

Nawaz Sharif, also a former prime minister and a political rival, announced his Muslim League party would boycott the elections.

He called on President Musharraf to resign, saying free and fair elections were not possible under his rule.

The United Nations Security Council held an emergency session and later said it "unanimously condemned" the assassination.

Ms Bhutto's coffin was removed from hospital in Rawalpindi and has now arrived by plane in Sukkur in Sindh province for burial in her home town, Larkana.

Her husband, Asif Ali Zardari, has arrived in Pakistan from Dubai to escort the coffin to its final resting-place.

The attack occurred close to an entrance gate of the city park where Ms Bhutto had been speaking.

Police confirmed reports Ms Bhutto had been shot in the neck and chest before the gunman blew himself up.

She died at 1816 (1316 GMT), said Wasif Ali Khan, a member of the PPP who was at hospital.

Some supporters at the hospital wept while others broke into anger, throwing stones at cars and breaking windows.

Protests erupted in other cities as news of the assassination spread, with reports of 11 deaths in the PPP's heartland province of Sindh, including four in provincial capital, Karachi.

More than 100 cars were burned in Karachi, while cars and a train were reportedly set on fire in Hyderabad.

In other violence:

- Police in Peshawar, in the north-west, used batons and tear gas to break up a rally by protesters chanting anti-Musharraf slogans
- One man was killed in a "shoot-out" between police and protesters in Tando Allahyar, the mayor said
- Unrest was also reported in Quetta, Multan and Shikarpur
- 'Security lapse'
- Mr Musharraf has announced three days of national mourning. All schools, colleges, universities, banks and government offices will remain closed.

Mr Sharif said there had been a "serious lapse in security" by the government.

Earlier on Thursday, at least four people were killed ahead of an election rally Mr Sharif had been preparing to attend close to Rawalpindi.

Ms Bhutto's death has plunged the PPP into confusion and raises questions about whether January elections will go ahead as planned, the BBC's Barbara Plett in Islamabad says.

The killing was condemned by India, the US, the UK and others.

US President George W Bush telephoned Mr Musharraf for what the White House would only describe as a "brief" conversation on the situation.

Ms Bhutto returned from self-imposed exile in October after years out of Pakistan where she had faced corruption charges.

Her return was the result of a power-sharing agreement with President Musharraf.

He had granted an amnesty that covered the court cases she was facing.

But relations with Mr Musharraf soon broke down.

On the day of her arrival, she had led a motor cavalcade through the city of Karachi.

It was hit by a double suicide attack that left some 130 dead.

Rawalpindi, the nerve centre of Pakistan's military, is seen as one of the country's most secure cities.

Many analysts say attacks like those on Thursday show the creeping "Talebanisation" of Pakistan.

Radical Muslims calling for Islamic law, and fiercely opposed to the US, have become increasingly active in Pakistani politics in recent years, analysts say.

BBC News, December 27, 2007

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/7161590.stm

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN PAKISTAN POSTPONED TO NEXT MONTH

Pakistani officials say elections will be delayed until February because it is impossible to hold next week's parliamentary vote on time. Election Commission Secretary-General Kanwar Dilshad told reporters Tuesday that a new date will be announced Wednesday, following talks with political parties. VOA's Nancy-Amelia Collins reports from Islamabad.

The secretary-general of the election commission, Kunwar Dilshad, told reporters in Islamabad Tuesday the date for the elections will be decided after talks with political parties.

"Election commission of Pakistan has decided that, in the first stance, the political parties may be consulted, may be, may be consulted," said Dilshad. "So, after the consultation with the political parties, the date of the poll will be decided."

Dilshad said it looked impossible to hold elections as originally scheduled on January 8. He said the new date would be announced on Wednesday.

Opposition parties want the elections held as scheduled next week. But officials from the ruling Pakistan Muslim-Q party say the polls may be delayed for several months because of unrest following the assassination of opposition leader Benazir Bhutto last week.

Sherry Rehman, the spokeswoman of Ms. Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party says the government should allow the elections to take place as planned.

"The party has very clearly stated its position, we would like the elections to be held on time," she said. "The PPP being the most affected party by this assassination - if it is able to go into election and fight for the kind of political participation that Ms. Bhutto gave her life for, then I think the government of Pakistan should have no problem."

Former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, who heads a large opposition party, has threatened to take his supporters to the streets if the elections are delayed.

Election commission officials say a delay is likely because many of their offices were burned and voter rolls destroyed in riots that broke out after the assassination.

U.S. officials say a slight delay in the election date would be acceptable, if all the political parties agree and if there is a definite date for the elections.

The death of former Prime Minister Bhutto has worsened the turmoil in Pakistan, which has been wracked for nearly a year by political disputes and a growing insurgency by Islamic militants. President Pervez Musharraf has become widely unpopular, after firing a Supreme Court justice early in 2007 and then imposing emergency rule and media censorship a few months ago.

The elections are seen as key to restoring political calm and establishing democratic rule.

Voice of America, January 01 2008

<http://www.voanews.com/english/archive/2008-01/2008-01-01-voa5.cfm?cfid=278704005&cftoken=80318878>

US PUSHING PAKISTAN TO FIX DISTORTIONS BEFORE POLLS

A senior Bush administration official said on Tuesday that the United States is pushing Pakistan to fix “serious distortions” ahead of Feb 18 parliamentary elections.

Richard Boucher, the assistant secretary of state for South Asia, conceded that “if history is any guide”, some fraud will occur. But, he told a House of Representatives panel, a vibrant, though still restricted, media and international observers, including US officials, will help curb cheating.

Lawmakers at the hearing criticised the Bush administration for its steadfast support of President Pervez Musharraf as “indispensable”, despite his suspension of the constitution and declaration of emergency rule last year, his purge of the judiciary and the arrests of thousands of opponents.

Boucher acknowledged “some serious distortions left on the process of the elections, with some things that still need to be corrected”. He said the United States is doing everything it can to ensure a fair election, including preparing teams from the US embassy to monitor major races around the country. Close scrutiny, he said, will encourage better behavior.

US lawmakers expressed worry on Tuesday that fraudulent elections could spark the kind of violence seen in Kenya, where fighting after a disputed Dec 27 presidential vote has left hundreds dead.

“The potential for a flawed election to destabilise Pakistan is a real one,” Democratic Rep Betty McCollum said. Lawmakers also suggested the Bush administration was not pushing Musharraf strongly enough to restore an independent judiciary. Boucher said that because of intense political

disagreements over the judiciary, the situation probably would not be dealt with by Pakistani officials until after the elections.

The News, January 30, 2008
http://www.thenews.com.pk/top_story_detail.asp?Id=12605

PML-Q ISSUES 'WHITE PAPER' AGAINST NAWAZ

The PML-Q dusted off old allegations against the PML-N and prepared a white paper tracing back Nawaz Sharif's 'misdeeds' from the days when he first became provincial finance minister then chief minister and finally the prime minister of Pakistan.

At a press conference here, Senators Muhammad Ali Durrani and Kamil Ali Agha asked Nawaz Sharif to answer 22 allegations of corruption and nepotism which they alleged cost the nation billions of rupees.

Detailing the allegations, Mr Durrani said Mian Nawaz Sharif, during his tenure as Punjab chief minister (1988-90), deprived the provincial departments of Rs 15.35 billion, which included Rs 470 million of agriculture, Rs 200 million of education, Rs 270 million of interior, Rs 180 million of forest and Rs 1,500 million of other departments. Besides, he said, Rs 12 billion were released in the name of development programmes.

Quoting the Auditor General's Report, released in 1988, he said Mian Nawaz Sharif, misusing his authority as chief minister, issued directives which resulted into direct malpractice of Rs 35 billion.

The report said that the Chief Minister's Secretariat had been turned out to be a hub of corrupt practices and Nawaz Sharif wasted the public money like an 'emperor' that resulted in huge fiscal deficit to the province. The Auditor General's Report released in 1986 said the then chief minister Nawaz Sharif had squandered Rs 1.2 billion in only one year.

It said Nawaz Sharif allotted 3,000 precious LDA plots to his favourites due to which the provincial assets suffered billions of rupees loss.

Nawaz ordered the CBR to issue several SROs due to which he got Rs 400 million.

PML-Q alleged Nawaz Sharif was the lead character in the cooperative and financial institutions scam, depriving the retired employees, orphans, widows, and the poor of their total assets amounting to Rs 17 billion.

It said Nawaz released Rs 1.2 million from his discretionary grant during 1985-86 while Rs 18.95 million were released in 1986-87, Rs 18,990,000 were used in 1987-88 while another Rs 18.87 million were distributed among his cronies.

It said during the first tenure of Nawaz Sharif as prime minister he obtained Rs 3 billion loan from different banks through his influence against inadequate guarantees.

