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E.O. 12958: N/A
 TAGS: KMDR, KPAO, OIIP, OPRC, PGOV, PREL, PK
 SUBJECT: PAKISTAN MEDIA REACTION: DECEMBER 08, 2009

Summary: Reports and photographs of bomb blasts in Peshawar, Quetta, and Lahore that killed and injured scores of people dominated headlines in all newspapers on Tuesday. At least five mainstream Urdu language dailies ran U.S. Embassy's statement condemning the terror attack in Peshawar. Ambassador Patterson's meeting with Federal Commerce Minister Fahim also received extensive coverage. Some major papers quoted Undersecretary of Defense Flournoy as saying that "Taliban (are) pressed by Pakistan Army." Reports that U.S. justice officials charged Chicago native Headley with helping to plot the 2008 attacks in Mumbai garnered media attention. Interior Minister Malik's statement that "concrete evidence of Indian interference in Pakistan has been provided to the

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
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Foreign Office" was also highlighted. UNCLASSIFIED
commenting on Defense Secretary Gates remarks on Usama Bin Laden's whereabouts with earlier statement of Secretary of State Clinton on the subject, "Dawn," raised a question that "are the U.S. Secretaries of Defense and State really operating with fundamentally different scripts for American policy towards Pakistan or is it part of a complex game of signaling, a good cop/bad cop routine, in which the U.S. is trying to goad Pakistan into 'doing more'?" All TV networks reported twin explosions in Multan on Tuesday that claimed 12 lives, and left many more injured. End Summary.

TOP STORIES

News Story: Bomb Blast In Multan Leaves 12 Dead "Dawn" (12/08)

"A bomb explosion at a security check post in Multan Tuesday (today) killed at least 12 people and injured 18 others. There were also some security men among the dead... Multan's Police Chief Saood Aziz told AFP the explosives appeared to have been planted in a small pick-up truck, but it was not immediately clear if it was a suicide attack, while the exact target was also unknown."

News Story: At Least 45 Killed As Twin Bombs Hit Lahore "Dawn" (12/08)

"Two powerful bomb blasts ripped through the busy Moon Market in Lahore's Allama Iqbal Town late in the night, claiming at least 45 lives. The blasts, which took place within a radius of 30 meter, also caused a massive fire in a crowded shopping mall." (Story also covered in all newspapers)

News Story: 11 Die In Suicide Attack Outside Peshawar Court "The News" (12/08)

"Eleven people, including two policemen, were killed and 45 others sustained injuries when a suicide bomber blew himself up at the entrance of the sessions courts in Peshawar on Monday. The attack was second of its kind outside the court buildings in less than three weeks." (Story also covered in all newspapers)

News Story: 10 Injured In Quetta Explosion "The News" (12/08)

"Ten people sustained injuries in a motorcycle bomb explosion in Quetta on Monday. Police officials said the explosives device went off around 3:00 pm near the main gate of the GOR Colony near the Quetta Airport Road." (Story also covered in all newspapers)

News Story: U.S. Condemns Terrorist Attack in Peshawar "Jang," "Nawa-i-Waqt," "Express," "Aaj Kal," "Islam," "Ausaf" (12/08)

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"The United States Embassy in Pakistan Condensed the suicide bombing at the Sessions Court in Peshawar on Monday that claimed numerous lives and left many injured."

News Story: U.S. Envoy Calls On Amin Fahim "The Frontier Post", "Nawa-i-Waqt," "Express," "Khabrain," "Aaj Kal," "Mashriq" (12/08)

"The U.S. Ambassador Anne W. Patterson called on the Federal Minister for Commerce Makhdoom Amin Fahim in his office on Monday. Makhdoom Amin Fahim expressed the hope that the U.S. government would be kind enough to accelerate work on Reconstruction Opportunity Zones (ROZ's)."

