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LIMDIS:

SUBJ: PRESIDENT YAHYA ON PAKISTAN POLITICAL SITUATION

REF: KARACHI 1692 - POL 15-1 PAK

1. DURING AMBASSADOR'S CONVERSATION WITH PRESIDENT YAHYA HERE SEPTEMBER 8, YAHYA SAID HE HAD BEEN GREATLY UPSET BY NEED FOR HIS DECISION TO POSTPONE GENERAL ELECTIONS FROM OCTOBER 5 UNTIL DECEMBER 7. HE SAID A NUMBER OF FACTORS HAD LED TO HIS DECISION. HE MENTIONED SPECIFICALLY THE INABILITY OF EXISTING BUREAUCRATIC MACHINERY TO COPE SIMULTANEOUSLY WITH FLOOD RELIEF REQUIREMENTS AND ELECTION PREPARATIONS IN EAST PAKISTAN. YAHYA NOTED THAT PAKS WERE COMPLETELY OUT OF PRACTICE ON ELECTION PROCEDURES.

2. YAHYA SAID HE HOPED NO ONE WOULD GET IDEA HE WAS WAVERING IN ANY WAY IN HIS DETERMINATION TO RESTORE CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT AND GET BACK TO BARRACKS.

3. YAHYA WENT ON TO VOICE DISAPPOINTMENT OVER COURSE OF POLITICAL CAMPAIGN TO DATE. HE SAID HE WAS APPALLED AT LACK OF LEADERSHIP AND PROGRAMS OFFERED BY THE POLITICIANS, MANY OF WHOM WERE ACTING LIKE SPOILED KIDS. HE HAD FAILED SEE EMERGENCE OF ANY STATESMAN-LIKE LEADERSHIP. WHEN HE BECAME DISCOURAGED, YAHYA SAID, HE HAD TO REMIND HIMSELF THERE HAD BEEN NO DEMOCRACY IN PAKISTAN AND THE POLITICIANS HAD LITTLE CONCEPTION OF RULES AND REQUIREMENTS.

(4)

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OF A DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM. IN RESPONSE TO QUERY ABOUT PROBLEM OF LEADERSHIP, AMBASSADOR COMMENTED THAT FRACTIONALIZATION OF PARTIES, SUCH AS VARIOUS MUSLIM LEAGUES, SEEMED TO ADD TO PROBLEM. YAHYA AGREED BUT DID NOT EXPAND. (THERE HAS BEEN CONSIDERABLE SPECULATION HERE RECENTLY TO EFFECT THAT MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATION (MLA) WOULD LIKE TO SEE THE MUSLIM LEAGUES MERGE.)

4. YAHYA SAID MUJIB (EAST PAK AWAMI LEAGUE LEADER) HAD TAKEN ON SELF-DEVELOPED CLOAK OF MYSTICISM. HE WAS CONCERNED OVER MUJIB'S PROMISES BECAUSE THEY WOULD BE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO FULFILL. YAHYA ADDED THAT MUJIB NEVERTHELESS REPRESENTED THE REAL STRENGTH IN EAST PAKISTAN AND AS SUCH HE HAD TO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT.

5. YAHYA DISMISSED MAULANA BHASHANI, EAST PAK LEADER OF NAP (LEFT), AS TOO OLD AND NO LONGER AN IMPORTANT POLITICAL FACTOR.

6. BHUTTO (PAK PEOPLE'S PARTY LEADER) WAS CHARACTERIZED BY YAHYA AS A YOUNG, BRIGHT DEMAGOGUE. YAHYA DESCRIBED BHUTTO'S OSTENSIBLE ROLE OF A PEOPLE'S SOCIALIST AS FARCE. IN YAHYA'S OPINION, BHUTTO IS POWER-CRAZY AND FASCIST AT HEART. YAHYA REFERRED TO BHUTTO'S STATEMENT IN RECENT PRESS CONFERENCE THAT YAHYA'S POSTPONEMENT OF ELECTIONS WAS CAUSED BY US/SOVIET PRESSURE. THAT STATEMENT HAD CREATED SOME TROUBLE FOR YAHYA WITHIN MLA AND HE HAD HAD TO EXPLAIN THAT STATEMENT WAS TOTALLY FALSE. HE ASSUMED BHUTTO HAD ISSUED STATEMENT DELIBERATELY SO AS TO CREATE FRICTION WITHIN MLA. YAHYA THEN ASKED THAT WE NOT SEE BHUTTO AGAIN UNTIL AFTER ELECTIONS. HE REFERRED TO PAKISTAN AS "CLOSED SOCIETY" AND COMMENTED THAT THINGS TEND EASILY TO BE MISREAD HERE.

7. COMMENT: AMBASSADOR FOUND YAHYA OBVIOUSLY DISCOURAGED. PRESIDENT SEEMED TO BE HARBORING DOUBTS ON PROSPECTS FOR FORMATION OF VIABLE NEW GOVERNMENT TO REPLACE MLA. YAHYA SEEMED MORE UNCERTAIN ON THIS SUBJECT THAN AMBASSADOR HAD FOUND HIM IN LAST PREVIOUS CONVERSATION IN JUNE. YAHYA APPEARED DETERMINED TO PROCEED WITH ELECTIONS ALTHOUGH HE IS PROBABLY KEEPING OPTIONS OPEN. POSITIVE FACTOR IS YAHYA'S ACKNOWLEDGEMENT THAT MUJIB WAS MAJOR FORCE IN EAST PAKISTAN. INFERENCE IS THAT YAHYA AT LEAST WILLING CONCEIVE DEALING WITH MUJIB IN POST-ELECTION PERIOD. GP-3.
SOBER!

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