According to details, Rs 1.5 billion loan was obtained against Ittefaq Foundries, Rs 302 million were obtained for Brothers Sugar Mills, Rs 92 million for Brothers Textile, Rs 392 million for Brothers Steel Mills, Rs 102 million for Ramzan Sugar Mills and Khalid Siraj Textiles each, Rs 385 million for Ittefaq Sugar Mills, Rs 368 million for Ittefaq Textiles and Rs 239 million were loaned to Ittefaq Brothers. The national wealth was used for establishing personal empire while the country's economy was facing huge disaster, the document alleged. This loan was equivalent to the total internal loan obtained by the government of Pakistan, it added.

It said another Rs 30 billion were spent in the name of 'Tameer-e-Watan Programme' in two phases and only 10 to 15 per cent was actually spent on the programme while his friends were benefited by the remaining funds. Later the World Bank (WB) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) unearthed the scam.

On Jan 7, 1991, the French government, under an agreement provided, \$138 million grant for the development of communication, energy and health sectors. Out of the grant, \$25 million were obtained by the then prime minister and his coterie as commission, it was alleged.

It said Nawaz Sharif, in the name of privatisation, handed over a state-owned bank on throwaway price against Rs 888.8 million to a bidder who was third in the list. Resultantly, the Sharifs received commission in millions of rupees. Besides, Allied Bank was also privatised and the then prime Minister got kick back in the deal, it alleged.

On Jan 15, 1992, the Nawaz government sold 90 per cent shares of Pak-China Fertilizer Company to Schon Group for mere Rs 450 million. The company had 700 employees with a daily production of 340 tons of fertilizer.

It said Nawaz Sharif with an amount of Rs 15,000 only opened his account in Muslim Commercial Bank and the next morning he got Rs 150 million loan from the same bank.

In June 1990, Nawaz Sharif allotted 43-acre forest land in Murree on a throwaway price to one Zafar Iqbal who was involved in BCCI Scam. Moreover, the Sharif paid the amount from his discretionary fund, it alleged.

On May 30, 1990, Nawaz Sharif announced launching of Pakistan Baitul Mal and appointed his close associate as its chairman. Only in one year Rs 1.9 billion were distributed amongst his cronies while Rs 9 million were spent on treatment of his feudal friends, it said.

During the second tenure of Nawaz Sharif as prime minister, beginning in 1997, he bought 2,000 acre of land in Raiwind, building a Rs 250 million, 1700-acre palace there. The amount was spent from the national exchequer, the white paper alleged. It added the palace was simultaneously declared Prime Minister's Camp Office and PWD was ordered to renovate it. For the purpose, Rs 80 million were approved within 24 hours in violation of rules and regulation. Besides, Rs 70 million were released for provision of Gas,

Rs 320 million for roads, Rs 85 million for brick-lining of the canal, Rs 50 million for provision of electricity and Rs 20 million were spent for telephone exchange for the palace.

On Sept 17, 1996, the then chief minister Arif Nakai issued a letter (No LDA-CMP-401-S-54) for the allotment of 540 acres of land for a housing society. The orders were cancelled by Mr Shahbaz Sharif and the same land was absorbed in 'Raiwind State' and the poor peasants were harassed and paid minimal sums for their precious lands.

It said Nawaz and Shahbaz, using their official status, saved Rs 1,79,382,293 in Income Tax and Wealth Tax.

It also alleged misappropriation of the amount collected under 'Qarz Utaro Mulk Sanwaro' plan.

On May 28, 1998, Nawaz Sharif imposed emergency in the wake of atomic explosions and ordered freezing of the foreign currency accounts through an executive order and deprived many Pakistanis of \$11 billion, it alleged.

Breaching his oath, the Sharifs informed most of their associates and relatives of the emergency step, who withdrew their amounts well in time. Due to this, \$1,200 million were transferred abroad, it claimed.

It also alleged that handing over of 33 industrial units to banks was yet another scam out of which only three were operative and the remaining were dysfunctional. As per investigators, 18 out of 19 units of Ittefaq Group of Companies, three out of four units of Ilyas Enterprises, six out of seven units of Ittefaq Brothers and all three units of Brothers Steel were totally redundant, it claimed.

Dawn, February 13, 2008

TELL-TALE FINDINGS

The findings of the latest survey conducted in Pakistan by the US-based International Republican Institute to gauge the public mood days before the election are least flattering for President Musharraf and his erstwhile ruling coalition. The vast majority disapproves of the government actions taken since Nov 2 and wants to vote for opposition parties in the Feb 18 election. A whopping 94 per cent of those surveyed based their disapproval of the government on its failure to arrest inflation and shortages of essential food items and supplies. As per survey results, the public mood is such that any attempt by the military-backed establishment to manipulate the election results can result in a massive movement against the powers that be. Whatever the standard methodology applied to carry out the survey in question, the results are quite credible because they reflect the random views being expressed by the public in the run-up to the election, as seen in TV road shows. This may

thus be a final wake-up call for the authorities concerned to shape up before it is too late, and live up to the people's expectations of holding free, fair and transparent elections. Failing this, a reign of chaos in the days after the election cannot be ruled out. The unhappy eventuality does not augur well for anyone concerned, much less for the federation and those vouchsafing it.

While the caretaker government had better heed the warning inherent in the prevailing public mood, opposition parties, too, must do their bit to remain relevant to the people's hopes and aspirations. So far, election campaigns have seen few of the acute socio-economic problems that the people have had to brave in recent months, and for which they blame the erstwhile government. The country is arguably faced with the worst ever shortages in the energy sector. Power, gas and water supplies have never been this erratic across the country. Everyday food items, say, wheat flour and sugar, are now more readily available but at a much inflated cost. Food price inflation is perhaps what affects the people most. The prices of edible fats, pulses, meat and vegetables have seen huge rises in the past months, putting these basic items nearly out of the reach of the majority of low-income segments. These are real issues and unless they are made part of the election campaigns being run by the contesting parties, there will remain a trust deficit between the ruled and the rulers, even if the latter are duly elected representatives of the people.

Editorial, *Dawn*, February 13, 2008

IN TRIBAL PAKISTAN, RELIGIOUS PARTIES ARE FOUNDERING

Senator Asfandiyar Wali, the leader of an opposition party, the Awami National Party, is campaigning for the elections next week from the safety of his bed, under a quilt and propped up on bolsters for his bad back at his country home outside Peshawar.

Ill health aside, Mr. Wali is staying home because suicide bombers are seeking to kill him, his party has been warned by high-level government officials. There have been two bomb attacks on his party's election gatherings in the last week. Two candidates have been killed, one in a suicide bombing and one in a shooting in Karachi.

Yet despite the attacks and the limited campaigning, his party is expected to do well in the parliamentary elections on Monday. The religious parties that for the last five years have governed the North-West Frontier Province and Baluchistan Province, which border Afghanistan and the tribal areas, are foundering.

Since being swept to power in 2002 on a wave of anti-Americanism and sympathy for the Taliban after the American invasion of Afghanistan, the mullahs here have found that the public mood has shifted against them.

People complain that they have failed to deliver on their promises, that they have proved just as corrupt as other politicians and that they have presided over a worsening of security, demonstrated most vividly in a rising number of suicide attacks carried out by militants based in the nearby tribal areas.

“They did not serve the people,” said Faiz Muhammad, 47, a farmer whose son was killed in the bomb blast on an Awami political gathering on Saturday.

The shift in mood here may be a bellwether of larger trends nationwide. The religious parties held 59 seats in the 342-member Parliament, making them a kingmaker at critical times, like helping President Pervez Musharraf to extend his military rule. But this time their number may fall to single digits, according to some estimates.

Pollsters and political analysts in Pakistan have maintained that the religious parties command only a small percentage of popular support and that the 2002 elections were an aberration, a reaction to the American intervention in Afghanistan and the result of rigging by Pakistan’s intelligence agencies, which have always had links with the religious parties.

Two opinion polls released this week show that the standing of the religious parties has fallen to a new low, with voters showing a strong shift of support toward the moderate parties.

A survey of more than 3,000 people at the end of January by the International Republican Institute showed that the religious parties could command only 1 percent of the vote nationally, down from 4 percent in November. In North-West Frontier Province and Baluchistan Province, their share was 4 percent.

Meanwhile, support for the Pakistan Peoples Party, the party of the assassinated former prime minister Benazir Bhutto, has soared to 50 percent nationally, the poll found. The face-to-face survey was conducted throughout Pakistan and has a margin of sampling error of plus or minus two percentage points.

Another survey conducted by Terror Free Tomorrow, a Washington-based bipartisan group that seeks to reduce support for international terrorism, showed backing at 62 percent for the Pakistan Peoples Party and the faction of the Pakistan Muslim League led by the opposition leader, Nawaz Sharif.

If the Taliban were on the ballot sheet, they would garner just 3 percent of the vote, and Al Qaeda only 1 percent, according to the poll. The face-to-face nationwide survey of more than 1,000 interviews was conducted in January with D3 Systems and the Pakistan Institute for Public Opinion and has a margin of sampling error of plus or minus three percentage points.

