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PRIME MINISTER JUNEJO GAINS IN PUBLIC STATURE

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H-45, St.52,F-7/4, Islamabad, Pakistan. Tel +92-51-2655630, Fax +92-51-2655632,

Email: jsb@gallup.com.pk

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PRIME MINISTER JUNEJO GAINS IN PUBLIC STATURE

According to a recent Gallup poll Prime Minister Junejo has been steadily making gains in his public stature. In the latest poll 44% of the respondents in a national urban survey thought that the Prime Minister enjoyed a great measure of authority as opposed to 30% who believed the opposite. The remaining 26% did not give an opinion. This was a substantial gain over the previous year, when, in a similar survey held in October 1985, 44% of the respondents thought that the Prime Minister did not enjoy much authority. The poll also showed a steady trend in the public view that the Prime Minister should have more powers than the President. In the latest poll 58% favoured more powers for the Prime Minister compared to 27% favoring more powers for the President. These figures are almost the same as in a survey held six months ago. The public is however sharply divided on the Chief of Staff issue, and the numbers of respondents who argue that President Zia should leave his Chief of Army Staff position exactly equal those who do not object to his retaining his army job; 44% on each side.

The survey was conducted by Gallup Pakistan in 100 statistically selected towns and cities all over Pakistan and the sample included a cross-section of various regional, income, education and age groups.

The computer analysis of the survey reveals that public views on these issues are strongly coloured by their political preferences. The PPP partisans are much more likely to believe that Prime Junejo does not enjoy authority compared to the Muslim League voters (46% compared with 15%). Similarly 73% of PPP voters want President Zia to retire from his army job, compared with only 29% of the Muslim League voters. On the division of powers between the President and the Prime Minister the PPP voters are split, 77% to 16%, in favour of Prime Minister, while Muslim League voters are split equally at 48% each for the Prime Minister and the President.