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~~Top Secret~~
RUFFUMBRA

PAKISTAN: Preelection Arrests

Several important opposition politicians in Karachi were placed under house arrest yesterday, including Pakistan People's Party leader Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi and National Democratic Party President Sherbaz Khan Mazari. Some detainees expressed satisfaction that the largely anticipated arrests would generate unfavorable publicity for the national and provincial assembly elections next week. [REDACTED]

Comment: The government is rounding up opposition leaders in Sind, Punjab, and the Northwest Frontier to keep the parties off balance and forestall disruption of the elections. Nearly all prominent politicians are boycotting the elections, but even in Sind—a stronghold of anti-Zia sentiment—enough candidates are running to deflect possible press criticism and allow the government to claim that the elections are credible. [REDACTED]

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