TERRORISM/MILITARY ISSUES

News Story: Taliban Pressed By Pak Army: U.S. "The Nation" (12/08)

"Taliban insurgents have got to be 'very worried' over a US move to surge 30,000 troops into Afghanistan as they had hoped to force

allied forces to retreat, a top Pentagon official said Monday. The insurgents will be facing a larger NATO-led force just as they come under mounting pressure in neighboring Pakistan, where the government has launched offensives against the Taliban network, said Michele Flournoy, the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy."

News Story: American Charged Over Mumbai Attacks "Dawn" (12/08)

"US justice officials on Monday charged Chicago native David Headley with helping to plot the 2008 attacks in Mumbai that killed nearly 170 people, including six Americans.... He is accused of conspiring to bomb public places in India, of seeking to murder and maim persons in India and Denmark, and of aiding and abetting the murder of U.S. citizens in India, the charge sheet said."

News Story: Proof Given To Foreign Ministry, Says Malik "Dawn" (12/08)

"Interior Minister Rehman Malik has said that concrete evidence of Indian interference in Pakistan has been provided to the Foreign Office which will take it up at an appropriate forum. He told a press conference after meeting Ulema of different schools of thought in Karachi on Monday." (Story also covered in all newspapers)

News Story: Ending Safe Havens In Pakistan Vital: U.S. "Dawn" (12/08)

"The United States said on Sunday it was pressing Pakistan to move against Taliban and Al Qaeda sanctuaries in its territory, saying success in Afghanistan depended on disrupting the cross-border safe

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havens. Senior U.S. officials turned the focus on Pakistan, after piling pressure on Afghan President Hamid Karzai to clean up corruption in his country, special U.S. envoy Richard Holbrooke said in an interview on CNN."

News Story: Pullout Date Indicates U.S. Won't Stay In Afghanistan Indefinitely "Dawn" (12/08)

"Setting a date for the start of a U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan conveys 'a sense of urgency' to Kabul that American forces would not stay indefinitely, Defence Secretary Robert Gates said. Defending President Barack Obama's decision to combine a troop build-up in Afghanistan with a target date of July 2011 for the beginning of a drawdown, Mr. Gates said the Kabul government had to understand the U.S. military commitment was not open-ended."

News Story: U.S. Issues Orders To 16,000 Troops To Start Afghan Surge "The News," "Dawn" (12/08)

"A 1,500-strong contingent of the US Marines will arrive in Afghanistan this month in the first wave of a troop surge approved by President Barack Obama, the US military said on Monday. The Marines from Camp Lejeune in North Carolina were among the 16,000 forces, who received deployment orders in the past few days as part of the troop build-up, spokesman Bryan Whitman told reporters."

News Story: NATO Pledges 7,000 More Troops "Daily Times," "Dawn" (12/08)

"NATO allies have agreed to support the U.S. troop surge in Afghanistan with 7,000 more troops, the organization's Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen said in Brussels on Monday. And there would be more to come in 2010, Rasmussen added."

News Story: Drone Attack Kills Three In North Waziristan "Dawn" (12/08)

"Intelligence officials say a U.S. missile strike has killed at least three people in a northwestern tribal region near the Afghan border early Tuesday. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly to the media." (Story also covered in all newspapers)

News Story: Eight Militants Killed In Bajaur "The News" (12/08)

"Eight militants were killed and several others sustained injuries in different areas of Bajaur Agency on Monday. Official sources said a fierce clash took place in the Chinar area of Charmang Valley in the Nawagai subdivision when militants attacked security forces." (Story also covered in all newspapers)

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News Story: Ulema Term Suicide Bombing Un-Islamic "The News" (12/08)

"Minister for Interior Rehman Malik on Monday said religious scholars belonging to different schools of thought were of the view that terrorism and suicide bombings were un-Islamic and funeral prayer of a suicide bomber was not permissible. Addressing a press conference after attending a meeting with Ulema in Karachi at the Chief Minister House, the Minister said the participants of the meeting exchanged views in detail about terrorism and all were unanimous in condemning acts of terrorism and suicide bombings."
(Story also covered in all newspapers)