Here in North-West Frontier Province, where religious parties won a majority and ran the government, they are blamed for being soft on the militants and for allowing “Talibanization,” the radical Islamist agenda creeping into society.

“People are fed up because they are not opposing the attacks by the Taliban openly,” said Muhammad Jawed, 40, a businessman who attended the funeral for Mr. Muhammad’s son.

That frustration has redounded to the favor of moderate opposition parties like the Awami National Party, a Pashtun nationalist party founded by Mr. Wali’s grandfather. It was almost wiped out in the last elections, in 2002, when it welcomed the American intervention in Afghanistan. In its place a coalition of religious parties, the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal, was elected.

The provincial assembly in Peshawar was filled with madrasa-educated mullahs, more than a dozen heavily veiled women on reserve seats and even mujahedeen who had fought in Kashmir and Afghanistan. They advocated the introduction of Islamic law, or Shariah, and the banning of music, cinema and alcohol.

The Awami National Party failed to win any seats in the national assembly and only 10 seats in the provincial assembly. It is now hoping to triple that on Monday and to secure as many as 12 national assembly seats.

The religious coalition itself is in disarray, facing attacks from both left and right. One of the largest parties in the coalition, Jamaat-e-Islami, is boycotting the elections, protesting what it says is an uneven playing field provided by Mr. Musharraf.

The other main party in the coalition, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam, is split, tainted after its leader, Maulana Fazlur Rehman, made compromises to support Mr. Musharraf. In particular, Maulana Rehman broke with the militants in their standoff last summer with government forces at the Red Mosque in Islamabad. When other opposition parties resigned from Parliament last October, seeking to undercut Mr. Musharraf’s election to another term, Maulana Rehman stood by the president.

Today, Maulana Rehman is homebound, under threat from the militants who resent the support he has lent to Mr. Musharraf. His house has come under attack, and he is under threat from suicide attacks, government officials have said.

For Mr. Wali, the expected trouncing of the religious parties on Monday is recompense.

“I feel,” he said, “that we Pashtuns have had enough of war, enough of bloodshed, and the common man now accepts that.”

Carlotta Gall, *The New York Times*, February 14, 2008
http://www.nytimes.com/2008/02/14/world/asia/14pstan.html?_r=1&ref=world&oref=slogin

US HAILS PAKISTAN POLL AS IMPORTANT STEP

The United States Monday hailed the conduct of parliamentary election in Pakistan, describing it an important step on the pathway towards civilian democracy. “We are pleased that elections have been conducted in Pakistan. It is an important step in the path towards an elected civilian democracy that reflects the choices of the Pakistani people,” Nicole Thompson, a spokesperson at the State Department told APP in initial comments.

Pakistan began vote counting after millions of people across the country cast their ballot to elect members for the national and provincial assemblies.

She said, the United States and others in the international community “have stressed the importance of having a free, fair and transparent election process as possible.”

The State Department official noted that there are many international and independent Pakistani monitoring missions in place and the US administration “looks forward to reviewing all of their assessments in the days ahead.”

“We will wait for the final election result and the chance to review the monitoring groups’ reports before commenting further on the process,” Thompson stated.—APP

Pakistan Observer, February 19, 2008

PAKISTANIS DEAL SEVERE DEFEAT TO MUSHARRAF IN ELECTION

Pakistanis dealt a crushing defeat to President Pervez Musharraf in parliamentary elections on Monday, in what government and opposition politicians said was a firm rejection of his policies since 2001 and those of his close ally, the United States.

Almost all the leading figures in the Pakistan Muslim League-Q, the party that has governed for the last five years under Mr. Musharraf, lost their seats, including the leader of the party, the former speaker of Parliament and six ministers.

Official results are expected Tuesday, but early returns indicated that the vote would usher in a prime minister from one of the opposition parties, and opened the prospect of a Parliament that would move to undo many of Mr. Musharraf’s policies and that may even try to remove him.

Early results showed equal gains for the Pakistan Peoples Party, whose leader, Benazir Bhutto, was assassinated on Dec. 27, and the Pakistan

Muslim League-N, the faction led by Nawaz Sharif, like Ms. Bhutto a former prime minister. Each party may be in a position to form the next government.

The results were interpreted here as a repudiation of Mr. Musharraf as well as the Bush administration, which has staunchly backed him for more than six years as its best bet in the campaign against the Islamic militants in Pakistan. American officials will have little choice now but to seek alternative allies from among the new political forces emerging from the vote.

Politicians and party workers from Mr. Musharraf's party said the vote was a protest against government policies and the rise in terrorism here, in particular against Mr. Musharraf's heavy-handed way of dealing with militancy and his use of the army against tribesmen in the border areas, and against militants in a siege at the Red Mosque here in the capital last summer that left more than 100 people dead.

Others said Mr. Musharraf's dismissal last year of the Supreme Court chief justice, Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry, who remains under house arrest, was deeply unpopular with the voters.

Mr. Musharraf, who stepped down as army chief last November after being re-elected to another five-year term as president, has seen his standing plummet as the country has faced a determined insurgency by the Taliban and Al Qaeda, and a deteriorating economy.

By association, his party suffered badly. The two main opposition parties — the Pakistan Peoples Party and the Pakistan Muslim League-N — surged into the gap.

By early Monday night, crowds of Sharif supporters had already begun celebrating as they paraded through the streets of Rawalpindi, the garrison town just outside the capital, Islamabad. Riding on motorbikes and clinging to the backs of minivans, they played music and waved the green flags of Mr. Sharif's party decorated with the party symbol, a tiger.

From unofficial results the private news channel, Aaj Television, forecast that the Pakistan Peoples Party would win 110 seats in the 272-seat National Assembly, with Mr. Sharif's party taking 100 seats.

Mr. Musharraf's party, the Pakistan Muslim League-Q, was crushed, holding on to just 20 to 30 seats. Early results released by the state news agency, The Associated Press of Pakistan, also showed the Pakistan Peoples Party to be leading in the number of seats won.

The Election Commission of Pakistan declared the elections free and fair and said the polling passed relatively peacefully, despite some irregularities and scattered violence. Ten people were killed and 70 injured around the country, including one candidate who was shot in Lahore on the night before the vote, Pakistani news channels reported.

Fearful of violence and deterred by confusion at polling stations, voters did not turn out in large numbers. Yet fears from opposition parties

that the government would try to rig the elections did not materialize, as the early losses showed.

Official results were not expected until Tuesday morning, but all the parties were already coming to terms with the anti-Musharraf trend in the voting.

At the headquarters of Sheik Rashid Ahmed, the minister of railways and a close friend of the president, his supporters sat gloomily in chairs under an awning, listening to the cheers of their opponents. "Q is finished," said Tahir Khan, 21, one of the party workers, referring to the pro-Musharraf party.

The party workers said Mr. Ahmed, who was among the ministers who lost their seats, was popular but had suffered from the overwhelming protest vote against Mr. Musharraf and his governing faction.

The results opened a host of new challenges for the Bush administration, which has been criticized in Congress and by Pakistan analysts for relying too heavily on Mr. Musharraf. Even as Mr. Musharraf's standing plummeted and the insurgency gained strength, senior Bush administration officials praised Mr. Musharraf as a valued partner in the effort against terrorism.

With Mr. Musharraf as both president and head of the Pakistani military — a post he relinquished last November — the administration poured about \$1 billion a year in military assistance into Pakistan after 9/11.

After Mr. Musharraf stepped down from the army, the Bush administration still gave him unequivocal support. Last month, the assistant secretary of state for South Asia, Richard A. Boucher, told Congress he considered the Pakistani leader indispensable to American interests.

Such fidelity to Mr. Musharraf often raised the hackles of Pakistanis, and the newspapers here were filled with editorials that expressed despair about Washington's close relationship with the unpopular leader.

Many educated Pakistanis said they were irritated that the Bush administration chose to ignore Mr. Musharraf's dismissal in November of the Supreme Court chief justice.

The big swing against the Pakistan Muslim League-Q party that supported Mr. Musharraf appeared to bear out the position of the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations committee, Joseph R. Biden Jr., Democrat of Delaware, who has been a critic of the administration's Pakistan policy.

On his arrival on Sunday to observe the elections, Mr. Biden said: "I don't buy into the argument that Musharraf is the only one. We have to have more than just a Musharraf policy."

As a starting point for a new policy, Mr. Biden said the United States needed to show Pakistanis that Washington was interested in more than the campaign against terrorism. He suggested that economic development aid be tripled to \$1.5 billion annually.

But Washington could take some comfort in the losses of the Islamic religious parties in the North-West Frontier Province that abut the tribal areas where the Taliban and Al Qaeda have carved out bases.

The greatest blow for Mr. Musharraf came in the strong wave of support in Punjab Province, the country's most populous, for Mr. Sharif, who has been a bitter rival since his government was overthrown by Mr. Musharraf in a military coup in 1999 and he was arrested and sent into exile.

