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TAGS: KMDR, KPAO, OIIP, OPRC, PGOV, PREL, PK

SUBJECT: PAKISTAN MEDIA REACTION: AUGUST 13, 2009

Summary: Reports on "killing of 70 people in fierce clashes between supporters of Baitullah Mehsud (TTP chief allegedly killed lately) and rival Turkistan Bhattani in Jandola" dominated headlines in all newspapers on Thursday. Several major newspapers highlighted the U.S. Charge d'Affaires Feierstein's remarks that he made while talking to a select group of journalists at the embassy that "Islamabad has been fully taken on board on the expansion of U.S. Embassy in Islamabad" and that he "categorically rejected" the media reports regarding the addition of 1,000 U.S. Marines to the embassy staff. The Pentagon Press Secretary's statement that "U.S. (will) not abandon Pakistan" received prominent display. Newspapers also reported that the "security forces arrested 46 suspected Taliban"

during the ongoing search and clearance operations in Swat valley.

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Several major newspapers ran editorials on the incident of burning down of seven schools by Taliban, the recent drone attack in Waziristan, and the overall security situation in the country. However, the center-right national English daily "The Nation," in its editorial observed that the U.S. Special Envoy "Holbrooke's agenda for his forthcoming visit to Islamabad would prominently figure the demand for pressing ahead with the military campaign to cover South Waziristan." Commenting on the schools burning incident, the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News," noted that "self-evidently the Taliban, at least in Buner and Shangla, are not 'defeated' and neither the army nor the government in any of their iterations are able to protect their most valuable assets." The liberal Urdu daily "Express," maintained that "it is now clear that the areas have not yet been fully cleansed of the militants. However, the militants have been weakened greatly, they are fighting amongst themselves and making false statements in desperation." End Summary.

News Stories

"Supporters Of Baitullah, Bhattani Clash; 70 Dead" "Dawn" (08/13)

"Fierce clashes broke out between supporters of Baitullah Mehsud and rival Turkistan Bhattani in the Frontier Region of Jandola on Wednesday and each side claimed inflicting heavy casualties on the other. According to sources, at least 70 fighters were killed in the clash."

"Mehsud's Death A Big Deal, Says Holbrooke" "Daily Times" (08/13)

"U.S. Special Representative for Pakistan and Afghanistan, Richard Holbrooke on Wednesday saw Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan chief Baitullah Mehsud's elimination last week in the tribal areas as a 'very big deal' in terms of security efforts in Pakistan."

"Mehsud's Death Report Submitted" "The Post" (08/13)

"The intelligence departments concerned on Wednesday sent a detailed report to the President and the prime minister regarding the death of banned TTP chief Baitullah Mehsud which confirms his death along with substantial evidence and information, sources told 'Online.'"

"Pakistan Taken On Board On U.S. Embassy Expansion" "The News," "Dawn," "The Nation," "Business Recorder," "Daily Times" (08/13)

"U.S. Embassy Charg d'Affaires Gerald Feierstein has said

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government of Pakistan has been fully confident on the expansion of U.S. Embassy in Islamabad. The Foreign Office is alive to our compulsions and fully supports us on the matter of expansion in the Embassy and increase in strength of the staff,' he said this while addressing a press conference in Islamabad on Wednesday."

"Marginal Increase In U.S. Marines: Embassy" "The Post" (08/13)

"Refuting the news items about arrival of 1000 U.S. marines to Pakistan, the Deputy Chief of U.S. Mission in Islamabad has said that about 20 U.S. Marines are in Pakistan to fulfill security responsibilities of the Embassy and other installations and there will be marginal increase in their strength after the expansion in Embassy staff. Deputy Chief of U.S. Mission in Islamabad Gerald M. Feierstein, talking to a group of newsmen in Islamabad at the U.S. Embassy, said that upcoming large-scale programs needed more staff but categorically rejected the induction of 1000 U.S. Marines in this strength."

"Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) To Protest against U.S. Embassy's Expansion" "The Frontier Post" (08/13)

"Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) will hold a protest rally against the reported expansion of the U.S. Embassy's sub offices in Pakistan. 'The expansion of the U.S. Embassy in Pakistan would certainly mean to build cantonments for Americans in Pakistan,' said (JI) media coordinator Syed Muhammad Bilal in Islamabad on Wednesday."