News Story: Army Stopped From Entering Jacobabad Airbase: Gen Shahid "The News" (12/08)

"Former Chief of General Staff (CGS) Lt-Gen. (Retd) Shahid Aziz has said he, along with other senior Army officers, opposed to give Pakistan's airbases to the U.S. but the then president and chief of Army Staff Pervez Musharraf did it without informing his corps commanders. Former CGS and former Chairman of the NAB Shahid Aziz made this revelation while talking to Hamid Mir in Geo TV's show 'Capital Talk' on Monday night."

Editorial: U.S. Signaling, an editorial in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (12/08)

"Mercifully, American public diplomacy can also get things right on occasion. On Sunday, U.S. Secretary of Defence Robert Gates said: 'Well, we don't know for a fact where Usama bin Laden is. If we did, we'd go after him.' More importantly, from a Pakistani perspective, Mr. Gates also acknowledged that intelligence-sharing was not necessarily the problem between the U.S. and Pakistan.... Compare Mr. Gates' statements with what Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said on her trip to Pakistan in late October: 'I find it hard to believe that nobody in your government knows where [Al Qaeda's leaders] are and couldn't get them if they really wanted to.' Are the U.S. secretaries of defence and state really operating with fundamentally different scripts for American policy towards Pakistan or is it part of a complex game of signaling, a good cop/bad cop routine, in which the U.S. is trying to goad Pakistan into 'doing more'?"

Editorial: Clueless, an editorial in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (12/08)

"Defence Secretary Robert Gates said on Sunday that U.S. intelligence agencies did not know where the Al Qaeda leader was and

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had lacked reliable information on bin Laden's whereabouts for years.... Looking for Usama bin Laden by relying on modern technologies is like fishing without a hook - unlikely to succeed. There is a 50-million-dollar reward on offer for him and so far nothing but silence. We expect no change in the foreseeable future."

Editorial: Gates' Feeble Attempt To Allay Pak Fears, an editorial in the Islamabad-based rightist English daily "Pakistan Observer" (cir. 5,000) (12/08)

"U.S. Defence Secretary Robert Gates has tried to allay fears of Pakistan in the wake of announcement of new Afghanistan strategy that not only focuses on Pakistan but also depends totally on the country for success in the neighboring country.... The question arises as to what necessitated the U.S. Defence Secretary to make such a statement. This is because a deep and widespread perception has developed in Pakistan that the new Afghan strategy has something ominous to do with Pakistan.... Therefore, apprehensions in Pakistan are not totally baseless and that also explains why there is an increase in anti-American feelings in the country. We think that President Obama, who claims to be champion of peace, will have to do more to allay fears of 170 million people of Pakistan."

Editorial: A Deadly Confusion, an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (12/08)

"Finally it has come out in the open that the U.S. really does not know where Osama has been post the botched Tora Bora bombing. U.S. Defence Secretary Gates declared that the U.S. had no reliable intelligence about Usama's whereabouts for years. Despite this ground reality the U.S. has pilloried Pakistan for years by declaring that Bin Laden was in Pakistan. The truth is that the U.S.

has and continues to be confused not only about bin Laden but also Afghanistan in general."

Editorial: Where Are You, Osama?, an editorial in the country's premier business newspaper, "Business Recorder" (cir. 25,000) (12/08)

"Short of Osama bin Laden himself telling us where he is, there is probably no other way of finding out his whereabouts. That is so, despite over eight years of intense search by the anti-terror international coalition, very high-resolution aerial scanning by the United States and a bounty of 50 million dollars on offer for his capture or death.... Meanwhile, the Usama detection experts may like to figure out how is it that his perceived hosts in the Wild West of the Pak-Afghan border have withstood so much bombing, rejected millions of dollars worth of bounties and have refused to turn him over to his enemies."