He returned last November, and although banned from running for Parliament himself, he has campaigned for his party on an openly anti-Musharraf agenda, calling for the president's resignation and for the reinstatement of Mr. Chaudhry and other Supreme Court judges.

Underscoring the reversal for Mr. Musharraf was the downfall of the powerful Chaudhry family of Punjab Province, who had underwritten his political career by creating the Pakistan Muslim League-Q party for him.

"The myth is broken; it was a huge wave against Musharraf," said Athar Minallah, a lawyer involved in the anti-Musharraf lawyers' movement. "Right across the board his party was defeated, in the urban and rural areas. The margins are so big they couldn't have rigged it even if they tried."

A few hours after the size of the defeat became clear, the government eased up on the restrictions against Aitzaz Ahsan, the leader of the lawyers' movement that has opposed the president. Mr. Ahsan, who has been under house arrest since last November, when Mr. Musharraf imposed emergency rule for six weeks, found the phones in his house were suddenly reconnected.

"Musharraf should be preparing a C-130 for Turkey," Mr. Ahsan said, referring to Mr. Musharraf's statements that he might retire to Turkey, where he spent part of his childhood.

Two politicians close to Mr. Musharraf have said in the past week that the president was well aware of the drift in the country against him and they suggested that he would not remain in office if the new government was in direct opposition to him. "He does not have the fire in the belly for another fight," said one member of his party. He added that Mr. Musharraf was building a house for himself in Islamabad and would be ready soon to move.

Jane Perlez reported from Lahore, Pakistan, and Carlotta Gall from Islamabad. David Rohde contributed reporting from Peshawar, and Salman Masood from Rawalpindi.

Carlotta Gall reported from Islamabad, Pakistan, and Jane Perlez from Lahore. David Rohde contributed reporting from Peshawar, and Salman Masood from Rawalpindi.

Carlotta Gall and Jane Perlez, *The New York Times*, February 19, 2008
http://www.nytimes.com/2008/02/19/world/asia/19pstan.html?_r=1&ref=world&oref=slogin

WINNER TO FORM GOVT: MUSHARRAF CONGRATULATES NATION ON PEACEFUL ELECTIONS; URGES ACCEPTANCE OF RESULTS GRACEFULLY

President Pervez Musharraf Monday greeted the nation over the holding of peaceful elections and urged the candidates to accept the results gracefully. "Instead of crying foul, we should all show magnanimity," he told the anchors of the PTV Election City during a visit.

The President said in the wake of challenges like extremism and terrorism confronting the country, it was important that the nation stands united, exhibits reconciliation, instead of confrontation. "Election is the voice of the nation and we all, including myself should accept these results." He said there was a need for exhibiting political reconciliation for secure and stable democracy in the country.

The President to a question about his comments on the opinion polls said surveys and opinion polls were good, but they do not necessarily reflect the views of the masses.

He cited an example when in 1994 an international organisation conducted opinion polls in India and the ruling BJP decided to go for an early election, but despite the "feel good" factor, they lost. He also lauded the caretaker government of Prime Minister Mohammadmian Soomro for putting in "maximum effort" in holding a free and fair election and the role of the concerned departments.

He appreciated the law enforcement agencies, the Election Commission and concerned authorities for providing effective security to ensure that the elections are held in a free, fair, transparent and peaceful manner.

President Pervez Musharraf Monday said that he has fulfilled his promise to hold the general elections in a transparent manner and whoever wins in the elections will form the government and pursue the politics of reconciliation in the larger interest of the country.

The President was talking to reporters after casting his vote at a polling station at Bhindara School here in constituency NA-54 and PP-9. First lady Begum Sehba Musharraf and the President's mother also polled their votes at the same polling station.

He said, "The politics of confrontation must give way to policy of reconciliation; not in anyone's personal interests, but in Pakistan's interest." "We have to come out of confrontational approach and get into a conciliatory mode. I will remain committed to this policy of reconciliation," the President said and added that he was willing to work with any Prime Minister and party that forms the government.

He said the party securing majority votes should form the government, and in case of a hung parliament a coalition government should be formed so that the democratic process continues to move ahead peacefully.

President Musharraf said it was vital that the next government stays in power for five years to ensure the economic sustainability and continuation of the crucial fight against terrorism and extremism till the elimination of the menace. He said policies of confrontation were damaging Pakistan and political reconciliation was in Pakistan's interest.

President Musharraf said February 18 was an important and historic day for Pakistan as the entire world was watching the transition towards complete democracy.

He said now it was upto the nation how it projected itself to the world and they should prove that they were fully capable of holding free, fair, transparent and peaceful election as a responsible nation.

"I have fulfilled my pledge made to the nation to hold the polls on Feb 18," he said.

He however regretted that unfortunately earlier some unnecessary aspersions were cast that the polls may not be held.

The President urged the media not to play in the hands of such elements and rather expose them so that they may not continue to take the people for a ride. He said it was important that the people come out in large numbers to prove to the world that they were not terrified of the terrorists who were trying to create lawlessness in the country. The President appreciated the role of law enforcing agencies, particularly the police, which are often blamed for all the ills but have done a marvelous job. He also lauded the role of the Frontier Corps, the Rangers and the army that have been deployed to assist the civil administration.

He also spoke high of the role of Election Commission of Pakistan for ensuring free, fair and transparent polls by taking necessary measures and providing the right equipment.

The President said whatever the outcome it should be accepted with grace. "Those winning should show humility and those losing should show grace," he added. He said it was important that no such thing is done that brings bad name to the country and added that no one would be allowed to damage the reputation of the country.

Secretary Election Commission Kunwar Dilshad told APP that polling was going on in a peaceful manner, apart from some unpleasant incidents at a few places.

He expressed satisfaction over the voters' turnout, which he termed quite good. He said about 22,000 local and 1200 international observers were monitoring the election and they were allowed to freely move and observe the poll process.

Dilshad also referred to US Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee, co-chair of the Congressional Pakistan Caucus, who said that the elections had assumed great significance for Pakistan's history.

Pakistan Observer, February 19, 2008
<http://www.pakobserver.net/news/topstories02.asp>

PML-Q GREETES NAWAZ, ZARDARI

Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid spokesman Tariq Azim congratulated opposition leaders Nawaz Sharif and Asif Zardari on Tuesday for "an excellent performance" by their parties in Monday's elections. "If the results are confirmed we will play the part of the opposition as effectively as we can," he said.

Daily Times, February 19, 2008

FOREIGN OBSERVERS SATISFIED

US Senator John Kerry and British envoy Robert Brinkley visit polling stations. EU team satisfied with security arrangements ISLAMABAD: Foreign observers, ambassadors and analysts on Monday visited hundreds of polling stations across the country and expressed satisfaction on the polling process. Talking to Geo News, they opined that the polling process was not much different from other countries. However, during their visit to Peshawar, they said most of the voters there preferred to stay at home due to security reasons. John Kerry, the US Senator and former presidential candidate, visited polling stations in Islamabad and expressed the hope that the elections would provide new opportunity to restore stability in the country. Meanwhile, the Canadian and Chinese ambassadors to Pakistan, and hundreds of foreign observers also expressed satisfaction over the polling process. They hoped the elections would strengthen democracy in the country. The observers from US, Europe and other countries also visited various polling stations in Rawalpindi and talked with the polling staff and polling agents of the candidates. British High Commissioner Robert Brinkley also visited polling stations in the capital and observed the polling process, Geo TV reported. John Kerry and hundreds of observers visited Lahore in the afternoon and viewed the voting process. An observer mission from the European Union visited polling stations in Chakwal and expressed satisfaction over the security arrangements. Agencies

Daily Times, February 19, 2008.

LIBERAL PARTIES ROUT MULLAHS IN NWFP: ALL THE KING'S MEN, GONE!

President Pervez Musharraf's political allies, the Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q), appear to have lost their grip over the country's parliament, with the Pakistan People's Party-Parliamentarians (PPPP) and the PML-Nawaz (PML-N) overtaking the "bicycle" in the election race.

Lion roars again: The PML-N swept Punjab despite low voter turnout in all 35 districts of the province.

PML-Q's Sheikh Rashid lost to PML-N's Makhdoom Javed Hashmi in NA-55. He also lost to PML-N's Muhammad Hanif Abbasi in NA-56, according to unofficial results.

Shujaat lost to PPPP's Chaudhry Ahmed Mukhtar in his hometown of Gujrat and was lagging behind PML-N's Rana Abdus Sattar in Sialkot. PPPP's Shah Mehmood Qureshi also won his seat.

PPPP's Dr Firdaus Ashiq Awan beat out PML-Q's Chaudhry Amir Hussain. PML-Q Punjab President Pervaiz Elahi was losing on two NA seats but won a third in Attock. PML-Q's Chaudhry Shahbaz Hussain, former population welfare minister, lost his seat for NA-62.

