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SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A
 TAGS: KMDR, KPAO, OIIP, OPRC, PGOV, PREL, PK
 SUBJECT: PAKISTAN MEDIA REACTION: SEPTEMBER 14, 2009

Summary: The Interior Minister's statement claiming that "troops were close to capturing Swat Taliban chief Fazalullah" dominated headlines in all newspapers on Monday. Newspapers also highlighted reports that "three Frontier Corps (FC) personnel were killed when a military convoy hit a landmine in Khyber Agency." All newspapers also reported that "ten militants were killed when the jetfighters pounded their hideouts in South Waziristan." In other news, all newspapers ran front-page reports and photographs of former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's meeting with Saudi King Abdullah in Mecca. Former President Musharraf's television interview with a Pakistani network continued to garner media coverage on the second consecutive

day. All dailies highlighted his ~~UNCLASSIFIED~~ "military aid provided by the U.S. to Pakistan for the war against terror during his tenure had been used to strengthen defense against India." In its editorial on the issue, the Urdu daily, "Express," criticized that "President Musharraf should not have talked about double crossing the U.S. because even domestically many people may [now] accuse him of doing the same [to Pakistan]."

Most major dailies ran editorials on various facets of the Pak-U.S. relationship. Expressing its "legitimate concern" over the proposed expansion of the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad, the national English daily "The Nation," in its editorial, observed that the "U.S. nationals' insulting behavior towards Pakistani citizens in the streets of Islamabad gives the foretaste of the things to come." Toeing the line, its sister Urdu publication, daily "Nawa-i-Waqt," noted that the "entire nation has concerns over notorious Blackwater's illegal activities in Islamabad and Peshawar, construction of an American military base on the pretext of Embassy expansion, American attempts to acquire houses near Dr. A.Q. Khan's residence and other sensitive installations, and the desire to buy a Peshawar hotel." Commending the U.S. government's decision to provide development assistance through NGOs and other alternative channels, the Urdu daily "Jang" noted that it "highlights the fact that hefty chunks of development funds provided by the donor countries are not properly utilized for public welfare and often misappropriated." End Summary.

News Stories

"Fazlullah Surrounded" "The Nation" (09/14)

"Interior Minister Rehman Malik has confirmed reports that security forces have started operations to arrest the chief of the banned Tehrik-e-Taliban Swat Chapter, Maulana Fazlullah, adding that he has been surrounded by the forces. Talking to media persons after his meeting with the FATA delegation on Sunday, Rehman Malik said that he wanted to tell Fazlullah that security forces were about to arrest him."

"Three Security Personnel Die In Bara Attack" "Dawn" (09/14)

"Three security personnel were killed and three other injured when a military convoy hit an explosive device planted on the road in Bara tehsil of Khyber Agency on Sunday."

"10 Militants Killed In South Waziristan Agency (SWA) Blitz" "The News" (09/14)

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"Ten militants were killed and 15 others sustained injuries when fighter planes hit the hideouts of the militants in Sarwakai area in South Waziristan Agency (SWA) on Sunday. The sources said security forces also dismantled 10 hideouts of the militants."

"Abdullah Asks Nawaz To Avoid Non-Issues" "The News" (09/14)

"Saudi King Abdullah Abdul Aziz has advised PML-N Quaid Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif to avoid controversial issues and promote reconciliation for the continuation of the democratic system in Pakistan. Nawaz Sharif, who is in Saudi Arabia, met Shah Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz on Sunday and discussed matters of mutual interest including national, regional and international issues."

"Mush Passes The Buck To Army" "The News" (09/14)

"Replying to a question in an interview, former President Musharraf admitted that aid and weapons supplied by the U.S. were used to strengthen Pakistan's defence against India. Musharraf admitted

that he had violated rules governing the use of the military aid, and justified his actions by saying he had 'acted in the best interest of Pakistan.' He said he 'did not care' whether the US would be angered by his disclosure."