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Editorial: Taliban's Positive Offer To The U.S., an editorial in the second-largest, nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 150,000) (12/08)

"According to Wall Street Journal, Taliban have said that they can guarantee noninterference in any foreign country if foreign forces leave Afghanistan.... Taliban are known for adhering to their promises the biggest evidence of which was their refusal to handover Usama to America.... The Taliban have made a positive offer as they want to give safe exit to America. This is a good condition put forth by the Taliban and America should take advantage of it."

Editorial: Terrorists' Brainwashing And Responsibility of Religious Scholars, an editorial in the leading mass circulation populist, often sensational Urdu daily "Jang" (cir. 300,000) (12/08)

"Interior Minister Rehman Malik has urged the religious scholars to play their role in bringing back the people, who have gone astray, to the right path. We appeal the religious scholars, belonging to all schools of thought, to come forward to prevent the daily killings of innocent people by educating the entire Muslim world about the anti-Islam activities of a handful extremists. We think that owing to the reverence they command in the Pakistani society, the religious scholars can contribute much more in the restoration of peace and harmony than the rulers, who are accustomed to making hollow claims and delivering uninspiring speeches."

Editorial: Consultation With Religious Scholars Is A Must To Restore Peace In Country, an editorial in the Karachi-based, pro-Taliban Jihadi Urdu daily "Islam" (cir. 15,000) (12/08)

"The government's belated initiative to take the religious scholars on board with a view to cope with the menace of terrorism is a right step in the right direction. Due to pursuing many policies of the Musharraf era, the militants consider that the present democratic government is nothing but the continuation of the dictatorship. It is high time for us to say goodbye to the ongoing pro-U.S. policies."

Editorial: President Hamid Karzai Must Also Be Listened, an editorial in the Peshawar-based Urdu-language daily "Mashriq" (cir. 55,000) (12/08)

"Afghan President Hamid Karzai has expressed his willingness to talk to the Taliban. In the light of this encouraging development, we think that the U.S. must understand the ground realities, and help in bringing about the national reconciliation in Afghanistan."

Editorial: Reversal of Musharraf's Pro-U.S. Policies Is Must To

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Improve Situation, an editorial in the populist
Urdu-language daily "Ausaf" (cir. 10,000) (12/08)

"Former dictator Pervez Musharraf's decision to make Pakistan the frontline state in the war on terror paved the way for U.S. drone attacks in our tribal areas. It seems that real motive of these sorties is to provoke the dwellers of this mountainous region, who were in fact our first line of defense, and pitch them against our armed forces. Now, we are tasting the bitter and disastrous fruit of this dictatorial policy. We think that it is the need of the hour that we revisit Musharraf's myopic strategy and quit the U.S.-led war on terror."

Editorial: Guarantee Of The Nuclear Assets' Safety, an editorial in the center-right Urdu daily "Pakistan" (cir. 10,000) (12/08)

"U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates and Indian State Minister for External Affairs Shashi Tharoor comments on Pakistan's nuclear weapons are important progress. High officials of both the countries have, for the first time, admitted in a positive way that Pakistan's nuclear assets are in safe hands.... We welcome U.S. Defense Secretary's statement. The U.S. should also admit that no other country has suffered men and material loses as much as Pakistan due to terrorism.... America and other big powers should recognize the reality that Pakistan and India are nuclear powers; they should be included in the nuclear club."

Editorial: Change In The Indian And U.S. Attitude Regarding Pakistan, an editorial in the liberal Urdu daily 'Express' (circ.25,000) (12/08)

"A change is visible in the U.S. and Indian stance towards Pakistan's internal matters. This is not only surprising for the Pakistani nation but also pleasant as well.... U.S. defense Secretary Robert Gates' admission that the U.S. does not have reliable information about Usama Bin Laden for the last several years is proof of the fact that all the pressure exerted on Pakistan in this regard was unjustified and eventually the U.S. has had to accept defeat.... On Sunday, Indian Minister of State for External Affairs Shashi Tharoor gave a positive statement on Pakistan by stating that at this stage India does not have any reason to doubt the safety of Pakistan's nuclear weapons. This is encouraging. There will be an opportunity to improve bilateral relations if this goodwill continues."

