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SUBJECT: PAKISTAN MEDIA REACTION: JULY 29, 2008

SUMMARY: President Bush's assurance to Prime Minister Gilani at the White House that the United States respects Pakistan sovereignty dominated front pages in all newspapers on Tuesday. The joint communique reaffirming the commitment of the United States and Pakistan to foster long-term strategic partnership also figured prominently. All newspapers ran front-page photographs of the meeting of the two leaders. Pegged to it were reports that a U.S. missile attack on South Waziristan killed six people, including an Al Qaeda weapons expert. The expression of concern by Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee Gen. Majid over repeated cross-border missile attacks during his meeting with acting U.S. CENTCOM chief Lt. Gen. Dempsey was also highlighted by all newspapers.

Most major dailies ran in-depth editions of the latest Taliban threats warning of more suicide attacks in Pakistan. The second-largest Urdu daily, "Nawa-i-Waqt," noted that the present government was pushing the country and its people toward lawlessness, terrorism, and suicide attacks by continuing with the military operation in the tribal areas. The English daily "The News" observed that it is obviously pointless to engage in dialogue with a man like Maulana Fazlullah, and that such people must be treated as the criminals they are and not permitted to hide behind the convenient mask of religious belief. Another English daily, "The Nation," noted that the militants in general and the Taliban in particular have become too provocative to be ignored by the government, which has been trying to hammer out a solution at the conference table. End Summary.

 News Stories

1. "U.S. To Respect Pakistan Sovereignty, Says Bush" "Dawn"
 (07/29)

"President George W. Bush assured Pakistan on Monday that the United States supported Pakistan's sovereignty, hours after a U.S. air strike had killed six people in FATA. 'Pakistan is a strong ally and a vibrant democracy,' said Mr. Bush after a meeting with Prime Minister Yusuf Raza Gilani at the White House."

2. "Pakistan, U.S. Reaffirm Strategic Partnership" "The News"
 (07/29)

"Pakistan and the United States have reaffirmed their commitment to fostering long-term strategic partnership, enhance economic cooperation and work together to build democratic institutions and eliminate terrorism."

3. "Joint Communique: \$115.5 Million U.S. Food Security Assistance"
 "Dawn" (07/29)

"The United States will provide \$115.5 million in food security assistance to Pakistan, including \$42.5 million over the next nine months, says a joint communique issued in Washington on Monday after a meeting between President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani. The statement also supports a move in the U.S. Senate to provide \$15 billion to Pakistan over 10 years."

4. "Condoleezza Meets Gilani" "The News" (07/29)

"U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice on Monday called on Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani here and discussed Pakistan-U.S."

cooperation on regional and international issues of common concern." UNCLASSIFIED

5. "Bilateral Ties With U.S. Important For Peace" "The News" (07/29)

"Pak-U.S. bilateral Relations are important for peace and security in the region, a Foreign Office spokesman said on Monday and expressed the hope that Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani's visit to the United States will result in a better understanding between the two countries."

6. "Pakistan Seeks U.S. Help to Meet Energy Needs: FO Spokesman" "The Nation" (07/29)

"Pakistan on Monday sought the assistance of United States and the rest of international community for the fulfillment of its ever-increasing energy needs. Answering a question in Islamabad at his weekly press briefing, Foreign Office spokesman Mohammad Sadiq said Pakistan was keen in cooperation with the international community in the production of nuclear energy under safeguards."

7. "Pakistan, America Expect More From Each Other" "The News" (07/29)

"Pakistan is hopeful of getting generous assistance from the United States in various fields in the wake of talks Prime Minister Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani had with U.S. President George Bush in White House on Monday. In return Washington expects Islamabad to play more 'effective and assertive' role in fight against terrorism."

8. "Missile Raid On South Waziristan; Six Killed" "Dawn" (07/29)

"A missile apparently fired from a Predator drone killed at least six people on Monday in a compound in South Waziristan, near the Afghan border. A security official said the strike might have killed Abu Khabab Al Misri, a senior Al Qaeda trainer known for his expertise in chemicals."

