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

SUBJECT: PAKISTAN MEDIA REACTION: JUNE 06, 2008

SUMMARY: Reports that the Islamabad Police put the capital on 'Red Alert' following reports that "three vehicles laden with explosives have sneaked into the city" received prominent front page coverage in all newspapers on Friday. Foreign Minister Qureshi's statement that the "government is seeking opposition's help in framing new anti-terror policy to tackle frequent violation of the Pakistan-Afghanistan border and U.S. missile attacks in the tribal areas" received prominent coverage in most dailies on Friday. U.S. Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mike Mullen's statement that "Pakistan was fighting terrorists bravely" also figured prominently. Newspapers also highlighted the Government of Pakistan's statement that the "Danish embassy blast would not affect the reconciliation process with tribal militants." Also highlighted were reports that government released 64 Swat militants following a peace accord."

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The English daily, "The News," and Urdu language publication, "Jang" ran an exclusive interview of nuclear scientist Dr. A. Q. Khan in which he blamed President Musharraf and his associates "for being too weak to defend Pakistan's nuclear program."

Varying themes got reflected in editorials in different newspapers. Most dailies continued to run editorials on the success of Barack Obama as the Democratic front-runner for the U.S. presidential elections. The English daily, "The News," noted that "while Obama has termed himself a candidate for change there is no indication that he plans to bring any radical adjustments in the U.S. foreign policy. Indeed regarding Israel, the war on terror and Pakistan his tone throughout has been hard-line." Another English daily, "The Post," observed that "the future president of the U.S. will have to work to reverse policies that have proved harmful to the interests of the U.S. as well as other peace-loving countries. Commenting on the impending delivery of F-16 aircrafts to Pakistan the Urdu daily, "Islam," wrote: "The American firm manufactured these F-16 aircrafts for Pakistan in 1980s, but the U.S. Administration stopped the company from providing these jets to Pakistan. Ultimately these aircrafts were used by the U.S. Air Force in 1990s, and now the U.S. is giving us these second-hand aircrafts. Now these old and used jets are of no use for Pakistan Air Force. The Government of Pakistan should discard these jets." End Summary.

 News Stories

1. "Capital Police On Red Alert" "The News" (06/06)

"Three vehicles laden with explosives have sneaked into Islamabad on Thursday posing threat to sensitive installations and some marked foreign missions, sensitive agency sources told 'The News.'" The capital city was sealed on Thursday as the Inspector General of Police, Islamabad suddenly put the police force on high alert and asked to barricade all the main roads leading to Islamabad, police sources said."

2. "Security For Diplomats Beefed Up" "Dawn" (06/06)

"Security is being beefed up for diplomats in the city after European Union envoys told the government that the terrorist attack on the Danish Embassy was 'an attack on the whole diplomatic community.'"

3. "Al-Qaeda Claims Attack On Danish Embassy" "The News" (06/06)

"Al-Qaeda on Wednesday claimed in Internet statements to have carried out a suicide attack on the Danish embassy in Islamabad."

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4. "Government Seeks Opposition's Help In Framing New Anti-Terror Policy" "Dawn" (06/06)

"Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi on Thursday told the National Assembly that the government had adopted a new strategy to counter terrorism after realizing that the policies of the previous regime were not working."

5. "Government-Opposition Strategy On US Attacks Soon: Qureshi" "The Post" (06/06)

"The National Assembly was concerned over border and air-space violations by coalition forces from Afghanistan, Qureshi said 'We have to sit collectively and devise a strategy.'"

6. "Qureshi Seeks Unity Against Border Violations" "The News" (06/06)

"Foreign Minister Shah Mahmud Qureshi on Thursday told the National Assembly that the government would not allow foreign interference in the Pakistan territory and would ensure that the Pakistani soil was not used for terrorism."

7. "Pakistan Fighting Terrorists 'Bravely,' Says US" "Dawn" (06/06)

"Pakistan's army is 'fighting bravely' against terrorism, Admiral Mike Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff said after a visit to the country to discuss joint efforts against the Taliban and Al Qaeda. Mr. Mullen said the Pakistan army remained committed to combating terrorism."

