

UNCLASSIFIED

RELEASED IN PART
B3, NSA50

ACTION INR-00

INFO	LOG-00	EEB-00	AF-00	AID-00	AMAD-00	A-00	CA-00
	[REDACTED]	INL-00	DNI-00	DOTI-00	PDI-00	DS-00	EAP-00
	DHSE-00	EUR-00	FAAE-00	UTED-00	VCI-00	DIAS-00	FRB-00
	OEO-00	H-00	TEDE-00	IO-00	LAB-01	ARMY-00	MOFM-00
	MOF-00	M-00	CDC-00	VCIE-00	DCP-00	NSAE-00	ISN-00
	OIC-00	OIG-00	OMB-00	NIMA-00	EPAU-00	GIWI-00	ISNE-00
	DOHS-00	IRM-00	NCTC-00	FMP-00	BBG-00	R-00	EPAE-00
	ECA-00	IIP-00	SCRS-00	DSCC-00	PRM-00	DRL-00	G-00
	SCA-00	CARC-00	NFAT-00	SAS-00	FA-00	SRAP-00	SWCI-00
	PESU-00	SRND-00	SANA-00	/001W			

B3

-----297D31 240956Z /38

O 240943Z FEB 10
 FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
 TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7530
 SECDEF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
 USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE
 USMISSION USNATO IMMEDIATE
 THE WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
 NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
 HQ USCENCOM MACDILL AFB FL//CCPA// IMMEDIATE
 JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
 DIA WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
 AMEMBASSY LONDON
 AMEMBASSY PARIS
 AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
 HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI

UNCLAS ISLAMABAD 000441

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A
 TAGS: KMDR, KPAO, OIIP, OPRC, PGOV, PREL, PK
 SUBJECT: PAKISTAN MEDIA REACTION: FEBRUARY 24, 2010

Summary: Reports and photographs of the arrest of militant outfit Jundallah's chief Abdolmalek Rigi in Iran dominated headlines in all major English language newspapers on Wednesday morning. However, Urdu newspapers preferred to highlight political stories including the ongoing controversy of reopening of the Swiss cases against President Zardari, and the much-debated issue of the 17th constitutional amendment. Statements of U.S. military and civilian officials received extensive coverage in all papers. Nearly all newspapers reported that CENTCOM chief General Petraeus visited Swat valley, and lauded Pakistan's fight against militants as "quite impressive." Media reported Defense Secretary Gates' remarks that Pakistan is making "real progress" against Taliban, and Lt. Gen.

Paxton's claim that "Taliban (are) relocating Karachi from Quetta." In regards to the upcoming Pak-India dialogue, Assistant Secretary of State Blake was quoted as urging both the countries to "revive composite dialogue" while terming the foreign secretaries-level talks a "significant breakthrough." Several newspapers published U.S. Mission's condemnation of the suicide attacks in Mingora, and Adezai. They also reported that the U.S. diplomatic presence in Peshawar has been elevated from Consulate to Consulate General. Almost all newspapers reported that a tribal militia, Lashker-e-Islam, publicly executed a tribesman on charges of murder in Khyber Agency. Commenting on the recent suicide attack in Mingora, "Dawn," called it a "grim reminder" that while the nation's attention has turned elsewhere, Swat still poses a "serious challenge." Similarly, "Daily Times," observed that it should be "enough to open our eyes to the threat that still persists in the areas declared as 'cleared' by the military." However, "The News," raised serious questions that "would matters really improve, if every foreigner left Afghanistan tomorrow? Or if America packed its bags and left Pakistan completely - taking its aid money and military support (and Blackwater) with it? Probably not in either case." End Summary.

TOP STORIES

News Story: Iran Captures Jundallah Leader After Intercepting Aircraft - "Dawn" (02/24)

"Iran seized a top rebel leader on a flight from Dubai on Tuesday just 24 hours after claiming he was in Afghanistan at a U.S. military base, in what it hailed as a defeat for its Western arch-foes. State television aired footage of a handcuffed Jundallah leader Abdolmalek Rigi, wearing a white shirt and khaki trousers, as masked Iranian agents led him off an aircraft at an unknown location."

News Story: Rigi's Arrest A Godsend For Pakistan - "Dawn" (02/24)

"Arrest of Jundallah leader Abdolmalek Rigi and his deputy Hamza during a flight from Dubai to Kyrgyzstan marks a lucky break for Pakistan, which has been long accused by Iran of hosting the terror group's ringleader, and offers an opportunity to ease the tense relations between Tehran and Islamabad."