9. "General Majid Expresses Concern Over Attacks" "Dawn" (07/29)

"The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, Gen. Tariq Majid, has expressed concern over repeated cross-border missile attacks and firing by coalition and Afghan forces and stressed that Pakistan's sovereignty and territorial integrity must be respected. 'Any violation in this regard could be detrimental to bilateral relations,' he said, during a meeting with Lieutenant General Martin E. Dempsey, acting Commander of U.S. CENTCOM, who had called on him at the Joint Staff Headquarters in Chaklala on Monday."

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10. "U.S. To Boost Interaction With Pak Army: U.S." "The Post"
(07/29)

"The acting U.S. CENTCOM Commander Lieutenant General Martin E. Dempsey has said that U.S. would enhance intelligence sharing and close cooperation with Pakistan army in war against terrorism and extremism. Lieutenant General Martin E Dempsey on Monday met Chief of the Army Staff General Ashfaq Pervez Kayani in General Headquarters Rawalpindi and Chairman Joint Chief of the Staff Committee General Tariq Majeed in Chaklala Headquarters, military sources said."

11. "PAF Gets Another Four F-16s" "Dawn," "The News," "The Nation,"
"Daily Times," "Pakistan Observer" (07/29)

"A simple but impressive ceremony for handing over of four F16s aircraft to the Pakistan Air Force (PAF) was held at PAF Base Mushaf in Sargodha on Monday, says a press release. These aircraft were flown into Pakistan and were later handed over to the PAF by United States CENTCOM Commander Lt. Gen. Martin E. Dempsey."

12. "Militants Strike In Swat" "Dawn" (07/29)

"Three security personnel were killed in an attack in Swat on Monday. Claiming responsibility for the attack, Terik-i-Taliban Pakistan spokesman Muslim Khan told 'Dawn' by phone that the action was in retaliation against the arrest of several Taliban."

13. "Afghan Killed For 'Spying'" "Dawn" (07/29)

"An Afghan refugee was gunned down by some people on Monday for allegedly spying for the U.S. forces in Afghanistan."

14. "Seminary Denies Detaining American Student" "Dawn" (07/29)

"The administration of a Karachi-based Madarassa has denied holding of Muna Abanur Mahamed, an American citizen at the seminary against her will and has claimed that she is free to leave the facility whenever she wants."

15. "Pakistan Undecided About Seeking IAEA Vote On Indian Deal"
"Dawn" (07/29)

"Because of immense U.S. pressure, Pakistan has still not decided whether to press for a vote on the India-specific IAEA safeguards agreement when the UN nuclear watchdog's board of governors meets on

Friday. Foreign Office spokesman Mohammad Sadiq said at his weekly press briefing without saying anything about Pakistan's preparation

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Editorials/Op-eds

16. "CIA Activities On Pakistani Soil And National Security," an editorial in the second-largest, center-right nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 125,000) (07/29)

"According to a Los Angeles Times report, there are 200 CIA agents stationed in Pakistan and this is the second biggest CIA operation after Iraq.... General (retired) Pervez Musharraf was not bothered about American secret service personnel coming into Pakistan and harming our national interests. However, this democratically elected government does not have any compulsion to continue the past policy. Hence the government should direct the agents' departure from the country. We should look into the possibility of suicide attackers and terrorists having been trained by these CIA agents."

17. "Hazards Of Impatience," an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (07/29)

"PM Gilani faces a hard task explaining his government's policy on terrorism to an impatient Bush administration looking for quick fixes. The U.S. leadership needs to be told that reliance on brute force alone tends to strengthen militants and spread their influence. What the elected government is trying to do now is to control it through a multi-pronged policy that is endorsed by the coalition partners and enjoys wide public support."

