

ACTION INR-00

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INFO	LOG-00	EEB-00	AF-00	AID-00	AMAD-00	A-00	
	INL-00	DOFE-00	PDI-00	DS-00	EAP-00	DHSE-00	EUR-00
	OIGO-00	FAAE-00	UTED-00	VCI-00	DIAS-00	H-00	TEDE-00
	IO-00	LAB-01	ARMY-00	MOFM-00	MOF-00	M-00	VCIE-00
	NEA-00	DCP-00	NSAE-00	ISN-00	OIC-00	OIG-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
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 SECDEF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
 USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE
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 THE WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
 NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
 HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL//CCPA// IMMEDIATE
 HQ PACAF HICKAM AFB HI//CCPA// IMMEDIATE
 JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
 DIA WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
 AMEMBASSY LONDON
 AMEMBASSY PARIS
 AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
 HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI

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SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

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

SUBJECT: PAKISTAN MEDIA REACTION: SEPTEMBER 17, 2009

Summary: Reports of the capture of the "chief of Taliban beheading squad along with 16 other militants in Swat" received front paged coverage in all major newspapers on Thursday. Secretary Clinton's remarks, made at an Iftar-dinner hosted by her in Washington, that the "Obama administration is determined to improve ties between the U.S. and Muslims" received prominent display. U.S. Ambassador Patterson's statement clarifying that "the U.S. government will continue to deliver assistance to Pakistan" received extensive coverage. Her assertion that the U.S. "is not depriving the Pakistani government any degree of direct funding" was also highlighted. Some newspapers highlighted that Finance Minister

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
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"Tarin" differed with U.S. on claim regarding the English daily, "Dawn," front-paged Admiral Mullen's statement that "Pakistan faces a two-front threat - both from Indian and Afghan." Almost all major dailies reported that the "suicide" in jail of a Christian accused of blasphemy "sparked riots in Sialkot."

Several major English language dailies ran editorials on the death of the Christian young man in police custody. The populist, often sensational national English daily "The News," noted that the "blasphemy pretext, even though it was entirely unproven, has been used to take away another life." The Lahore-based liberal English newspaper, "Daily Times," maintained that the "latest death has burdened the conscience of Pakistan with one more collective crime."

Whereas, the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" advised that the "majority Muslim community must also learn to adhere to the law and demonstrate self-restraint." End Summary.

News Stories

"Chief Of Taliban Beheading Squad Captured" "Dawn" (09/17)

"Sher Mohammad Qasab, one of 15 Taliban 'commanders' carrying a head money of Rs10 million, was captured in Swat on Wednesday, along with 16 other militants. Thirty-seven terrorists laid down their arms in different areas of the valley. Qasab's is the third high-profile arrest announced in five days."

"Hillary Hosts Iftar-Dinner: U.S. To Boost Ties With Muslim World" "Dawn" (09/17)

"In the past, relationship between the United States and Muslims suffered from misunderstanding and misperception but the Obama administration is determined to improve it, says Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton. At an Iftar-dinner she hosted at the State Department on Tuesday evening, Secretary Clinton also told American Muslims and diplomats from the Muslim world that the Obama administration 'will defend the freedom of religion.'"

"U.S. Refutes 'No Direct Money' Allegation" "Dawn," "The News," "Daily Times," (09/17)

"The U.S. government will continue to deliver assistance to Pakistan through a variety of long-standing vectors as required by American law to ensure transparency and accountability, and is not depriving the Pakistani government any degree of direct funding as a result of a lack of confidence or trust," U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Anne W. Patterson said on Wednesday.... 'We have provided

more than \$3 billion in combined security, economic, and development assistance since President Zardari was elected." UNCLASSIFIED

"Tarin Differs With U.S. On claim Regarding Aid" "The Nation"
(09/17)

"Minister Shaukat Tarin has said that he is unaware about \$3 billion U.S. Aid to Pakistan during last one year as he just knows about \$971 million which Washington has given in different sectors. I don't know where from the (U.S.) have added up this amount."