"Zardari's New U.S. Yatra First It Was Money, Now Weapons" "The Nation" (09/14)

"President Asif Ali Zardari is intending to link the start of a full scale military operation in Waziristan with the provision of military equipment by the U.S. Well-placed sources told 'The Nation,' he would press on U.S. President Obama to expedite the delivery of these weapons, when he meets him in New York on September 24 to help Islamabad in meeting its urgent needs for adequate military equipment to continue with counter-terrorism campaign."

"Over 700 Khasadars Sacked In Khyber" "Dawn" (09/14)

"Authorities have sacked 715 personnel of the paramilitary Khasadar force for deserting their posts after receiving threats from Lashkar-i-Islam chief Mangal Bagh. Political Agent of Khyber Agency Tariq Hayat said on Sunday the process of recruiting fresh personnel would commence on Monday in accordance with the new policy of the force."

"Troops Avert Suicide Attack; Kill Bomber" "Dawn" (09/14)

"A suicide bomber tried to attack a security check-post near a petrol pump in the Thana area in Malakand on Sunday morning."

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Personnel guarding the post fired at UNCLASSIFIED packed vehicle which exploded, killing the bomber. Three civilians and a security man were injured."

"Taliban Commander Killed In Dir Clash" "Dawn" (09/14)

"A local Taliban commander was killed during a clash with security forces in Shagai area of Maidan on Sunday, locals and official sources said."

"Drone Attack Kills Four In North Waziristan: officials" "Dawn" (09/14)

"A suspected U.S. drone missile attack on Monday killed four militants in a remote tribal town bordering in North Waziristan, officials said. The missile targeted a militant vehicle in Toori Khel village in North Waziristan region, they said."

"U.S. To Engage Militants Near Pakistan Border" "Dawn" (09/14)

"The United States may shift the focus of its military operations close to the Pakistani border in eastern Afghanistan, U.S. experts say. Diplomatic sources in Washington say that General Stanley McChrystal, the U.S. and NATO commander in Afghanistan, has recommended a change of focus in a report he submitted to the Obama administration last week."

"USAID To Recruit 100,000 Pakistanis" "The Nation" (09/14)

"USAID Pakistan (Jobs) has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Brightspyre and Institute of Business Administration (IBA) Sukkur to join hands for the placement of approximately 100,000 Pakistanis on highly skilled jobs. 'This MOU will open doors to a world of opportunities for the youth and women job seekers of Pakistan,' said Amy Ramm, Chief of Party, USAID (Jobs), according to a press release issued in Islamabad the other day."

"U.S. Distrust Of Government Comes To The Fore" "Dawn" (09/14)

"Jamaat-i-Islami Chief Syed Munawar Hasan has said on Sunday, the provision of U.S. aid under the Kerry-Lugar Bill directly to the ministries and NGOs instead of the PPP government is an indication that the rulers have lost Washington's confidence due to widespread tales of corruption."

"No Change In Aid Bill Status: Taseer" "Dawn" (09/14)

"Governor Salman Taseer has said in Lahore on Sunday, the aid coming through the Kerry-Lugar bill is being allocated under an agreed plan and the impression that the U.S. is bypassing the government in this

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regard is 'totally false and baseless.' 'The bill is a commitment to a democratic Pakistan,' the governor clarified."

"PTI For Moot On Black-Water" "Dawn" (09/14)

"The Pakistan Tehrik-i-Insaaf has demanded a national conference to discuss the issue of Blackwater, a private security force of the United States, PTI Information Secretary Omar Sarfraz Cheema said in Lahore on Sunday."

"FM Hopes For Progress In Peace Process" "Dawn" (09/14)

"Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi said on Sunday that differences between Pakistan and India could be resolved only through dialogue. Talking to reporters in Multan, he said that the Mumbai attack was an abominable crime, but the two countries needed to move forward, instead of remaining preoccupied with that."