Other PML-Q bigwigs that lost include Rao Sikandar Iqbal, Sher Afgan Niazi, Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri, Nasir Khan, Hamid Nasir Chattha, Humayun Akhtar Khan, Chaudhry Amir Hussain, Ijazul Haq, Ghulam Sarwar Khan and Daniyal Aziz.

Meanwhile, showing that the PML-Q was not completely out, Faisal Saleh Hayat of the party beat PPPP's Abida Hussain in NA-88.

PPPP comes home: The PPPP, based on early results, appears to have overtaken the PML-N and the MQM in Sindh, establishing the party as a force to be reckoned with in its home state. PPPP's Amin Fahim was one of the big winners in the province.

ANP kicks in: The Awami National Party (ANP) took the maximum number of seats based on early poll results, leaving the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal in the dust. PML-Q NWFP President Amir Muqam and Aftab Ahmed Khan Sherpao, both 'King's men', won the seats in their respective constituencies. According to unofficial results, Jamiat Ulema-e-Fazl chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman won in NA-26, but lost NA-24 to Faisal Karim Kundi.

Business as usual: Balochistan witnessed a historic low turnout in the parliamentary elections and the early poll results did not show a clear winner in the province, although the PML-Q appeared to be leading.

Daily Times, February 19, 2008.

US SENATORS COMMEND CREDIBLE POLLS

We congratulate the people of Pakistan for taking a very important step towards democracy through credible elections. We are satisfied with the outcome of the election that upheld the will of the moderate and democratic people and hope for a peaceful and historic transfer of power. We look forward for an independent judiciary, free press and genuine decision-making through parliament. If such transformation took place, the US government would triple assistance. We urge various political parties to seize this opportunity and to put the grudges of the past in the past and look ahead to the future and exercise the trust put in them by the people in these difficult circumstances.

These were the main features of a press conference held by three US senators namely, Sen. Joseph R. Biden, Sen. John Kerry and Sen. Chuck Hagel at the Serena Hotel. The US Press Attaché and spokesperson, Dr. Elizabeth O. Colton acted as moderator. A large group of domestic and foreign journalists from both print and electronic media also attended the function. The three senators looked positive, confident and frank in answering various questions pertaining to the future coalition government, future role of Gen. Pervez Musharraf, bilateral relations, nuclear programme and the War Against Terror.

Mr. Biden maintained that the election had given the moderate majority a clear voice and clear stake in the system. He urged political leaders to focus on the future emphasizing that it was important to move from a policy focused on the personality to a genuine people's policy. Answering a question on the bilateral relations, Biden held that it was in the interest of the US and the world to see a stable Pakistan whose people have confidence in their government and democratic process.

John Kerry, in his statement, paid a tribute and congratulations to the people of Pakistan for holding a credible election and expressed his admiration at their "courage and unbelievable thrust for change". Speaking on the importance of democracy, Kerry noted "returning to democracy is in the best interest of Pakistan and the region". He was jubilant and described the post-election moments as historic and decisive. He joined Biden by urging leaders of various political parties to put aside their differences and seize this opportunity to ensure workable democratic process.

Regarding his meeting along with other senators with President Pervez Musharraf, Kerry disclosed that he found the President "looking forward for the election results and to work with other parties". He said that President Musharraf assured the delegation that he would respect the power of the future Prime Minister and his government regarding prisoners and the

judiciary. Kerry hoped that the future cooperation between the President and the future Prime Minister would be fulfilled.

Kerry also disclosed that the delegation met leaders of the major political parties, including Mr. Asif Ali Zardari and Mr. Nawaz Sharif who both promised to “build a genuine coalition government and expressed willingness to work with other parties in the best interest of the Pakistani people.” On the bilateral relations, Kerry reiterated long term relations with Pakistan which would not be personality-centric but country and people-centric.

In his remarks, Sen. Chuck Hagel commended the democratic process in Pakistan and said that democracy means self-correction and that each election would produce new hope, new possibilities, new trust and new confidence. Admitting that challenges and problems still exist and that there will be differences in political process, Hagel advised “consensus of purpose” in addressing the problems of “this great nation”.

Speaking on the regional importance of elections, Hagel maintained that South Asia was most critical and important than other part of the world and that stability of the region is in the interest of Pakistan, Afghanistan, India and the rest of the world. Hagel maintained that this election had broken the cycle of despair and promised more US assistance in education, healthcare and infrastructure. He particularly expressed gratitude for the hospitality of the people of Pakistan.

Answering a question about his perception of terrorism and insurgency, Biden observed that he held talks with President Musharraf, ISI and political leaders and found them committed to fight terrorism. He described insurgency as a complicated issue stating that Baitullah Mehsud was a tribal leader who would always have a problem with democracy and tend to work with Al-Qaeda and Taliban. While expressing respect for the sovereignty of Pakistan, Biden stated that the US decision makers should enhance the capacity of the Pak military to move in the mountainous area and not to have non-realistic expectations. He pointed out that all the three senators were critical of the administrations anti-terror policy and said “it is badly defined and badly managed”. He stated that the anti-terror policy created more terrorists and enabled Al-Qaeda to reconstitute itself. He advised the US administration to do “a better job in Afghanistan” to relieve the pressure on Pakistan especially on border Wazirisatn, FATA and other regions. He admitted that Pakistan faced very complex and diverse array of challenges with respect to terrorism and counseled the administration to understand this fact better.

Pakistan Observer, February 20, 2008.

THE PEOPLE HAVE SPOKEN

Lahore February 19, 2008: The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan applauds the people of Pakistan who overcame several obstacles and despite pre-poll rigging gave a clear verdict in favour of democratic governance. Regrettably, this opportunity was not available to the electorate in Balochistan. Boycott of worthy political leadership from contesting the elections and their call for staying away from the polls; have not reflected a genuine will of the people of Balochistan to the 2008 polls. This will pose a challenge to the federal parliament as well as the future provincial government of the Province.

The people of Pakistan have placed a monumental responsibility on the winning political parties to ensure that the democratic transition takes place. In addition, there are expectations from the new Parliament to restore the deposed judiciary, improve law and order and to solve the economic crisis. The new government will also be expected to find imaginative ways of combating terrorism, without putting the lives of non-combatants in danger. This will require policies and actions built through consensus. Unilateral and rash decisions of the past have not curbed the rise of ‘talibanisation’ but added to the miseries of the people. A large number of people have been displaced, lost their lives and been regularly exposed to violence.

Pakistan’s civil society, too, must continue to play their role and maintain closer interaction with political parties.

HRCP would also like to express its gratitude to all foreign observers, who traveled to Pakistan to monitor our elections. Despite, the threat of violence, these observers came to ensure that the true voice of the people of Pakistan could be heard. The message is clear: rule by the military can no longer be tolerated, whether in the name of combating terror or in the garb of delivering a transition to democracy.

Asma Jahangir, *Hindu* on line, 21 February 2008
<http://www.hindu.com/nic/pakelection.htm>

PAKISTAN’S VICTORS MAY LACK STRENGTH TO OUST MUSHARRAF

This week’s election will leave President Pervez Musharraf weakened in his post, but continuing returns and haggling over the new government on Wednesday showed his opponents likely to fall short of the numbers needed to impeach him.

Musharraf is our problem,” said Ahmad Mukhtar, who successfully contested a seat against a powerful ally of Mr. Musharraf, Chaudhry Shujaat Hussein. “Today we don’t have the two-thirds majority. It is very difficult to talk about impeachment.”

The party does not have a simple majority on its own and will have to enter a coalition to form a government. It is holding discussions with the party that won the second-most seats, the Pakistan Muslim League-N, the party of former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif.

A coalition of the two parties would have the necessary simple majority, including reserved seats allocated for women, to form a government and nominate a prime minister.

Beyond that, it would need to bring in smaller parties or some independents, said Rehman Malik, a senior official of the Pakistan Peoples Party, which had been led by Benazir Bhutto, who was assassinated. Any move against Mr. Musharraf “depends how strong we are in coalition,” he said.

The president dismissed calls for him to resign. In an interview with *The Wall Street Journal*, he was asked if he would quit or retire. “No, not yet,” he was quoted as saying. “We have to move forward in a way that we bring about a stable democratic government to Pakistan.” He said he would work “with any party and any coalition, because that is in the interest of Pakistan.”

Asif Ali Zardari, the widower of Ms. Bhutto, who now leads the Pakistan Peoples Party, ruled out working with any members of the former government on Tuesday.

But Mr. Malik said most senior members of the Pakistan Muslim League-Q, the pro-Musharraf party, had lost their seats. He said those who had won were not so strongly affiliated with the party as to be unacceptable.

He said it would take three or four more days of talks to work out a coalition.

Mr. Sharif and Mr. Zardari are due to meet Thursday in Islamabad. Pakistan Peoples Party officials say a coalition between their two parties would be the strongest and best combination.