Opinion: President Obama's Af-Pak Policy - A Blessing Or Misfortune, an op-ed by Saleem Safi in the leading mass circulation populist, often sensational Urdu daily "Jang" (cir. 300,000) (12/08)

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"For the first time in the last eight years, Americans have talked about the political solution of the Afghanistan issue. They seem convinced to deal with Taliban minus Al Qaeda. The U.S. cannot achieve this goal sans the active cooperation of Pakistan. In this sense, the Afghan strategy could prove a blessing in disguise for us provided we are able to demonstrate our importance to Washington. But, on the other hand, if we fail to exploit this opportunity in our national interest, the new American policy would prove to be a disaster for us."

Opinion: An Important Factor, an op-ed by Shahid Javed Burki in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (12/08)

"The Pakistan people must know America will remain a strong supporter of Pakistan's security and prosperity long after the guns have fallen silent, so that the great potential of its people will be unleashed. The response in Pakistan to the country's inclusion in the refined Afghan strategy was mixed. Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani worried about the movement of the Afghan insurgents into Balochistan as the pressure on Afghanistan's province of Helmand increased. He wanted some assurance that the American troops will block these escape routes. There is no doubt that as the new strategy unfolds, Pakistan will be in the middle of things to come."

Opinion: Obama's Afghanistan Policy, an op-ed by Javid Husain in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (12/08)

"There are three questions concerning Obama's Afghanistan policy which deserve special attention. What is its rationale? What are the chances of its success? What will be its likely repercussions on Pakistan? As for the rationale, the fact of the matter is that the U.S. and other coalition troops already in Afghanistan, currently numbering about 100,000, have not succeeded in wresting the military initiative from the Taliban and preventing their resurgence. The question is whether the mere addition of 30,000 troops will bring about a dramatic change in the situation on the ground within a period of 18 months.... What does Obama's Afghanistan policy portend for Pakistan? The reassuring factor is the recognition by the U.S. of the need for an enduring partnership with Pakistan on the foundation of 'mutual interests, mutual respect and mutual trust.' We have been told that the U.S. would continue its support for Pakistan's security and prosperity even after peace has been restored in Afghanistan. At the same time, it is obvious that we will continue to face constant pressure from the U.S. for doing more for eliminating the menace of terrorism."

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Opinion: Surge, And Then What?, an op-ed by Ashraf Mullah Yusufzai in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (12/08)

"Despite being vague, his exit strategy marking July 2011 for starting the withdrawal of the 30,000 'surge' forces was designed to placate the Democrats and liberals, but it appears unrealistic and may not work. Besides, it has provoked the Republicans into accusing the president of endangering U.S. troops and emboldening the Taliban fighters who may simply opt to retreat and wait out the 18 months before the American soldiers start pulling out from Afghanistan.... On the ground the battle in Afghanistan is starkly uneven. On the one hand are the U.S.-led coalition forces that will total 147,000 by next summer when the 'surge' troops from all NATO countries are in place. In addition, there are around 103,000 so-called private contractors - or, to put it bluntly, mercenaries - assigned all kinds of tasks ranging from supplying foreign forces to protecting convoys and sensitive installations. Then there is the Afghan National Army, now 90,000-strong and to be raised to 134,000 in 2010, and the Afghan National Police numbering more than 70,000.... And yet this huge force is unable to defeat the lightly-armed Taliban fighters, whose strength until now was estimated at not more than 15,000."

