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ACTION SCT-00

INFO	LOG-00	EEB-00	AID-00	A-00	CCO-00	CG-00	COME-00
	CTME-00	INL-00	DOEE-00	DOTE-00	PERC-00	PDI-00	DS-00
	EAP-00	DHSE-00	EUR-00	FAAE-00	FBIE-00	VCI-00	DIAS-00
	H-00	TEDE-00	INR-00	INSE-00	IO-00	L-00	CAC-00
	ARMY-00	MOFM-00	MOF-00	M-00	CDC-00	VCIE-00	NEA-00
	DCP-00	NRC-00	NSAE-00	ISN-00	NSCE-00	OCS-00	NIMA-00
	PA-00	PM-00	GIWI-00	PRS-00	P-00	ISNE-00	DOHS-00
	FMPC-00	SP-00	IRM-00	SSO-00	SS-00	USSS-00	NCTC-00
	ASDS-00	CBP-00	SCRS-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	PRM-00	DRL-00
	G-00	SCA-00	NFAT-00	SAS-00	FA-00	SWCT-00	/000W

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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0316

INFO AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY

AMCONSUL KARACHI PRIORITY

AMCONSUL LAHORE PRIORITY

AMCONSUL PESHAWAR PRIORITY

CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY

USCINCCENT MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY

USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY

SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

RELEASED IN PART

B1, 1.4(B), 1.4(D), B3, NSA50

C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 003677

B3

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/31/2018

TAGS: PGOV, PREL, PTER, PK

SUBJECT: REACTION TO ALLEGED DRONE ATTACKS IN BANNU

REF: ISLAMABAD 3654

Classified By: Anne W. Patterson for reasons 1.4 (b), (d).

1. (C) Summary: According to local press, the alleged U.S. strike in Bannu on November 19 marked the first such attack in the settled areas of the Northwest Frontier Province, outside of the tribal areas. The strike drew a new round of condemnation by Prime Minister Gilani, coalition political parties, opposition leaders, and the media. According to Pakistani press, the strike killed four people, including a senior Al-Qaida member, and injured five others. The first strike within "Pakistan proper" is seen as a watershed event,

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and the media is suggesting this could herald the spread of attacks to Peshawar or Islamabad.

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] End Summary.

GOP RESPONSE

2. (C) President Zardari did not issue a public response. However, speaking to the National Assembly on November 20, Prime Minister Gilani condemned the alleged strikes as "intolerable" and said he hoped the incursions would stop with the change of administration in Washington. He refuted the accusation that the GOP had a secret agreement with the United States (as has been reported by the Washington Post). He repeated that the issue of drone strikes was being taken up with the U.S. government at various levels. (Note: Ambassador was convoked by the MFA on November 20, see reftel.) Gilani has also called into action a special joint parliamentary committee to follow up on the October 22 joint resolution against extremism.

PARLIAMENT PROTESTS

3. (C) On November 20 in the National Assembly, Pakistan Muslim League-N (PML-N) Opposition Leader Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan criticized the GOP's inability to stop alleged U.S. incursion and asked that the matter be taken to the United Nations. PML-N leader Ahsan Iqbal cited the Bannu attack as evidence that the GOP must have a secret agreement with the U.S. Other parliamentarians claimed that they have seen drones hovering over Swat, and warned that future attacks could spread to Peshawar and Islamabad.

4. (C) Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam leader Maulana Fazlur Rehman also made an impassioned speech during the Assembly session against alleged U.S. action in Bannu calling it "U.S. aggression and violation of Pakistan's territorial integrity." [REDACTED]

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6. (SBU) Chairman of the Joint Committee Raza Rabbani told the press November 21 that Pakistan had the option of taking

the strikes to the UN, but he questioned whether the UN would be effective in stopping them. "Friendly countries are being asked to help Pakistan in convincing the U.S. to respect Pakistan's sovereignty," he said. All papers noted that UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon had expressed "concern" about the U.S. attacks but noted that this was a bilateral issue between the U.S. and Pakistan.

NWFP RESPONSE

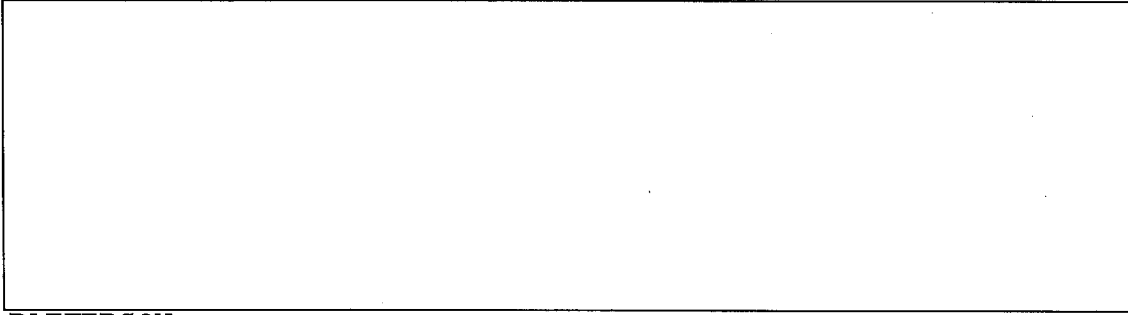
7. (C) Awami National Party leaders Asfundyar Wali Khan and Afrasiyab Khattack both condemned the strikes, saying such attacks could further weaken the harmony among the people of Pakistan and the U.S. Former NWFP Chief Minister and Bannu's provincial assembly representative Akram Khan Durrani appeared on several Pakistani TV news channels condemning the strikes. He also told fellow politicians that though he is a well-wisher of the U.S., attacks within the settled areas were going to push moderate political and religious forces "up against the wall." As the attacks spread into settled districts, he warned that politicians are losing face among their constituents and many "more people are willing to pick up arms rather than listen to us."

8. (C) There also were several student protests in Peshawar November 21 against the strikes. Anecdotal sources in Bannu report that though local people do not care about the death of Arabs or other foreigners, they are largely business-minded and do not want further instability. Bannu

residents are worried about the panic created by drones hovering overhead. The city was further shocked by several militant rocket attacks on November 20, which were in response to the drone strikes.

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