One compelling reason is that Mr. Sharif’s party is the strongest in the important province of Punjab, Pakistan’s most populous. It is likely to form the government there, and so should be part of the national one, too. Any national government that does not have the Punjab government on board is intrinsically unstable, the party officials said.

Yet the two parties have different positions on Mr. Musharraf and on the man who has most threatened his presidency, the deposed Supreme Court chief justice, Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry.

Mr. Sharif has consistently said that he will not work with Mr. Musharraf and has called for him to resign. But Mr. Zardari has not taken a clear stand.

The two parties drew up a Charter for Democracy last year. In it, they pledged to undo many of the constitutional changes passed under Mr. Musharraf and previous military regimes, including an article that allows the president to dismiss Parliament and the government.

Mr. Musharraf also passed a law that barred anyone from serving as prime minister for a third term, which was clearly aimed at Mr. Sharif and Ms. Bhutto. Both served two terms as prime minister.

International election observers said Wednesday that the election had not met international standards, mainly because of the seriously flawed pre-election environment. They cited in particular the period of emergency rule in November, which favored the government's candidates.

Yet they said that the election still proved competitive, that voters were able to express their will and that the vote produced a result broadly accepted by the population. "Millions of Pakistanis took a leap of faith Monday by showing up at the polls," said James Moody, who led an American group of election observers.

Despite fears of vote rigging, that did not happen on a large scale, the observers said.

Diplomats said the strong international pressure on Mr. Musharraf to allow free and fair elections had played an important part in preventing large-scale abuses. Nevertheless, observers said that numerous complaints still must be investigated, and that 10 percent of the results had not been announced because of discrepancies.

Opposition parties are questioning the results of the pro-Musharraf party, which ended up with 42 seats despite significant losses nationwide.

Observers from the European Union, who have been in Pakistan for the last two months, and the group of American experts strongly criticized the prelude to the elections.

"The serious assault on Pakistan's constitutional order and fundamental flaws in the pre-election environment prevented the election from meeting international standards," said the American group, Democracy International, which fielded 38 international observers on Election Day.

Jane Perlez reported from Lahore, Pakistan, and Carlotta Gall from Islamabad. Salman Masood contributed reporting from Islamabad.

Carlotta Gall, *The New York Times*, February 21, 2008
http://www.nytimes.com/2008/02/21/world/asia/21pstan.html?_r=1&ref=world&oref=slogin

BRITAIN GREETES PAKISTANIS

The UK government endorsed the finding of the EU mission and noticed that the elections were completely fair, despite procedural problems.

A Foreign and Commonwealth Office spokesperson said: "We congratulate people of Pakistan for exercising their right at the ballot box and their refusal to allow violent extremism to prevent democracy taking its course."

Dawn, February 21, 2008

MUSHARRAF SHOWED ‘GRACE’ IN DEFEAT: KERRY

President Pervez Musharraf displayed “a kind of grace in accepting” the defeat of his allies in elections, US senator and poll monitor John Kerry said on Wednesday.

“We would like to say he kept his promise to hold elections. Imperfect as it was, it produced results... and he showed a kind of grace in accepting what people had said,” Mr Kerry said in New Delhi, a day after meeting Mr Musharraf in Islamabad.

Mr Kerry was part of a team of veteran US senators, along with Joseph Biden and Chuck Hagel, who monitored Pakistan’s crucial vote held on Monday.

Mr Biden said Mr Musharraf had told them that “the people had spoken — this will not change, the results are clear, there would be no push back at all” against the results.

Mr Kerry said it was up to Mr Musharraf and the Pakistani people to decide whether he stayed on as president in the wake of the election results which saw the president’s allies beaten by the two main opposition parties.

“It would be totally inappropriate for us as American officials... to express any views on this,” he said when asked if Mr Musharraf should resign.

“If they recognise this opportunity correctly, this could be a transition that is very important for the larger stability of Pakistan and also for the region,” Mr Kerry said.

“It is up to the Pakistani people to see that the next few days are well used,” he added.

On the impact the election results would have on the US-led war on terror, Mr Kerry said: “I don’t think it (the war on terror) rests on a single man.”

“We will deal with and work with the next set of leaders,” Mr Hagel said.

Dawn, February 21, 2008

FREE AND FAIR

Headlines across the world have cried out for weeks that Pakistan’s elections... were rigged long before any voter dropped a paper ballot into the voting box. Predictions of violence were just as numerous. But, lo and behold, almost 40 per cent of Pakistanis of voting age made their way to the polling stations unmolested and cast their votes.

And, in a surprise to all the doomsayers, mainstream opposition candidates beat out many office-holders who had come to see their positions in government as permanent.

Clearly, such a defeat of President Pervez Musharraf's candidates could come about only if the elections were, indeed, free, fair and transparent.

...Just a few months ago, he declared emergency rule, a sure sign, many said, that he was not the democrat he had presented himself to the world as being. Free and peaceful elections certainly reflect that his primary interest, after all, is the good of Pakistan.

Of course, where Pakistan goes from here is still up in the air. Calls for Musharraf's resignation have already begun, and they are likely to intensify in coming days and weeks. Musharraf has, for a long time, received the backing of the US, much of Europe and the Gulf states, which has been a thorn in the sides of many Pakistanis. A democratically-elected government, in theory, should continue to receive backing from these states, but it is not clear if a new government will court such support and whether the Pakistani people really want it.

As long as Musharraf continues to follow the rule of law and accepts the election results as the mandate of the people, his legacy seems assured. Whatever one thinks of his policies up to this point, his recognition and acceptance of the people's wishes will demand that history regard him in a favourable light. — (Feb 20)

The Saudi Gazette, *Dawn*, February 21, 2008

ZARDARI VOWS TO FORM GOVERNMENT OF CONSENSUS

PPP Co-Chairperson Asif Ali Zardari has said that the party would try to form a Government of national consensus taking on board all political parties.

Addressing a news conference in Islamabad Wednesday after Central Executive Committee meeting of the party, he said they will talk to all political parties including those out of the parliament.

The PPP emerged with the largest number of seats in the National Assembly following a general election on Monday, but does not command a majority.

Mr. Zardari said the PPP was in a comfortable position to form a stable government in Sindh but it is their desire to co-opt the MQM as well. "We also had working relations with MQM in the past", he said.

To a question about possibility of talks and cooperation with the PML(Q), he said the party has been wiped out in the elections.

Mr. Zardari said the pro-Musharraf Pakistan Muslim League was unwelcome in a coalition, but the PPP wanted the PML's junior partner in the last government, the Muttahida Qaumi Movement, to join. "I want to make a government along with the MQM," he added. Mr. Asif Zardari said he has contacted Qazi Hussain Ahmad, Imran Khan, Mahmood Khan Achakzai and would be meeting PML(N) leader Mian Nawaz Sharif tomorrow.

Responding to another question Mr. Zardari said he would not be a candidate for the slot of the Prime Minister as the party has senior leadership for the purpose. He, however, said the name is not being indicated pending consultations with other political parties for the formation of the government.

He said the party wants to strengthen the judiciary and parliament and grant maximum provincial autonomy and freedom of media. He said PEMRA would be made autonomous with representation from the media and wage board would be implemented.

Mr. Asif Ali Zardari said it will be up to the next parliament to decide whether to work with President Pervez Musharraf.

“We want to form government but it must be one with authority,” he stressed. He said he is not a candidate for the Prime Minister’s job and this will be offered to a senior member of the party.

Pakistan Observer, 21 February 2008

<http://www.pakobserver.net/news/topstories02.asp>

ZARDARI, NAWAZ AGREE TO FORM COALITION

Three parties that emerged as the main winners of Monday’s election said after their talks on Thursday they had agreed to form a coalition to govern at the centre and in provinces, but ticklish details of what could be a landmark combine of former political foes remained to be sorted out.

The outcome became known after Pakistan People’s Party chairman Asif Ali Zardari held separate meetings with Pakistan Muslim League-N leader Nawaz Sharif and Awami National Party president Asfandyar Wali at the start of a dialogue for what he visualises as a PPP-led “government of national consensus”.

Mr Sharif, whose party came second in the National Assembly after PPP, but topped in the Punjab legislature, said the two parties had agreed to respect each other’s mandate and would cooperate with each other in the centre as well as the provinces to complete their five-year terms in government.

Mr Wali, whose ANP has emerged as the largest group in the NWFP, said after the meeting with Mr Zardari earlier in the day that the two sides had agreed to be part of a coalition as well as to struggle jointly to realise their aims on four issues: provincial autonomy, judicial reforms, ‘war on terror’ and sovereignty of parliament.

However, the main show of the day was a joint news conference by Mr Zardari and Mr Sharif after their two-hour talks at the PPP leader’s residence, where they announced what seemed to be a meeting of minds even on some ticklish issues about the political future of President Pervez

Musharraf and the independence of judiciary, including the reinstatement of about 60 judges of superior courts.