News Story: Gen Petraeus Visits Swat - "The News" (02/24)

"The U.S. CENTCOM Chief General David Petraeus visited Swat on Tuesday where he was briefed about the latest situation in the area by the military officials. . . . General David Petraeus praised Pakistan's fight against militants as 'quite impressive'."

News Story: Gen Petraeus Hails 'Breakthroughs' in Pakistan - "Daily Times" (02/24)

UNCLASSIFIED

"U.S. Central Command Commander General David Petraeus on Tuesday hailed 'important breakthroughs' and detentions in Pakistan, following the capture of Taliban military commander Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar and reports of other arrests."

News Story: Petraeus Calls On Gen Kayani- "Daily Times" (02/24)

"Commander U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) General David H Petraeus called on Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Ashfaq Kayani on Tuesday to discuss security and professional issues. Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said the meeting was held at the General Headquarters."

News Story: Pakistan Making Real Progress In War Against Terrorism: Gates - "Daily Times" (02/24)

"Pakistan has made some 'real progress' in the war against terrorism and it is committed in securing its long border with Afghanistan, US Defense Secretary Robert Gates said on Tuesday. Gates said this while addressing a press briefing at the Pentagon."

News Story: Taliban Relocating To Karachi, U.S. Senate Told - "Dawn" (02/24)

"A senior U.S. general told a Senate committee on Tuesday that Taliban militants were relocating from Quetta to Karachi, making it more difficult to apprehend them."

News Story: U.S. Hopes Pakistan And India To Revive Composite Dialogue - The News" (02/24)

"Calling up coming up resumption of Pakistan-India talks a 'Significant breakthrough' the United States has expressed hope that the two regional powers would be able to revive the composite dialogue process, derailed since 2008. . . . Assistant Secretary for South Asia Robert Blake told BBC in an interview"

News Story: India, Pakistan Urged To Think Of Restarting Composite Dialogue -"Dawn" (02/24)

"The United States has urged India and Pakistan to think about restarting the process of composite dialogue as the two nuclear armed nations prepare to meet in New Delhi to cool off temperatures."

TERRORISM/MILITARY ISSUES

News Story: U.S. Hails Pakistan's Arrest of Taliban Leaders -
"Dawn" (02/24)

UNCLASSIFIED

"The recent arrests of Afghan Taliban leaders in Pakistan were the result of intelligence breakthroughs and none was involved in reconciliation talks with the Afghan government, the US general who oversees the war in Afghanistan said on Tuesday."

News Story: Nato, Russia To Jointly Combat Taliban, Says Hillary -
"Dawn" (02/24)

"The NATO military alliance and Russia face a common threat emanating from the Pak-Afghan border and have agreed to make joint efforts to deal with it, says US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton."

News Story: Chemical Arms Inspectors Due Today - "Dawn" (02/24)

" International inspectors are reaching here on Wednesday to determine if the country's largest fertilizer factory has taken adequate safety and safeguard measures to prevent terrorists from gaining access to all its products."

News Story: U.S. Diplomatic Presence Elevated From Consulate To
Consulate General - "Daily Times," "Jang," "Express," "Aaj Kal,"
"Ausaf," "Pakistan," (02/24)

"The U.S. diplomatic presence in Peshawar has been elevated from Consulate to Consulate General status underlining Washington's growing interest in this part of the world said a statement issued on Tuesday."

News Story: U.S. Condemns Terrorist Attacks In Mingora & Adezai -
"Jang," "Express," "Ausaf," (02/24)

"The U.S. Embassy in Pakistan condemns the terrorist attacks targeting innocent people on February 22 in Mingora and in Adezai."

News Story: Army Ready To Respond To Misadventure: Kayani - "Dawn"
(02/24)

"Chief of the Army Staff General Ashfaq Parvez Kayani has said the army is fully prepared to give a befitting response to any misadventure from the eastern border and there is no possibility of the adversary catching Pakistan unawares."

News Story: Five Taliban Killed While Planting Bombs In Kurram -
"Daily Times" (02/24)

"Five Taliban were killed and four others were injured on Tuesday

when the explosives that they were planting around their hideout

UNCLASSIFIED

detonated accidentally in Ali Sherzai Dar village, Kurram Agency, officials said."