Editorials/Op-eds

"[Musharraf's] Claim Of 'Double-Crossing' America," an editorial in the liberal Urdu daily "Express" (cir. 50,000) (09/14)

"Now in a startling revelation in a program on a local television network, former President Musharraf has said that he double-crossed the U.S. and strengthened Pakistan's defense against India through weapons provided by the U.S. for the war on terror. The former president has said that he double crossed the U.S. in Pakistan's national interests and hence did not care whether this action annoyed the U.S.... About supporting the U.S. post 9/11, former President Musharraf said that U.S. troops might have entered Pakistan and taken control of Pakistan's nuclear weapons had it not agreed to support the U.S.... He should not have talked about double crossing the U.S. because even domestically many people may accuse him of doing the same [to Pakistan]."

"Legitimate Concern," an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (09/14)

"The unbridled leeway that the government has given to the Americans to acquire land in Islamabad for an extensive expansion of their embassy has roused strong apprehensions among the people about the real U.S. designs and compelled some of the concerned citizenry to approach the Supreme Court to seek a legal injunction to forestall the move.... One wonders how a popularly elected government could overlook these glaring factors. It seems not to have bothered about even the plight of the Prime Minister's Secretariat staff who have

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been deprived of their houses to meet the embassy. The U.S. nationals' insulting behavior towards Pakistani citizens in the streets of Islamabad gives a foretaste of the things to come. The sooner the government reviews the decision to let the U.S. do such a large-scale expansion the better.

"U.S. Activities In Islamabad And National Interests," an editorial in the second-largest, nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 150,000) (09/14)

"The government decision's to lease 18 acres of land to the American Embassy and 7,000 acres of land to Arab and Gulf states has been challenged in the Supreme Court of Pakistan. The entire nation has concerns over notorious Blackwater's illegal activities in Islamabad and Peshawar, construction of an American military base on the pretext of Embassy expansion, American attempts to acquire houses near Dr. A.Q. Khan's residence and other sensitive installations, and the desire to buy a Peshawar hotel. The nation describes the events as the manifestation of U.S. designs to control Pakistan sensitive assets in order to prevent it from using nuclear and missile capability for its defense.... Instead of putting the Supreme Court in a difficult position the Government should reconsider its decision to lease out 18 acres of land to America and hundreds of thousands of acres to some Arab and Gulf states. The Pakistan army has carried out a military operation and overpowered terrorists to a great extent. Why does America need to expand its Embassy and rent 200 residences?

"Country For Sale?," an editorial in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (09/14)

"American drone attacks against the Taliban are routinely condemned as violations of national sovereignty. But there is little criticism of how our own government is threatening the country's territorial integrity by engineering the lease of millions of acres to foreign investors.... All this has been decided without tabling the move in parliament. This is a gross injustice to the people of Pakistan and stands in clear violation of the UN General Assembly resolution on Permanent Sovereignty over Natural Resources."

"Kerry-Lugar Bill And Responsibilities Of Government," an editorial in the leading mass circulation populist, often sensational Urdu daily "Jang" (cir. 300,000) (09/14)

"The decision by the U.S. government that it would provide financial assistance to the ministries concerned, provinces and NGOs rather than the PPP government, highlights the fact that hefty chunks of development funds provided by the donor countries are not properly utilized for public welfare and often misappropriated. The usefulness of this decision of the U.S. government cannot be denied

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because the utilization of international world countries needs strict monitoring to avoid any misappropriation in order to maintain its inflow."

"Fazlullah Nearing His End?," an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English language daily "Daily Times" (cir. 10,000) (09/14)

"Briefing a Senate committee, FATA Additional Chief Secretary Habibullah Khan has said something that must upset a lot of people. He said: 'There is evidence that the U.S., Israel and India are involved in nurturing the insurgency in FATA.' Like the evidence against India - which was never handed over to the Indians or shown in Pakistan - this evidence too has to be treated as 'emotional' unless it is made public. Why should America kill Baitullah Mehsud, thus breaking the back of the Taliban insurgency, and yet join India and Israel to conspire against the very country it wants not to succumb to terror? If America is following a strategy of dividing the Taliban in FATA then that should be differentiated from what the FATA officer thinks are acts against Pakistan. The Interior Ministry should seriously be worried about why people think that Pakistan will fail to punish its terrorists."