Mr Sharif said the two sides had also agreed to implement Charter of Democracy that he had signed with assassinated PPP leader Benazir Bhutto in London in 2006 “in letter and in spirit”. That will look after the major issue of restoring the constitution to its pre-Oct 12, 1999 shape.

Mr Zardari, whose party also won a simple majority in the Sindh Assembly besides coming second in Punjab, the NWFP and Balochistan assemblies after the PML-N, ANP and PML-Q, respectively, told the news conference that talks between the two parties would continue in the future to “work out modalities” of their cooperation that could not be done in their meeting on Thursday. He said: “In principle, we have decided to stay together.”

The talks, which are likely to continue until the first session of the newly elected National Assembly expected to be called next month, came while pressure began to mount on the president to step down after a humiliating defeat of his loyalists and rejection of his policies in Monday’s election.

But the discredited regime seemed to be countering with its own pressure tactics such as pressing disputed long-standing charges against Mr Zardari in a Swiss court that he had stashed millions of dollars of ill-gotten money in Swiss banks, just as a PPP-led government seemed only days away, and a show of force on Thursday against protesting lawyers.

Some figures of the defeated parties even predicted the new coalition would last only a few months and PML president Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain seemed to be provoking the PML-N chief by daring him to have the sacked judges reinstated.

Even apparent courtesy calls by western diplomats on Mr Zardari and Mr Sharif have led to speculations about possible urging to them to work with President Musharraf for fear his absence from the scene could weaken Pakistan’s key role in the so-called war against terrorism.

Although Mr Zardari avoided comments about his party’s chances of having to work with Mr Musharraf, Mr Sharif, in reply to a question if any deadline would be given for the president to resign, said he would prefer the now retired army chief departed “today”, but added: “The sooner he does, the better.”

On the same issue, the PML-N leader said: “The nation has given its verdict and he (Musharraf) should accept it.”

Asked about his party’s terms for joining the coalition, he said: “We have no demands from each other. We have accepted each other’s mandate. We strongly feel that we should support each other to complete the tenure.”

In reply to a question about the possibility of associating with the formerly ruling and pro-Musharraf Pakistan Muslim League-Q, Mr Zardari

said: “We are not looking at pro-Musharraf forces. We believe that pro-Musharraf forces do not exist.”

But he has said the PPP would like the MQM to join the coalition.

Dawn, 22 February 2008

PAKISTANIS STRIKE POLITICAL ACCORD

The two main opposition parties that won Pakistan’s elections this week announced Thursday that they had set aside their differences and would form a government, further isolating President Pervez Musharraf, America’s favored ally here.

The speedy accord, just three days after the overwhelming defeat of Mr. Musharraf’s party, was another setback for the embattled Pakistani president and his backers in Washington.

Since the rout of Mr. Musharraf’s political supporters, who won just 40 of 272 seats contested Monday, the Bush administration has gone out of its way to express its confidence in the president as a cooperative ally in the campaign against terrorism for the last six years.

President Bush took time out of his Africa trip to call Mr. Musharraf soon after the vote, and Bush administration officials have said they would still like to see him as part of a power-sharing deal.

But at a news conference, the two opposition leaders, Asif Ali Zardari, of the Pakistan Peoples Party, and Nawaz Sharif, the head of the Pakistan Muslim League-N, all but snuffed out what hope remained for such a plan. Instead, the men announced that they would join forces and exclude the remnants of Mr. Musharraf’s party in their coalition. Both had stiff words for Mr. Musharraf, reveling in the opportunity to skewer the man who had dispatched them, on separate occasions in the 1990s, into exile.

Asked by a reporter if Mr. Musharraf could lend any help to the new government, Mr. Sharif replied to much laughter, “He is not capable of giving any kind of help anymore.”

Mr. Zardari was more crisp. “We are not looking at the pro-Musharraf forces,” he said. “I do not believe the pro-Musharraf forces exist.”

The assistant secretary of state for South Asia, Richard A. Boucher, said the Bush administration would work with whatever government the Pakistanis formed. “We look forward to working with whoever emerges as prime minister; we look forward to working with President Musharraf in his new role,” he said in Brussels on Thursday.

But an opposition coalition that threatens Mr. Musharraf is likely to leave the Bush administration uneasy. In addition, both opposition leaders are regarded with some skepticism in Washington, and have a long history of tangles with Mr. Musharraf and corruption accusations.

In the past, the Bush administration has voiced concerns about Mr. Sharif, who is perceived as being close to some of Pakistan's Islamist parties, as a potential ally in fighting the growing insurgency of the Taliban and Al Qaeda, a criticism his supporters contend is unfair.

Mr. Sharif, ousted from his second term as prime minister in 1999 in a coup by Mr. Musharraf when he was army chief, is also seen by the administration as being too hostile to Mr. Musharraf.

After his ouster, Mr. Sharif reached a deal with Mr. Musharraf: his sentence in a 2000 conviction on corruption and hijacking charges was commuted, and he was sent into exile in Saudi Arabia, where he remained until last November.

When Mr. Zardari was released from prison in 2004, after spending eight years in jail while accused of corruption, he went into exile in Dubai and New York, returning only after the assassination of his wife, Benazir Bhutto, on Dec. 27.

As the head of the largest vote-getting party on Monday, Mr. Zardari invited Mr. Sharif to join his party in Parliament. Mr. Sharif accepted, and the two announced their accord later at a news conference at Mr. Zardari's spacious Islamabad house.

"We've agreed on a common agenda, and we will work together to form a government in the center," Mr. Sharif said.

The differences between the opposition leaders centered on how hard to oppose Mr. Musharraf now and how far to go in undoing many of the unpopular steps he took after he declared emergency rule on Nov. 3.

While Mr. Sharif has called for the president's impeachment, Mr. Zardari has been less strident in his opposition.

Mr. Sharif has also stressed the need to reinstate the Supreme Court judges who seemed poised to declare Mr. Musharraf ineligible for another presidential term when he dismissed them under his emergency decree. Many of the judges remain under house arrest, and the call resonated with many voters.

Mr. Zardari, who faces corruption charges from the 1990s in the Pakistani courts and might suffer from independent-minded courts, had been less decisive on the issue. But by Thursday night the two men suggested they were in harmony on the judges, and it was Mr. Sharif who had to bend to Mr. Zardari's point of view.

"In principle, there is no disagreement on the restoration of the judiciary," Mr. Sharif said. "We will work out the modalities in the Parliament."

Perhaps facing the reality of a lack of numbers in the new Parliament, Mr. Sharif also appeared to have softened his insistence that Mr. Musharraf be impeached. The coalition between the parties of Mr. Zardari and Mr. Sharif

would fall short of the two-thirds majority needed in the lower house for impeachment.

And even though analysts said they were likely to stitch smaller parties into the government, the coalition would still need control of the Senate. Currently, the party that has supported Mr. Musharraf, Pakistan Muslim League-Q, dominates it.

Even so, the balance of power now rests with Mr. Musharraf's opponents, who will control Parliament and name a new prime minister. The opposition could use its majority to roll back many of the unpopular steps, like restrictions on the news media, that Mr. Musharraf decreed last year when he was still both president and army chief.

Since then, under great pressure, Mr. Musharraf yielded control over the army, Pakistan's most powerful institution. Monday's election and the announcement by the opposition parties completed the return to civilian rule.

As the negotiations proceeded between Mr. Sharif and Mr. Zardari in the last two days, political circles here were awash with talk that Washington was interfering, trying to micromanage a process in which the Bush administration has much at stake.

The impression that the United States was meddling was fortified Wednesday when Mr. Zardari was summoned to the American Embassy for a meeting with the ambassador, Anne W. Patterson.

Afterward, Mr. Zardari was portrayed as a creature of the Americans who wanted him to work with Mr. Musharraf, a negative perception for a politician in a country where recent polls show the United States has a favorable rating of just 16 percent.

An article in the newspaper *The News* on Thursday by the journalist Mariana Baabar said: "Eyebrows were raised as to why Zardari, in his present position when his party has received the people's mandate, felt it necessary to drive all the way and call on the U.S. envoy."

The writer continued: "Have you ever heard of or seen India's Sonia Gandhi going to the American Embassy while in the opposition?" The correct protocol, Pakistanis said, was for Ms. Patterson to visit Mr. Zardari.

But Mr. Zardari, who joined his wife, Ms. Bhutto, on a trip to Washington last fall when she was in talks with the Bush administration on returning to Pakistan to join Mr. Musharraf in the government, brushed off the notion that he was under pressure to conform to a pro-Musharraf agenda.

"If I couldn't come under pressure with eight years of prison life, I don't think I would come under pressure now," Mr. Zardari said at the news conference.

Before the joint appearance, the leader of the anti-Musharraf lawyers movement, Aitzaz Ahsan, accused the Bush administration of being reluctant to recognize that the Pakistani voters had rejected Mr. Musharraf.