"How Patterson Came Up With The \$3 Billion Count, Nobody Knows; Pakistan Received \$970 Million Not \$3 Billion From U.S.: Official" "The News" (09/17)

"The statement of U.S. Ambassador Anne Patterson about giving \$3 billion assistance to Zardari regime surprised the top economic managers of Pakistan and they were completely clueless about the figure of \$3 billion floated by the U.S. Embassy. Talking to 'The

News,' a senior functionary of the Finance Ministry said requesting anonymity as he was not formally authorized to give Ministry's version: 'The U.S. Ambassador should provide details of \$3 billion assistance given to Pakistan during the last one and a half years period,' the official said."

"Pakistan Faces Threat From Two Sides, Says Top U.S. General" "Dawn"
(09/17)

"Pakistan faces a two-front threat - both from the Indian and Afghan sides - and its strategy for combating militants would always reflect this threat perception, says the U.S. Military Chief. Admiral Michael Mullen made the remarks at a hearing of the Senate Committee on Armed Services where he agreed with some lawmakers that showing weakness in Afghanistan would also destabilize Pakistan."

"Team Visited Islamabad To Review Aid Spending" "Dawn" (09/17)

"In a written reply to Senate Armed Services Committee, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mike Mullen said the team was sent to review the Coalition Support Funds, which reimburses expense incurred during the anti-extremists operations. The decision to send the team followed a congressional demand to increase U.S. oversight of the reimbursements to Pakistan."

"Qaeda Trying To Seek N-Secrets From Pakistan: Holbrooke" "Daily Times," "The Nation" (09/17)

"Al Qaeda is trying to get its hands on Pakistan's nuclear secrets and remains dangerous as ever, a private TV channel quoted U.S."

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Special Envoy Richard Holbrooke as saying on Wednesday. He said Al Qaeda was still operating in the region, adding that it was publicly asking nuclear engineers to give them nuclear secrets from Pakistan."

"U.S. To Boost Pakistan's Counter-Terror Capabilities" "Dawn"
(09/17)

"The Obama administration has set objectives for countering Al Qaeda in Pakistan and Afghanistan, from boosting Islamabad's counter-insurgency capabilities to building up Afghan security forces so U.S. assistance can be reduced, according to an internal document obtained by Reuters on Wednesday."

"Usama's Close Aide Killed In Drone Attack" "The News" (09/17)

"Intelligence sources are confirming that Nazimuddin alias Yahyo - an important Uzbek comrade of Al Qaeda Chief Usama bin Laden - was killed in Monday's drone attack in North Waziristan.... Intelligence sources are also confirming that another important leader of al-Qaeda Ilyas Kashmiri was killed in another drone attack about a week earlier. Ilyas Kashmiri was stated to be the al-Qaeda's commander for Pakistan."

"Taliban Kill 2 Baitullah In-Laws On Spying Charges" "The News"
(09/17)

"Two members of the family of the in-laws of the slain Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) head Baitullah Mahsud have reportedly been killed by the Taliban in South Waziristan on charges of spying."

"11 Militants Killed In Dera Ismail Khan Gunship Copter Attack" "The News" (09/17)

"Eleven militants were killed when gunship helicopters pounded their hideouts in Nadir Wanda area on the Dera Ismail Khan-Lakki Marwat border on Wednesday, sources said."

"Owais Says Govt. Was Forced To Launch Khyber Operation" "The News"
(09/17)

"NWFP Governor Owais Ahmad Ghani said on Wednesday the government was forced to launch an operation in Bara tehsil of Khyber Agency after the militants of banned Lashkar-e-Islami (LI) challenged the writ of government in the area."

"Lashkar-e-Islam (LI) Chief Charged With Rocket Attacks" "The News"
(09/17)

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"The Banned Lashkar-e-Islam (LI) Chief ~~Maqbool Bhatti~~ was charged with rocketing Peshawar city on Wednesday after the provincial capital witnessed five successive attacks in only four days to terrorize the entire population."

"Retired Captain Held For 'Links' With Anti-State Network" "Dawn" (09/17)

"A retired army captain was picked up by a joint team of police and an intelligence agency from Islamabad on Wednesday for his alleged links with an anti-state network, sources said."