"Negative Side Of Hating America," an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English language daily "Daily Times" (cir. 10,000) (09/14)

"The Pakistani media is boiling over with anti-American opinion as the Pakistan Army finally succeeds in pushing back the Taliban to applause from a worried international community. The government denies in vain the claims made in the media that America is inducting mercenary soldiers into Islamabad and is unfairly acquiring land for their housing. Also, that armored cars are being brought in through Karachi so that a bullet-proof caravan of these hired men may attack Kahuta and steal Pakistan's nuclear program... That is why most TV channels ended up producing a patently false picture of what happened after 9/11 on the anniversary of the shocking event."

"The Aftermath of 9/11," an op-ed by Talat Masood in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (09/14)

"When events of 9/11 occurred it (Pakistan) suffered the most as it acted as a buffer and cushioned the shock and awe of the U.S. invasion for Afghanistan. In the process the Pakistani state that always had a weak control over FATA lost its writ in many parts paving the way for the influx of Al Qaeda and Taliban... With a fast growing population gross neglect of education has produced a generation with hardly any skills to relate to either national or global economy. The collapse and absence of the public education system with 2 per cent annual growth rate in population thus became

a serious threat to the nation state. UNCLASSIFIED that militancy has become the most lucrative occupation for the youth who find it as a means of livelihood and a vehicle for empowerment in these areas."

"U.S. Interest In An Unstable Pakistan," an op-ed by Syed M. Tariq Pirzada in the Islamabad-based rightist English daily "Pakistan Observer" (cir. 5,000) (09/14)

"The occupation of Afghanistan offers a wide array of strategic opportunities to the U.S., which include, but, are not limited to,

the following: With its growing military might, and operations along the Pak- Afghan border, the U.S. remains ideally located to exercise maximum containment-pressure over any further weaponization, or needed expansion within Pakistan's limited nuclear program. Also, based on the alleged possibility that somehow Pakistan's nuclear weapons, or, materials, could one day fall in to the hands of Al Qaeda, or, the extremists, any U.S. contingency plans, to, preemptively, seize or destroy, small Pak-nuclear arsenal, despite the difficulties involved, may never be ruled out."

"Trade Train Service," an editorial in the Lahore-based populist Urdu daily "Khabrain" (cir. 25,000) (09/14)

"India has once again proposed a trade train service between India, Pakistan and Bangladesh.... This proposal seems to carry more benefits for India than the other countries.... We feel that if such a service is initiated, the trade of goods should remain between these three states, and no country should be used merely as a transit route to countries beyond. If Indian goods start arriving in the Central Asian states, it would have a negative impact on the Chinese market, resulting in China's annoyance with Pakistan.... Hence there is a need for high-level review of this issue."

"Down to The Wire," an editorial in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (09/14)

"This election was not just flawed, Messrs Holbrooke and Miliband, its goose was well and truly cooked. Holbrooke has drawn the line in the sand that is a virtual guarantee of a Karzai victory no matter what the election commission eventually reports - and investigations into irregularities are going to take several months. Whoever the Americans and the British and the other sponsors of this exercise in how-not-to-run-an-election decide has won when the dust has settled, we may be certain that the people of Afghanistan lost it."

"Blow To Middle East Peace," an editorial in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (09/14)

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"The Obama administration has done little that is practical to make Israel behave. All that the White House said was that the decision to build more houses was harmful to peace efforts, and America did not accept its 'legitimacy.' In other words, Israel seems to be getting away with something against which President Obama spoke so forcefully in his June 4 address to the Muslim world. The fate of the Oslo accords (1993), the roadmap (2003) and the Annapolis agreement (2007) is before us. Israel scuttled these with full help from the Clinton and Bush administrations. President Obama has yet to prove that he cannot be trifled with."

(All circulation figures are based on estimation)

Patterson

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