"Jumpy Jogger Jumps At Student" "Dawn" (08/13)

"The city police have started investigation into a brawl in which a foreigner allegedly manhandled a student and damaged his vehicle in the Diplomatic Enclave on Wednesday, sources told 'Dawn.' Shams Khan, a resident of Nasir Apartments located in the Diplomatic Enclave, lodged a complaint with the Secretariat Police Station, claiming that a U.S. diplomat manhandled his son - Ibrahim Khan. Richard Snelsire, spokesman for the U.S. Embassy, when contacted said: 'I cannot comment on the issue as I have no information about the incident.'"

"U.S. Not To Abandon Pakistan: Pentagon" "The Nation" (08/13)

"Acknowledging positive results of the recent Pakistani anti-terrorism efforts, the Pentagon has renewed the U.S. pledge to provide security and economic assistance to the key regional ally striving to overcome challenges in the two fields.... Press Secretary Geoff Morrell said, 'We must manifest to the Pakistani government and people that we are there for the long haul. We are not going to abandon them again as we did years ago when the Pressler Amendment froze us out of contacts with the Pakistani

government and military.' "

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"Pak Aid Bill Put Off Till Congress Vacation Ends" "The News"
(08/13)

"Although the Pakistani officials insist that both the houses of U.S. Congress have reached an agreement over the Kerry-Lugar Bill, U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee officials have said that the matter was not settled and the reconciliation committee would begin negotiations when the U.S. Congress resumes session in early September. Frederick Jones, spokesman for the powerful U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee, told 'The News.' "

"Security Forces Arrest 46 Suspected Taliban In Swat" "Daily Times"
(08/13)

"Security forces said on Wednesday they had arrested 46 suspected Taliban during the ongoing search and clearance operation in various parts of Swat."

"Afghan Govt. Acts On Pakistan Complaints; National Assembly Informed" "Dawn" (08/13)

"Afghanistan has removed 'some' of the militants operating from its border against Pakistan, Interior Minister Rehman Malik told the National Assembly on Wednesday, in a rare compliment to Kabul for what he saw as the start of implementation of its commitments to Islamabad."

"Students Demand Military Operation In Khyber Agency" "The News"
(08/13)

"The students belonging to Khyber Agency Wednesday demanded of the government to launch a full-fledged military operation to purge their area of militants. The students said they were living in their native town but compelled by cruelties of the militants to migrate to Peshawar."

"Mine Kills Two Children In Bajaur" "Daily Times" 08/13)

"Two schoolboys were killed and another injured on Wednesday when a mine exploded in Bajaur, local administration chief Adalat Khan said."

"U.S. General Pushes For Unmanned Vehicles" "Daily Times" 08/13)

"As pilotless U.S. drones battle in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iraq from the sky, a top U.S. Army general is urging the military to step

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up the deployment of unmanned vehicles. 'It's all about saving lives,' Lieutenant General Rick Lynch, the commander of the III Armored Corps, said on Tuesday."

"Dr. Aafia Case - Govt. Told Not To Release \$20 Million To U.S. Lawyers" "Dawn" (08/13)

"The Lahore High Court on Wednesday restrained the federal government from releasing \$20 million to three U.S.-based lawyers for pleading Dr. Aafia Siddiqui's case in American courts."

"FBI Agents Testify At Kasab's Trial" "Dawn" (08/13)

"Agents from the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) on Wednesday gave evidence at the trial of the sole surviving gunman of last year's Mumbai attacks. The first witness, an FBI electronics engineer and forensic expert, told a special prison court that he had examined one satellite phone and three hand-held global positioning systems recovered after the attacks, the FBI agent told the court under condition of anonymity."

"U.S. To Press Pakistan On Mumbai Plotters" "Daily Times" (08/13)

"The Al Qaeda, Taliban and the Lashkar-e-Tayyaba are common enemies of the U.S. and India and Washington is pressing Pakistan hard on the Mumbai attacks suspects, Timothy Roemer, the new U.S. envoy to India, said on Wednesday."

"Pak Intercontinental Missile Underway; Technology to Cover Range of 7,000 Kilometers" "The Post" (08/13)

"Pakistan, to increase its defensive capabilities, has started preparing intercontinental missile with a range of 7000 kilometers, according to sources."

Editorials/Op-eds

"Incoherent U.S. Policy," an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (08/13)

"going by the views that the various U.S. officials have been expressing after Pakistan's successful operation in Swat, President's Special Envoy Richard Holbrooke's agenda for his forthcoming visit to Islamabad would prominently figure the demand for pressing ahead with the military campaign to cover South Waziristan. But, strangely at the same time, the U.S. shies away from appreciating its implications for Pakistan and its own and its Western allies' responsibilities to an extent that one gets the

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impression that the U.S. is not quite as strategic objective concerning militancy. On the one hand, eliminating it is characterized as a major initiative of Washington's policy; on the other, it hums and haws at delivering on its commitments that should help achieve that objective.... For Pakistan as well as the U.S., it is important that the varied consequences of stretching the military operation to South Waziristan before consolidating the gains in Malakand Division are thoroughly weighed."