Opinion: A Man Of The Past, an op-ed by Zafar Masud in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (12/08)

"The new administration in the White House, impatient to seek a decent enough way out of the Af-Pak imbroglio, has resolved to count on the talents of Richard Holbrooke who, to tell the truth, has always been more of a bully than a negotiator.... Holbrooke is no stranger to Washington's grander designs in Pakistan that include turning the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad into a veritable fortress with its own up to 1,000-strong armed security and intelligence personnel who are to remain beyond the reach of the law of the land. Two private agencies, the DynCorp and Xe Services are reportedly already busy in Pakistan preparing groundwork for the project. It is probably too early to claim whether the Af-Pak mission is failing or whether it is making progress."

Opinion: Pakistan's Nuclear Capability And U.S., an op-ed by former Jamaat-i-Islami chief, Qazi Hussain Ahmed, in the leading mass circulation populist, often sensational Urdu daily "Jang" (cir. 300,000) (12/08)

"The U.S. cannot accept a Pakistan in possession of nuclear weapons. Unveiling his new Afghan strategy a few days back, President Barack Obama, has alleged that Pakistan has become a safe haven for Al Qaeda operatives and that his country would chase these terrorists

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wherever they are in world including Islamabad and Rawalpindi seem a part of a very dangerous conspiracy against our nuclear assets. Clearly, the real motive of these attacks was to demonstrate that Al Qaeda had the capability to reach out to the nuclear weapons of Pakistan and that Islamabad was unable to stop its nukes from falling into the hands of the terrorists."

Opinion: At The Crossroads, an op-ed by Nazir Naji in the leading mass circulation populist, often sensational Urdu daily "Jang" (cir. 300,000) (12/08)

"Now, when a dominant majority of religious scholars has taken a common stand against the terrorist attacks in Pakistan, a party, engaged in politics in the name of Islam, is still making efforts to divert people's attention from the real perpetrators of these heart-rending incidents. Former chief Jamaat-i-Islami Qazi Hussain Ahmed, his successor Munawar Hassan and others of their ilk, claim adamantly that India, Israel and the U.S. are responsible for suicide bombing in the country. After the recent attacks in most sensitive areas of Islamabad and Rawalpindi, we are not in a position to term Washington's concern, that Al Qaeda can reach our nuclear assets, as baseless."

POLITICAL ISSUES

News Story: Restrictions On Movement: Dr. A.Q. Khan Says Govt. Using Fake Agreement "Dawn" (12/08)

"The Lahore High Court (LHC) put off the hearing Monday in a case about restrictions on the movement nuclear scientist Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan, till December 14 after a government lawyer concluded his arguments.... Interior Ministry's counsel Ahmer Bilal Sufi told the division bench of Justice Nasir Saeed Sheikh and Justice Khwaja Imtiaz Ahmed that the high court had decided in favor of the scientist without hearing the government. He said Dr. Khan himself had agreed with the government not to visit any place if not allowed by the security agencies.... In response, Barrister Ali Zafar, who represented Dr Khan, claimed that the document the government was relying on was a fake one and the government was only trying to put forth excuses to detain the scientist."

News Story: America Wants To Declare Pak Nukes Unsafe: Munawar "The Nation" (12/08)

"Jamaat-i-Islami (JI) Amir Syed Munawar Hassan has said that the United States through creating anarchy in Pakistan is seeking justification to declare Pakistan's nuclear arsenal as unsafe. He said that Black Water is fully active in destabilizing Pakistan. He stated this while replying to questions of newsmen at Quetta Press

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Club flanked by other JI provincial leaders on Monday." UNCLASSIFIED

MISCELLANEOUS

News Story: News Story: Moot Rejects New U.S. Policy on Afghanistan
"The News" (12/08)

"A moot organized at a religious seminary in Peshawar on Monday rejected the new Afghan strategy of the U.S. and declared that the American and allied forces should withdraw forthwith from Afghanistan to settle the issue and restore peace in the region. Addressed by noted religious scholars, representatives of different religio-political parties and academicians, the 'National Conference on U.S. New Afghan Policy' was convened by the Markaz-e-Uloom-e-Islamia."

(All circulation figures are based on estimation)
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