"Christian's Death In Jail Sparks Riots In Sialkot" "The News" (09/17)

"Pakistani Christians clashed with security forces on Wednesday at the funeral of a Christian man who police said hanged himself in jail while being held on accusations he defiled the Holy Quran. Some Christian leaders alleged he was murdered. The clashes - just weeks after eight Christians were burnt to death by a Muslim mob - a reminder of the tensions, simmering in religious minority communities in Muslim-majority Pakistan, where a spreading Taliban movement has fuelled Islamist extremism."

"President's Spokesman Denies Deal Remarks" "Dawn" (09/17)

"President Asif Ali Zardari backtracked on Wednesday on his reported remarks that he and 'international guarantors' had negotiated an 'indemnity' for former President Gen. (Retd) Pervez Musharraf that paved the way for his 'safe exit.'... Political analysts believed that President Zardari had changed his statement because of political and international pressure."

"President Never Talked Of A Deal, Babar Denies Three Days Later" (09/17)

"Spokesperson for the President former Senator Farhatullah Babar on Wednesday contradicted reports in a section of the media that president Asif Ali Zardari had confirmed negotiations with the so-called international guarantors to give indemnity to former dictator Gen. (R) Pervez Musharraf."

"Friend Or Foe?" "The Nation" (09/17)

"The U.S., far from the public perception and official claims of supplying Pakistan with substantive military hardware, is actually impeding Pakistan's efforts to upgrade its capabilities especially in non-offensive systems. According to inside sources, only recently, the PAF, which has an agreement with Ukraine for the purchase of air to air refuellers, asked Ukraine to send a trainee

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plane so that the PAF personnel could familiarize themselves with the systems that were expected later. The Ukraine agreed to send the required aircraft which happened to be in the U.S. However, before it could fly to Pakistan, the U.S. authorities on learning of its destination, impounded the plane. Earlier, the U.S. had tried unsuccessfully to block the deal itself."

Editorials/Op-eds

"Beyond Belief," an editorial in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (09/17)

"The blasphemy pretext, even though it was entirely unproven, has been used to take away another life. It is becoming hard to keep track of how many needless deaths have been caused by those bandying about the blasphemy charge and then acting as judge, jury and executioner. It has to be said, for the umpteenth time, that the simple fact that we are all humans demands that the blasphemy laws be reviewed to discourage such barbarity.... Will this new outrage prompt the government to take more proactive measures to prevent the abuse of minorities and to tackle the bigotry that underpins it?"

"Death Of Blasphemy Accused," an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English language daily "Daily Times" (cir. 10,000) (09/17)

"Christians killed in the name of Islam never get justice. The only way an accused can be saved is to bundle him out of the country after releasing him on bail. The Muslims of Pakistan are killed

like flies by the Taliban warlords and Al Qaeda. Instead of uniting against the curse of Muslim-kills-Muslim they turn around and target the most impoverished community among the minorities of Pakistan. The latest death has burdened the conscience of Pakistan with one more collective crime. The state, forewarned, has instead relied on its old reflex of looking away and letting an innocent man die."

"Communal Tensions," an editorial in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (09/17)

"Outbreaks of communal tension - especially that stoked by allegations of blasphemy - can have a snowball effect.... The country cannot risk these attacks turning into a pogrom against minorities, particularly given suspicions that certain banned sectarian outfits had a hand in the Gojra violence.... Effective prosecution would serve as a deterrent to future attacks of this nature. The majority Muslim community must also learn to adhere to the law and demonstrate self-restraint."

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"Dealing With Terrorists," an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English daily "The Post" (cir. 5,000) (09/17)

"According to a news report, the government is set to introduce major changes to the anti-terrorism law to give more powers to law-enforcement agencies and courts to deal with terrorism.... While only time will tell whether the proposed laws are applied in true letter and spirit, the law makers should ensure that the set of proposed laws is debated at length in the Parliament before it comes into force. The apprehensions raised here are not without reason. Anti-terrorism laws have been blatantly misused in the past. A poor track record in this context has brought a bad name for the country as human rights organizations in the country and abroad have pointed to the human rights violations in the name of nabbing the terrorists. The government should take every step to make the process participatory and transparent."