"Burn Everything," an editorial in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (08/13)

"One of the defining features of Taliban activity is their progressive destruction of the education system in the areas where they operate or have influence in Swat and Malakand.... In terms of the fight they seek to win it makes sense for them to target schools because education is the greatest threat that they face in the long term. Educated minds are less pliable. For the provincial and federal governments, the rebuilding of the education system in the war-affected areas is one of the most pressing needs.... Self-evidently the Taliban, at least in Buner and Shangla, are not 'defeated' and neither the army nor the government in any of their iterations is able to protect their most valuable assets. We are learning a lesson, but not in school."

"A Shocking Incident," an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English daily "The Post" (cir. 5,000) (08/13)

"In a shocking development, Taliban burnt down seven primary schools in Buner. The incident comes after the military claimed to have wiped out militants from the area and declared the place safe for people to return.... This and other incidents show that the security forces have to attack the Taliban with full force so that they are not able to regain their lost territory."

"Drone Attacks And Destruction Of Schools In Swat," an editorial in liberal Urdu daily "Express" (cir. 25,000) (08/13)

"As far as the drone attack in South Waziristan is concerned, it is very difficult to condone it because such strikes constitute a violation of our territories. Admittedly, these strikes killed Baitullah Mehsud and other important Taliban leaders, and even the latest strike must have targeted such elements; despite this, the U.S. stance is irresponsible.... If the U.S. has evidence, it should share this information with Pakistan so that if possible, a joint operation could be conducted, but bypassing the other side [Pakistan] when the aim is similar can lead to a perception that there is lack of trust.... The fact that 13 schools in Shangla and Buner were set on fire despite the presence of troops and tribal

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lashkars in the area puts a big question mark on its claims that all's well. It is now clear that the areas have not yet been fully cleansed of the militants. However, the militants have been weakened greatly, they are fighting amongst themselves and making false statements in desperation."

"Why Silence Over Drone Attacks?," an editorial in the Karachi-based, pro-Taliban Jihadi Urdu daily "Islam" (cir. 15,000) (08/13)

"No end is in sight as to when the U.S. drone attacks would be stopped. Ironically the Pakistan government, 'as per instructions' has even given up now the policy of the verbal protest on this issue. On the killing of Baitullah Mehsud, a few days back, our rulers expressed so much delight as if it was their own 'achievement.' If Baitullah was to blame for killing of innocent Pakistanis in suicide attacks, then can the murderer of hundreds of Pakistani citizens in drone attacks, while violating the territorial frontiers of the country as well, be termed as the friend of Pakistan. The U.S. drone attacks are an open challenge to the sovereignty of Pakistan, as well as to our national honor. It is the responsibility of our government and the security forces to retaliate to this highhandedness in a befitting way."

"The Reality Of Drone Attacks," an editorial in Karachi based Pro-Jihadi right-wing daily "Ummat" (Cir. 33,000) (08/13)

"Drone attacks are killing numerous innocent Pakistani children and women. In a recent attack, fourteen people were killed, but nobody knows whether the victims were locals, foreigners or militants. There seems to be no end to these attacks which are gross violation of Pakistan's sovereignty, no one knows that how long this would continue? After fighting of years, the U.S. national security advisor says that there were more than twenty thousand more Taliban in Pakistan, but several years ago when the military action was begun we were told that there were only a handful elements of Taliban but now the story is quite different. The excuse to continue these strikes inside Pakistan is not much different from the pretext that the U.S. made to invade Afghanistan and Iraq."

"Claims Of Success In The War On Terror; President Should Get The Drone Attacks Stopped Now," an editorial in the second-largest, center-right nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 150,000) (08/13)

"If as the government claims, peace has been restored to Swat, Malakand the operation must be stopped immediately; and the residents should be helped in reconstruction and development. Moreover, the President must make it clear to the U.S. that drone strikes are tantamount to an attack on our sovereignty and must be

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stopped immediately; the U.S. must ~~UNCLASSIFIED~~ troops from Afghanistan. It should counter and eliminate those who threaten its security on its own soil. We cannot be a partner in a war of its [U.S.] interests."