18. "PM's Trip To The U.S.," an editorial in the Lahore-based independent Urdu daily "Waqt" (cir. 5000) (07/29)

"Although we hear from some American circles that they support dialogue [with the local Taliban], the general impression is that the power circles in the United States do not favor talks with the militants and want the Pakistan government to use force on the militants. Keeping this U.S. mindset in view, we can say that the PM will face some pressure during his U.S. visit. However, we hope that the PM will be able to convince the U.S. administration of its stance [in favor of holding talks]."

19. "Don't Just Make Claims, Take Action Too," an editorial in the Lahore-based populist center-right Urdu daily "Khabrain" (cir. 50,000) (07/29)

"Another reservation the Pakistani nation has about the United States is that it does not let democracy prosper in the country, and that military rulers suit the United States. President Musharraf's

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retention as president even after the February 2013 elections is also seen as continuation of U.S. policies.... Hence the United States should fulfill the promises it has made during the PM's trip to the U.S. Firstly, tension on the Pak-Afghan border should actually be removed; and secondly the U.S. should give solid support to Pakistan to fight terrorism."

20. "Terrorist Threats," an editorial in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (07/29)

"Fazlullah is a man who has been known in the past to roam the Swat area on horseback, wielding a sword, as people handed over money and jewellery to him. Such acts of extortion are well-known in the area. The blackmailing of authorities too is not new. It is obviously pointless to engage in dialogue with such men. They must be treated as the criminals that they are and not permitted to hide behind the convenient mask of religious belief."

21. "Sabre-Rattling," an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (07/29)

"The militants in general and the TTP in particular have become too provocative to be ignored by the government, which has been trying to hammer out a solution of the conflict at the conference table, something it remains committed to do but, unfortunately, the Taliban behavior inspires anything but confidence.... But the TTP should know that no govt. worth the name would get intimidated by such tactics."

22. "Suicide Attacks Threat By Tehrik-i-Taliban," an editorial in the second-largest, center-right nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 125,000) (07/29)

"TTP leader Maulana Fazlullah has threatened suicide attacks in the event of a military operation in Swat.... The present elected rulers are also pushing the country and its people toward lawlessness, terrorism, and suicide attacks by continuing with the military operation in the tribal areas. It is also inappropriate for Maulana Fazal Ullah to adopt a threatening tone; he is admitting that he was involved in suicide attacks in the past."

23. "The Taliban Jitters," an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English language daily "Daily Times" (cir. 10,000) (07/29)

"Pakistan has the military capability to confront the menace but its army doesn't want to risk taking on the warlords when the elected politicians are not fully willing to endorse military action.... The Taliban have been in total control of FATA for almost a decade. Peshawar will be the jewel in their crown. And if Peshawar goes, the rest of Pakistan would not be far away."

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24. "Drone Attack," an editorial in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (07/29)

"Yet there appear to be no reports of Pakistani aircraft intercepting or engaging and destroying any of the RPVs that daily intrude upon us. The inescapable conclusion is that nobody ordered them to do so, and the equally inescapable conclusion is that somebody in the Pakistani government decided to turn a blind eye, and decided perhaps that they would allow the drones to operate and strike at will."

25. "An Ominous Mission," an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (07/29)

"Operations that the American airplanes have launched on several occasions to hit the so-called terrorist hideouts but, in fact, resulted in killing innocent people, have already created intense ill will among the local population. This will constitute another provocation to the tribesmen to take revenge. The vicious cycle cannot be broken with the presence of CIA operatives in the country nor by indiscriminate attacks."

26. "War On Terror & Census," an op-ed by Nasser Yousaf in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (07/29)

"The present situation is not a temporary phenomenon and calls for a long-term strategy to deal with the fallout of the war. The enemy will keep reappearing after every drubbing it receives.... According to some estimates there are over 10,000 foreigners actively engaged in militancy. How could such a large number evade the prying eyes of the pursuing agencies if the pursuit is earnest? The areas adjoining the line (Durand Line) are no longer manageable even with the help of state-of-the-art satellite surveillance. The Durand Line will have to be fenced and let the fencing be done by the one most willing to do it, which must be the United States."