8. "Danish Embassy Blast Will Not Affect Talks With Militants" "Dawn" (06/06)

"Pakistan said on Thursday that the Danish embassy blast would not affect the reconciliation process with tribal militants. When his attention was drawn to Al Qaeda claiming responsibility for the blast, Foreign Office spokesman Mohammad Sadiq said that the claim, made in a statement hosted on internet, would have no bearing on the talks."

9. "64 Swat 'Militants' Freed In Timergara" "Dawn" (06/06)

"Following a peace accord signed by the government with the Tehrik-i-Taliban in Swat, 64 suspected militants were released from Timergara's district jail on Thursday, official sources told 'Dawn.'"

10. "Mush Too Weak To Defend Nukes: UNCLASSIFIED Dr. Khan, 'The News' (06/06)

"Denying all the accusations of proliferation and corruption, the father of the Pakistani nuclear bomb, Dr. A.Q. Khan, has blamed President Musharraf and his associates for being too weak to defend Pakistan's nuclear program, allowing the Western countries and the news media to malign and scandalize Pakistan during the last eight years. In an exclusive interview with 'The News,' Dr Khan thanked the Pakistani masses for recognition of his contribution in transforming Pakistan into a nuclear state."

11. "Bush Says Cooperation With Pakistan In US Interest" "The News" (06/06)

"President George W. Bush said on Thursday the United States cooperation with Pakistan and other countries facing terrorism challenges is in America's vital interest, as he highlighted the need for strengthening democratic institutions that serve as an antidote to extremism. Speaking at the US Institute of Peace, he said curbing extremism requires using the power of liberty."

12. "Peace Talks Must End Violence: US" "The News" (06/06)

"Acknowledging the enormity of challenge facing Pakistan in curbing terrorism along its rugged Afghan border, United States National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley has urged patience as the new government develops a comprehensive counter-terrorism strategy. Replying to a question about Pakistan's talks with local Taliban at a briefing he said that Washington wanted any anti-terror negotiations in Pakistani tribal areas should result in an end to extremist violence."

13. "Taliban's 12 Demands For Peace In Darra" "Dawn" (06/06)

"The Taliban of Darra Adam Khel are reported to have presented 12 demands to the government for restoring peace in the region at the first round of talks held at an unspecified place."

14. "Mukhtar On Drone Attacks In Tribal Areas" "Dawn" (06/06)

"United States (US) troops are not violating the sanctity of Pakistani borders as 'they use pilot less drones to hit Al-Qaeda hideouts in Pakistani tribal areas,' according to Defence Minister Chaudhry Ahmed Mukhtar."

15. "Army To Leave Mehsud Areas After Deal Inked" "Daily Times" (06/06)

"The military will 'withdraw completely' from the Mehsud areas of

South Waziristan after Taliban commander Baitullah Mehsud frees the remaining captured army and paramilitary soldiers, and the government and Mehsud tribes sign a peace deal, according to a draft truce made available to 'Daily Times' on Thursday."

16. "US Using Ships For 'Terror Suspects'; Holds 26,000 People Without Trial" "Pakistan Observer" (06/06)

"The United States government is currently detaining at least 26,000 people without trial in secret prisons, and information suggests up to 80,000 have been 'through the system' since 2001. 'The US government must show a commitment to rights and basic humanity by immediately revealing who these people are, where they are, and what has been done to them,' a human rights activist said."

17. "'September 11 Mastermind' Seeks Death Penalty" "Dawn" (06/06)

"The accused Al Qaeda mastermind of the Sept 11 attacks stood in a US military court on Thursday and said he would welcome the death penalty. 'This is what I wish, to be martyred,' Pakistani captive Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the highest-ranking Al Qaeda operative in US custody, told the Guantanamo court."

18. "US Envoy Meets Kaira" "The Nation", "Pakistan Observer" (06/06)

"The US Ambassador to Pakistan Anne W. Patterson called on the Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Northern Areas Qamar Zaman Kaira in Islamabad on Thursday. Pakistan-US relations, regional situation composite dialogue between Pakistan and India, Kashmir issue, matters relating to regional cooperation in the wake of WTO came under discussion during the meeting."

