

~~Top Secret~~
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PAKISTAN: Electoral Restrictions Eased

President Zia announced on Wednesday that he is lifting restrictions barring former ministers, legislators, and officials of most political parties from running in the elections set for the end of next month, and yesterday he extended the repeal to 74 of those convicted of political abuses during the Bhutto years. The election commission can remove Muslim candidates if they fail to meet "Islamic standards."

[REDACTED] opposition leader Jatoi will call off his boycott of the elections if President Zia promises to respect the 1973 Constitution and waives the ban on some 60 politicians in Sind Province who remain disqualified. [REDACTED]

Comment: Zia's move will enhance the credibility of the elections and exacerbate differences among the opposition. The action also will seriously undermine opposition efforts to organize a boycott, because many politicians are worried that they will lose influence in their districts if they do not run for election. [REDACTED]

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