27. "A Lot Of Things To Be Achieved Before An Eyeball To Eyeball With United States," an op-ed by Mahmood Sham, Group Editor of the leading mass circulation centrist Urdu daily "Jang" (cir. 300,000) (07/29)

"Nearly everyone among the masses hates America these days; particularly the Muslim states are annoyed with this country very much. But the question is whether it is possible for us to confront a superpower with sheer public gatherings, protest demonstrations, empty slogans, emotional rhetoric, or abusing it in public. The Americans have a very long history of struggle to win independence and self-rule, and entrusting autonomy to their states (federating

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units). Following that era, Americans excelled in the fields of education, health care, environment, economy, science, and technology. By keeping these accomplishments in mind, and achieving all these successes, we can see eyeball to eyeball with the United States."

28. "Role Of ISI In National Defense And Integrity," an editorial in the popular rightist Urdu-language daily "Ausaf" (cir. 10,000)

(07/29)

"ISI is a big challenge. Pakistan's enemies, particularly India and Israel, are sick of this intelligence agency. Now it is being said that the United States also wants to curtail ISI's role, and to put it under the Ministry of Interior. Perhaps that is why some people opined that this step was taken at the U.S. behest, but the Pakistan Army reacted very sharply. Nevertheless, it is imperative to discuss the alleged political role of ISI, but the Parliament is the most appropriate forum for this debate."

29. "Failure Of Intelligence," an editorial in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000)

(07/29)

"There is no doubt about the need to bring it (ISI) under civilian control urgently; however, clandestine, surprise moves of the kind attempted by the government on Saturday only backfire and further undermine the government's authority. The humiliating back-pedaling of the government has also cemented its reputation for lurching from crisis to crisis, many of them self-made.... Missteps and errors are to be expected, especially from a political class that has never been allowed to be comfortable in power. Yet such grave and elementary errors of judgment suggest that the government is not learning from the mistakes of the past. This does not bode well for the transition to democracy."

30. "ISI: There Are Still Some Unanswered Questions," an editorial in the Islamabad-based rightist English daily "Pakistan Observer" (cir. 5,000) (07/29)

"The highly controversial decision of the Government, which has now been reversed, to place ISI under the control of the Interior Ministry evoked universal condemnation and as evident from the reaction reported by media, it shocked every section of the society.... Had the decision been taken at the behest of someone outside the Government? Why necessary homework was not done before announcing a major decision? What is all the more important is the timing of the move as it coincides with the visit of Prime Minister Gilani to the United States and his meeting with President Bush at the Oval Office. Some circles also believe that the decision was

aimed at pleasing the United States but it has failed." UNCLASSIFIED

31. "Oh God, What Is This Circus?," an editorial in the center-right Urdu daily "Pakistan" (cir. 10,000) (07/29)

"The issuance of [ISI-IB] notification and its withdrawal show that there is more than one power center and there are governments within the government. What necessitated the issuance of the order exactly at the time when the Prime Minister was to embark on an official U.S. visit, and what was the objective of the order? According to one speculation, this attempt to change the internal functioning of the ISI was a result of U.S. pressure."

32. "Controversial Notification On ISI: Army Spokesman Clarified The Situation," an editorial in the liberal Urdu daily "Express" (cir. 25,000) (07/29)

"The government has made a grave mistake, but withdrawal of the notification should not be considered a defeat. There has been severe criticism of the government's step at home and it does not seem to be ending...."

33. "Afia Siddiqui, Prisoner Number 650" an editorial in the second-largest, center-right nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 125,000) (07/29)

"Afia Siddiqui was abducted four and a half years ago while she was traveling in a train from Karachi. Her crime was the same as thousands of other Muslims who handed over to the U.S. custody and President Musharraf talked of getting billions of dollars in return. Majority of them are rotting in the U.S.-controlled notorious torture camp at Guantanamo Bay. Before the nation takes to the streets with the issue, the government should play it fullest role for the release of Afia Siddiqui."

Archibald

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