"A Challenge To Integrity," an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (08/13)

"Through terrorist acts the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) wants to make it known that despite the government's claim of having crushed the militants they still remain a force to be dealt with. Meanwhile

there are reports of the TTP activists having assembled in the strategic Chagharzai which connects Swat and Buner with Shangla, Mansehra and Battagram districts. There is a need under the circumstances to concentrate on consolidating the gains in Malakand Division before undertaking any other venture as is being suggested by President Zardari. The momentum gained in the region must not be lost. For this the remaining pockets of the militants have to be cleared and their leadership apprehended or neutralized. Any perception of the initiative passing over to the militants is likely to nullify the gains made at great price in human and material terms."

"Trivializing The Issue," an editorial in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (08/13)

"The government should not confound the issue further as this would give the Taliban spokesmen a chance to keep spreading what could well be disinformation. If Baitullah Mehsud is dead - and there is a strong possibility that he is - the truth will come out sooner or later, claims and counterclaims notwithstanding. Let the TTP choose his successor. That will settle the issue. The least Mr. Malik can do is to spare us his daily press talk that serves no purpose. The media too should approach the issue with caution, for no newsperson was around for miles when the drone did the job."

"America Should Stop These Gimmicks," an editorial in the popular rightist Urdu-language daily "Ausaf" (cir. 10,000) (08/13)

"The United States has said that the arrest of the former President Musharraf is an internal matter of Pakistan.... Washington had adopted the same policy regarding the military rule of General Ayub Khan and General Ziaul Haq notwithstanding the fact that all martial laws in Pakistan had been imposed in tacit support of the U.S. Moreover, the U.S. was the main beneficiary of all the military regimes of Pakistan. Now, when the people of Pakistan are preparing to settle their scores with the recently-ousted dictator General Musharraf, Washington has once again started harping the same mantra

of 'internal matter.' Nevertheless, UNCLASSIFIED but the entire world knows that, even today, the U.S. is providing full support to General Musharraf. If the U.S. really respects Pakistan's sovereignty, as the U.S. officials always claim in their statements, then why does it (U.S.) not stop drone attacks? Why do important U.S. officials visit Pakistan every other day? Why has the U.S. Ambassador in Islamabad virtually been given the status of a Viceroy (a term that illustrates the all-powerful representative of the British crown during the colonial period)?"

"The Future After Baitullah," an op-ed by Kamila Hyat in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (08/13)

"There have been many who have celebrated the death of Baitullah Mehsud - the man who had come to symbolize militancy and destruction in Pakistan.... Several questions now arise. Is the death of Baitullah Mehsud - the man code-named 'Nasrat' -- truly an immense blow to militancy? Will it now simply shrivel away and die - or is this an entirely unrealistic scenario? The events that have immediately followed the death of Baitullah indicate that his TTP is now a fractured body. It has been badly crippled by the loss of the leader who glued it together. But the key still is whether this can be capitalized on by authorities."

"Mehsud's Death," an op-ed by Ayaz Ahmed Khan in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (08/13)

"There is no doubt that Mehsud's death would represent a significant victory in Pakistan's bid to eliminate terrorism. Well funded and with over twenty thousand trained well equipped and motivated militant fighters, his motive was to destabilize the Pakistani polity and government. He was responsible for over one hundred suicide bombings and scores of ambushes and attacks across Pakistan.... Mehsud was a top priority to be eliminated for the Pakistani and American establishments.... Although he was an elusive fighter, when you kill men, women and children ruthlessly and without mercy, you cannot escape Allah's punishment."

"U.S. Imperialism 2.0," an op-ed by Ahmed Quraishi in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (08/13)

"Pakistan's relationship with the U.S. remains rocky despite the recent reported assassination of Baitullah Mehsud.... Whether Baitullah Mehsud is dead or alive, there is little question that he was someone's asset.... So should we in Pakistan be grateful to CIA drones? Hardly. Our problems will persist as long as the unjust and mismanaged Afghan occupation continues. What is stunning is how the Pakistani government is sanctioning the construction of probably

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the largest U.S. Embassy in the world in Islamabad. In the past couple of weeks it has been reported that a security officer of the U.S. Embassy had a run-in with a Pakistani police officer in Islamabad. The diplomat reportedly cursed the country that is hosting him. And this is before 1,000 U.S. marines reach Islamabad to guard the new huge Embassy. Pakistan's core contention with the U.S. persists: how the U.S. turned Afghanistan into a hub for anti-Pakistan forces from within and outside the region. U.S.-occupied Afghanistan is a source of destabilizing Pakistan, China, Iran and Russia. We want excellent relations with the United States but an imperial-size diplomatic mission in the Pakistani capital is a wrong start."

(All circulation figures are based on estimation)
Feierstein

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