News Story: LI Publicly Executes 'Murderer' In Khyber - "Daily Times" (02/24)

"The militant outfit Lashkar-e-Islam (LI) organized the public execution of a tribesman in the Tirah Valley of Khyber Agency, after pronouncing him guilty of double murder at a self-styled Islamic court, tribesmen said on Tuesday."

POLITICAL ISSUES

News Story: Pakistan Wants Meaningful Talks With India: Qureshi - "The News" (02/24)

"Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi said on Tuesday "Pakistan would welcome any role (to bridge the gap between India and Pakistan) given to China because of the trust and confidence we enjoy among each other."

News Story: Pakistan Bows To Indian Dictates On Delegation's Composition - "Daily Times" (02/24)

"India enjoyed a diplomatic triumph before the start of the foreign secretary-level talks with Pakistan when it forced Islamabad on Tuesday to change the composition of its proposed delegation. Diplomatic sources said Islamabad had planned to include one official from the Ministry of Water and Power and Interior Ministry each, but was asked by India to drop the two officials."

News Story: NAB Stopped From Contacting Swiss Govt Directly - "Dawn" (02/24)

"The ministry of law stopped the National Accountability Bureau on Tuesday from directly approaching the Swiss government for reopening of money laundering cases against President Asif Ali Zardari in compliance with the Supreme Court order."

MISCELLANEOUS

News Story: Govt Has Not Issued License To Blackwater - "Daily Times" (02/24)

"The government has not issued any license to Blackwater to operate in the country and all reports in this regard are speculative, Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States Hussain Haqqani said on Monday."

UNCLASSIFIED

EDITORIALS/OPINIONS

Editorial: Swat Attack , an editorial in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (02/24)

"The Mingora bombing is a grim reminder that while the nation's attention has turned elsewhere, Swat still poses a serious challenge. In the days leading up to the bombing, it is believed that a former militant commander of Mingora had sneaked back into the area along with several associates and was planning fresh strikes. . . . Without such counter-terrorism capabilities, the country will struggle in its long war against militancy."

Editorial: Violence revisited in Mingora , an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English language daily "Daily Times" (cir. 10,000) (02/24)

"The attack on a military convoy in Mingora, the capital of Swat, should be enough to open our eyes to the threat that still persists in the areas declared as 'cleared' by the military. . . . Conceded that the force of the militants in Swat has been eroded considerably, and the writ of the government has been re-established, but the militants have gone back to subversion tactics, which fritter away the resolve of the fighting force as well as the people. Hence, premature claims of victory and the triumphalism of the military were premature. Make no mistake: the Taliban are here to stay for a long time and we had better not let our guard down."

Editorial: Endless Terror , an editorial in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (02/24)

". . . . So would matters really improve if every foreigner left Afghanistan tomorrow? Or if America packed its bags and left Pakistan completely - taking its aid money and military support (and Blackwater) with it? Probably not in either case. The war we fight has its genesis in our classrooms, the grinding poverty and disillusion of millions, and the serial failure of government after government to break the mould of feudal dynastic politics and truly emancipate the people. The butchery is inexcusable, but against such a backdrop perhaps we might dimly discern the mindset that produces it. And even in the midst of this darkness, if we are to hold the ground we have so recently won back, we need to do more to consolidate the peace. Winning the battle is the easy part - winning the peace infinitely harder."

Opinion: Incessant Targeting Of Pakistan, an op-ed by Shireen Mazari

UNCLASSIFIED

DRONE/DOS/000601

in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (02/24)

UNCLASSIFIED

"The U.S. duplicity in its dealing with Pakistan continues unabated and I have always maintained that the scale of their enterprise in destabilizing Pakistan can only be understood by finding linkages in seemingly unconnected events and publications. Just when the Pakistani military has taken a strong position on its military operation in Fata and the pull towards dialogue with the tribal is becoming more evident, the U.S. subversive activities against Pakistan are becoming more overt, and old CIA connection are taking centre stage again including so called expert on Pakistan, let us look at some recent development and see the link. . . . As always, Selig Harrison is playing his questionable role. Nor is this the only targeting of Pakistan and Iran together. In the coming days we should gear up for a new nuclear related hype building up in U.S. media. Unfortunately Dr.Khan's letters have been purchased by a leading U.S. newspaper and will be used to target Iran."