Mr. Ahsan, who was arrested on Nov. 3 when Mr. Musharraf imposed emergency rule and fired the chief justice of the Supreme Court and many other judges, remains under house arrest in Lahore.

But since Tuesday he has been allowed to hold news conferences in his study and to receive visitors, one of them the United States consul general in Lahore, Bryan Hunt.

Mr. Ahsan said he had blunt words for Mr. Hunt, telling him that the United States was being too supportive of Mr. Musharraf. "The guy is history, please don't prop him up," he said he told the diplomat. Mr. Ahsan said the United States should ask Mr. Musharraf to resign.

Mr. Ahsan is a senior member of the Pakistan Peoples Party, although he had a prickly relationship with Ms. Bhutto in recent years. From his talks with his colleagues in the Peoples Party, he said he understood the Americans were pushing for the party to align with the president's party.

Jane Perlez contributed reporting from Islamabad, Pakistan

Jane Perlez and Carlotta Gall, *The New York Times*, February 22, 2008
http://www.nytimes.com/2008/02/22/world/asia/22pstan.html?_r=1&ref=world&oref=slogin

PPP, ANP JOIN HANDS FOR UNFETTERED JUDICIARY

The Pakistan People's party (PPP) and the Awami National Party (ANP) on Thursday reached on agreement in principle to move together for a coalition at the federal and provincial levels for the supremacy of parliament, war against terror, provincial autonomy and independence of the judiciary. "We met today and agreed in principal to move together for democracy and Pakistan," said PPP Co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari and ANP President Asfandiyar Wali Khan while talking to newsmen after holding the meeting at the Parliament Lodges here.

Asif Ali Zardari was accompanied by opposition leader in the Senate Raza Rabbani, PPP Information Secretary Sherry Rehman and party spokesman Farhatullah Babar.

The meeting continued for more than an hour at the residence of Asfandiyar Wali at the lodges in which both the leaders discussed all the issues pertaining to the formation of a coalition at the federal as well as provincial level.

According to the sources, there was consensus during the meeting that the party having majority at the provincial level would head the government.

The sources also disclosed the main demand of the ANP that the NWFP should be renamed as "Pakhtoonkhawa" that was agreed in principle.

Both the parties were in unanimity that it was the prerogative of the provincial assembly to decide in this regard and the decision would be accepted.

Meanwhile, talking to newsmen after the meeting, Asif Zardari said that there was a complete agreement in principle between both the parties that they would move together for democracy. “We have an agreement that both the aims to strengthen parliament and to free the judiciary, and for this we have to move together,” he added.

ANP President Asfandyar Wali Khan said that during the meeting all the issues were pondered and it was principally agreed that both the parties have to move forward for the rule of law, supremacy of parliament, war against terror and provincial autonomy.

He said all the basic issues have been agreed and they will continue to meet to complete the final aim for the cooperation.

When asked from Asif Ali Zardari about the reports of his meeting with the top aide of President Pervez Musharraf on Wednesday, he denied it saying, “Farhatullah Babar has already issued a contradiction of these reports.”

The News, 22 February 2008

http://www.thenews.com.pk/top_story_detail.asp?Id=13118

General Elections 2008 Results

Party Position National Assembly & Provincial Assemblies					
Party	NA	PP ¹	PS ²	PF ³	PB ⁴
PPPP	88	77	66	18	7
PML(N)	66	102	0	4	0
PML(Q)	38	64	10	4	17
MQM	19	0	36	0	0
ANP	10	0	2	29	2
BNP(A)	1	0	0	0	5
MMA	5	2	0	8	5
Others	41	39	11	16	10
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provincial Assembly Punjab 2. Provincial Assembly Sindh 3. Provincial Assembly NWFP 4. Provincial Assembly Balochistan 					

Dawn, February 27, 2008

GENERAL ELECTIONS 2008 RESULTS AFTER NOMINATION OF RESERVED SEATS

Party	NA	PP	PS	PB	PF
PPPP	120	106	88	11	39
PML (N)	90	165	0	0	09
PML(Q)	51	86	10	20	05
MQM	25	0	51	0	0
ANP	13	0	0	04	46
MMA	06	02	0	10	14
PML F	05	04	09	0	0
BNP (A)	01	0	0	07	0
PPP (S)	01	0	0	0	07
NPP	01	0	02	0	0
Independent/others	18	02	0	10	06
Total Results	331	365	159	63	117
Total Seats	342	371	168	65	124

The News, March 10, 2008

Previous General Elections 2002 Results

Detailed Position of Political Parties / Alliances in National Assembly General Elections - 2002

S #	Party/Alliance	No. of Seats Secured	Total Votes Secured	Percentage of Seats won out of 272 General Seats	Percentage of Party Votes by Total Valid Votes
1	PML (OA)	118	6898587	33.82	26.63
2	MMAP	59	3181483	16.54	12.28
3	PPPP	80	7361423	23.16	28.42
4	PML(N)	18	3292659	5.15	12.71
5	MQM	17	920381	4.78	3.55
6	MQMP	1	54007	0.37	0.21
7	National Alliance	16	126268	4.78	0.49

8	PML (F)	5	318054	1.47	1.23
9	PML(J)	3	241701	0.74	0.93
10	PPP (Sherpao)	2	125145	0.74	0.48
11	BNP	1	54955	0.37	0.21
12	JWP	1	5966	0.37	0.02
13	PAT	1	196808	0.37	0.76
14	PML (Z)	1	87373	0.37	0.34
15	PTI	1	160686	0.37	0.62
16	PKMAP	1	35254	0.37	0.14
17	IND	1	2845478	6.25	10.98
TOTAL		342	25906228		

Election Commission of Pakistan,
<http://www.ecp.gov.pk/content/GE-2002.htm>

PREVIOUS PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLIES ELECTIONS 2002 RESULTS

PUNJAB PROVINCE					
S #	Party Name	Total	Women	Non-Muslim	Grand Total
1	Muttahidda Majlis-e-Amal Pakistan	9	2	0	11
2	National Alliance	12	3	0	15
3	Pakistan Muslim League (J)	3	1	0	4
4	Pakistan Muslim League (Jinnah)	3	1	0	4
5	Pakistan Muslim League (N)	38	8	1	47
6	Pakistan Muslim League (QA)	168	37	5	209
7	Pakistan Muslim League (Z)	1	0	0	1
8	Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians	63	14	2	79
	Total Party Candidates	296	66	8	370

	Independents	0	0	0	0
	Vacant	0	1	0	1
	Grand Total Constituency Seats	296	67	8	371
SINDH PROVINCE					
S #	Party Name	Total	Women	Non-Muslim	Grand Total
1	Mohajar Qaumi Movement Pakistan	1	0	0	1
2	Muttahidda Majlis-e-Amal Pakistan	8	2	0	10
3	Muttahidda Qaumi Movement	31	7	2	40
4	National Alliance	12	3	1	16
5	Pakistan Muslim League (F)	9	2	1	12
6	Pakistan Muslim League (QA)	14	3	1	18
7	Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentary	51	12	4	67
	Total Party Candidates	126	29	9	164
	Independents	2	0	0	2
	Recounting	2	0	0	2
	Grand Total Constituency Seats	130	29	9	168
NWF PROVINCE					
S #	Party Name	Total	Women	Non-Muslim	Grand Total
1	Awami National Party	8	2	0	10
2	Muttahidda Majlis-e-Amal Pakistan	52	13	1	65
3	Swabi Qaumi Mahaz	1	0	0	1
4	Pakistan Muslim League (N)	4	1	0	5
5	Pakistan Muslim League (QA)	8	2	0	10
6	Pakistan Peoples party (Sherpao)	10	2	1	13
7	Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentary	8	2	0	10

8	Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf	1	0	0	1
	Total Party Candidates	92	22	2	116
	Independents	7	0	0	7
	Vacant	0	0	1	1
	Grand Total Constituency Seats	99	22	3	124
BALUCHISTAN PROVINCE					
S #	Party Name	Total	Women	Non-Muslim	Grand Total
1	Balochistan National Democratic Party	1	0	0	1
2	Balochistan National Movement	3	1	0	4
3	Balochistan National Party	2	0	0	2
4	Jamhoori Wattan Party	3	1	0	4
5	Muttahidda Majlis-e-Amal Pakistan	14	3	1	18
6	National Alliance	5	1	1	7
7	Pakistan Muslim League (QA)	15	4	1	20
8	Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarian	2	0	0	2
9	Pakistan Pakhtoonkhawa Milli Awami Party	2	1	0	3
	Total Party Candidates	47	11	3	61
	Independents	1	0	0	1
	Postponed Repoll	2	0	0	2
	Enquiry	1	0	0	1
	Grand Total Constituency Seats	51	11	3	65

Election Commission of Pakistan,
<http://www.ecp.gov.pk/content/PResult.htm>