"Militancy And The Law," an editorial in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (09/17)

"According to a report in this paper, the government is preparing to amend anti-terrorism laws to eliminate loopholes that may allow terrorists and militants to walk free on technicalities and/or lack of evidence. Operation Rah-i-Rast in Swat may have been the catalyst for the impending changes, but there is a general problem with the law and its implementation is found wanting when it comes to punishing militants. Undoubtedly there is a social and political element in this debate, for it is demoralizing and frightening for the people when the state seems unable to prosecute and punish those involved in terrorism. Yet laws must not be tinkered with in haste and every effort should be made to ensure that changes are thoroughly thought out and well designed."

"A Failed Cover Up," an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (09/17)

"Presidential spokesperson Farhatullah Babar has tried to gloss over President Zardari's confession regarding the deal underwritten by foreign guarantors for the safe exit of Gen. (R) Musharraf; but it does not wash.... Media persons are even more tuned in to nuances and implications of what is said and what is left unsaid. But clearly there is a brazenness with which the Presidency is now trying to erase the President's confessional in an unguarded moment. And it makes no sense for Babar to hide behind the now rather worn out refrain of a conspiracy of vilification against the Party leaders."

"Did Pak Envoy Deliberately Leak Official Classified Communication?," a news commentary by Ahmed Quraishi in the

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"In his 'classified' letter that is no longer classified, Ambassador Haqqani fails to recognize the prerogative of any government, including the government of Pakistan, to decide whom to grant entry permits.... No U.S. Ambassador to Islamabad has written back to the U.S. government warning of dire consequences for following such a policy, as Ambassador Haqqani has done in his case. Exercising discretion in granting entry visas to U.S. journalists falls within the prerogative of the government of Pakistan. The ISI, whom

Haqqani tried to vilify to please a certain lobby in Washington, D.C., follows this policy as part of its prescribed duty according to the law to protect Pakistan's national interest.... As the custodian of Pakistan's interests in Washington, why does Ambassador Haqqani insist that Islamabad should not have the right to choose who should enjoy the hospitality of the Pakistani people, especially when the number of visas denied to U.S. applicants is insignificant compared to the number granted? And should Ambassador Haqqani not defend this legitimate Pakistani position instead of putting his own government under pressure on behalf of Washington's interest where it is undue?"

"Breaking The Deadlock," an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (09/17)

"Iran's willingness to hold talks on the nuclear issue with six countries - Britain, China, France, Germany, Russia and the U.S. - is a pragmatic way of settling a thorny issue with the world community. Washington has welcomed the move as an important first step.... One hopes that in the upcoming negotiations the world community would hear Tehran's side of the story with consideration and patience."

"Israeli Violation Of Geneva Convention," an editorial note in the second largest nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (09/17)

"UN enquiry commission has strongly criticized Israel for Geneva Convention violation during attack on Gaza.... Israeli military savagely killed Palestinian civilians, used white phosphorous against them and their bullets and phosphorous did not even spare UN camps. Geneva Convention violation was proved by UN itself and now it should move against it. UN should suspend Israel's membership and should impose sanctions against it. If UN does not do it then the impression of its being an American puppet will be strengthened."

"Israeli Crimes In Gaza," an editorial in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000)

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(09/17)

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"Israel, which did not cooperate with the UN's fact-finding commission headed by a man who is himself a Jew from South Africa, rejected the report. Such censure by the UN is not going to make Israel think and behave responsibly. The Jewish state is immune to criticism, because it knows it is the region's most powerful state militarily and can get away with all manner of crime because it enjoys America's support. Washington's Middle East policy is hostage to its domestic politics, for Tel Aviv knows the powerful Jewish lobby in the U.S. will always bail it out of trouble, no matter what crime Israel commits."

(All circulation figures are based on estimation)

Patterson

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