19. "Haqqani Urges Long-Term US-Pakistan Partnership" "Pakistan Observer" (06/06)

"Pakistan's new ambassador to the United States Husain Haqqani made an emphatic case for fostering long-term US-Pakistan strategic partnership on the Capitol Hill, voicing the hope that emergence of democracy in his South Asian nation would help bolster bilateral ties."

20. "Benazir Paid For Defying US: Beg" "Dawn" (06/06)

"Former Chief of Army Staff Mirza Aslam Beg has said slain PPP Chairperson Benazir Bhutto was killed because of her anti-American policy."

Editorials/Op-eds

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21. "Obama And US Policy," an editorial in the English daily, "The News" (06/06)

"While Obama has termed himself a candidate for change there is no indication that he plans to bring any radical adjustments in US foreign policy. Indeed, regarding Israel, the 'war on terror' and Pakistan his tone throughout has been hard-line. Of course, for Obama, there is still a long way to go before any question arises of playing a role in policy making. Whatever the coming months bring for the US, there can be no doubt the country has moved towards a new era."

22. "Obama's Nomination," an editorial in the English daily, "The Post" (06/06)

"With the expected change of guard at the White House later this year, the world leaders and the people are keeping their fingers crossed in the hope that the future US President might bring about some positive changes in the present US foreign policy that has earned a bad name for that country around the globe. The future president of the US will have to work to reverse policies that have proved harmful to the interests of the US as well as other peace-loving countries."

23. "Malice Of Barack Obama" an editorial in the Urdu daily, "Nawa-i-Waqt" (06/06/08)

"Barack Obama, Democratic nominee for U.S. presidential election, has exposed his malice against the Muslim Ummah, especially Iran. Therefore, Muslims of the world should not expect any good coming their way from Obama.... He has proved himself to be a tool of Zionists by declaring that the interests of Israel and America are identical."

24. "Nomination Of Obama For Presidency," an editorial in the Urdu daily, "Pakistan" (06/06/08)

"Emergence of a black presidential candidate is a historic event. If he was elected as the President, which is very much expected, then it will turn a new page in the world history.... No visible change in Pak-U.S. relations is expected under Obama."

25. "F-16 Aircrafts For Pakistan," an editorial in the Urdu daily, "Islam" (06/06)

"The American firm manufactured these F-16 aircrafts for Pakistan in 1980s, but the U.S. Administration imposed sanctions, and stopped

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the company from providing these jets to Pakistan. Ultimately these aircrafts were used by the U.S. Air Force in 1990s, and now the U.S. is giving us these second-hand aircrafts. Now these old and used jets are of no use for Pakistan Air Force. The Government of Pakistan should discard these jets, and ask the U.S. Government to reimburse the cost to Pakistan right away."

26. "Dr. A.Q. Khan's Recantation," an editorial in the English daily, "Daily Times" (06/06)

"Pakistani nuclear scientist Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan told the US media on Tuesday that 'he was not responsible for passing nuclear secrets to Iran and Libya.' This recantation is difficult to swallow for most half-informed people. The problem is that his latest "modification" is not going to convince anyone in the world outside, including the IAEA, where he is regarded as a big spider in the middle of a web of nuclear contraband at the global level."

27. "Will European Companies Be Ever Punished For Proliferation?" an editorial in the Urdu daily, "Islam" (06/06)

"It is now crystal clear that some French, German and South African firms transferred nuclear technology to Iran and North Korea. Will the UN and U.S. take serious note of this proliferation ever? Moreover, no one would ever believe that the American intelligence agency CIA was unaware of these deals. What is the reason that only Pakistani nuclear scientist is alone blamed for proliferation? Perhaps, he (Dr. Khan) committed an unforgivable crime by transforming a Muslim country into a nuclear state."

28. "The Exploding Mangoes," an op-ed by Ayesha Siddiqa in the English daily, "Dawn" (06/06)

"Musharraf continues in office to serve as a bridge between American interests and certain Pakistani interests. While President Musharraf is there to watch over American interests such as the Pakistani military continuing to fight the war on terror or nuclear weapons not falling into the hands of unsavory characters, the military is more concerned about a situation where the US or NATO forces might choose to directly attack Pakistani territory. The entire peace process with the Jihadis is not just the idea of politicians, it was also conceived and implemented by the military."

Patterson

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