Opinion: Chemical Weapons Being Used In Drone Attacks, an op-ed by Prof. Shamim Akhtar in the Karachi-based, pro-Taliban Jihadi Urdu daily "Islam" (cir. 15,000) (02/24)

"The U.S. drone attacks in Waziristan are not only killing innocent people, but are also poisoning the surroundings by using chemical and biological weapons. Resultantly, a large number of the local residents have fallen prey to Scabies, and other fatal diseases such as cancer. Doctors and medical experts practicing in the area say that the local populace will be wiped out, if drone attacks continue. It seems that the real objective of the drone attacks is the genocide of our Pashtun brethren, and the U.S. is committing this crime with the tacit support, and in connivance with our reckless rulers. Under these circumstances, the Pakistani masses should follow the footsteps of the peoples of Panama, and Nicaragua, and file a case against the Obama administration in the International Court of Justice."

Editorial: Minibudget On The Way , an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (02/24)

"The government must not make the taxpayer pay for a war that is not Pakistan's, and which the people of Pakistan oppose anyway. If that means revising its relationship with the USA to preclude blind obedience, then it should take that step. If the IMF program is thereby endangered, that is a step which the government must take. There must be no minibudget, especially with so much of the current financial year past."

Opinion: Decisions Should Be Taken Now , an op-ed by S. M. Hali in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000)

UNCLASSIFIED

DRONE/DOS/000602

"India may have endeared itself to the Northern Alliance and some Afghan citizens through participation in the reconstruction phase there at the cost of Pakistan, which was embroiled in combating terrorism. Nevertheless, for the sake of future stability, as well as peace in the region, Pakistan must not only secure its 2,640 kilometers western boundary with Afghanistan, but also endeavor for peace and tranquility in Afghanistan, since the ramifications of the events in its neighborhood affect it the most. Any help to Afghanistan must be on the basis of non-interference to gain the confidence of the Afghans. Decisions that are taken now will have far-reaching effects for the region."

Editorial: Unite Against Indian Water Terrorism, an editorial note in the second-largest, nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 150,000) (02/24)

"It is encouraging that after the NFC (National Finance Commission) award issue, Punjab and Sindh have resolved the water issue amicably... It is now the responsibility of our provincial and federal governments to jointly counter Indian conspiracies to stop our water... We must prepare a strong case against India's water aggression and present it to the World Bank and other concerned international bodies. We must not give up even a drop of water from our share. If this cunning enemy of ours does not listen to words, then it should be treated the way it deserves to be treated."

Editorial: Blast In Swat: The Operation Must Intensify And Should Be Targeted, an editorial note in the liberal Urdu daily "Express" (cir. 25,000) (02/24)

"An analysis of Swat reveals that the military operation dislodged the terrorist network, but as the resistance [from terrorists] decreased, perhaps the operation also starting becoming lax. This is a point that the terrorists have used to their advantage in the past as well. Hence, whether the resistance is weak or stiff, the operation should not slacken; in fact with the passage of time it should be intensified."

Editorial: Water Resources And Indo-Pak Talks, an editorial in the Lahore-based independent Urdu daily "Din" (cir. 5000) (02/24)

"Pakistan's water crisis is getting worse and our agricultural lands are becoming barren due to lack of water... Meanwhile, in utter violation of the Indus Waters Treaty, India is busy building several small dams on rivers flowing out of Kashmir. On the other hand, Pakistan has expressed its intent to raise the issue at the international level. However, even now India is just trying to buy time by signaling talks, but will fool us again [by walking out of

talks under one pretext or the other

Opinion: Persecuted By All, an op-ed by Rafia Zakaria in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (02/24)

"At least one of three Sikhs who were abducted for ransom about a month ago by the Pakistani Taliban was killed on Sunday, Feb 21. The murdered man, Jaspal Singh, and his fellow kidnap victims were Pakistani citizens who lived in Khyber Agency's Tirah Valley. . . . The blasphemy laws have in effect become legal tools allowing the religious majority to persecute minorities or the weak under pre textual charges of having defamed the Quran or the Prophet. . . . At the heart of the problem lies the assurance that the lives of minorities who are crushed between the barbarity of the Taliban and the corruption of the state are ultimately expendable and unworthy of protection. The recent beheading reflects in gruesome detail the tyranny of the Taliban. But the continued existence of the blasphemy laws is perhaps equally damning indictments of the Pakistani state."

(All circulation figures are based on estimation)

Patterson

NNNN