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

SUBJECT: PAKISTAN MEDIA REACTION: SEPTEMBER 09, 2008

Summary: Reports of an alleged U.S. missile attack in North Waziristan killing 23 including three Arabs and two Azerbaijani nationals dominated headlines in all newspapers on Tuesday. The English daily, "Dawn" reported that the White House said that the new civilian government in Pakistan fully supported the U.S. anti-terrorist strategy and was also participating in U.S.-led actions against the militants. Newspapers also highlighted reports that PML-N "politely declined" president-elect Asif Zardari's request to rejoin the ruling coalition unless the 17th Amendment was repealed and all deposed judges were reinstated. Several newspapers reported on their front pages that Asif Zardari would visit China next week to negotiate a nuclear deal similar to the one between India and the United States.

Today most major dailies ran editorials on different themes including recent missile attacks on tribal areas, Mr. Zardari's future plans, and the resurgence of violence in Kashmir. The English daily, "The Nation" noted that "the war on terror has certainly veered off track, forcing Pakistan to seriously rethink its policy in the global struggle." The Urdu language daily, "Nawa-i-Waqt" advised the president-elect Zardari to "encourage" the parliament to hold debate on the pro-America policy and to change it, as many of the problems have resulted from this policy." Another English newspaper, "Daily Times" while expressing concerns over resurgence of violence in Indian-held Kashmir, observed that "the option of jihad is at an end. It is time to save the country from the clutches of the Taliban, many of whom are veterans of the Kashmir jihad." End Summary.

 News Stories

1. "Haqqani's Close Relatives Killed In U.S. Missile Strike" "Dawn" (09/09)

"Suspected U.S. drones hit the house and seminary of former Taliban commander Maulvi Jalaluddin Haqqani in Dandi Derpakhel area of North Waziristan on Monday killing 23 people, including three Arab and two Azerbaijani nationals among them. According to sources, Maulvi Jalaluddin's eight grandchildren, wife, sister, sister-in-law and other relatives were killed. Fourteen other people were injured."

2. "Pakistan Fully Backs Terror War, Says U.S." "Dawn" (09/09)

"The White House said on Monday that the new civilian government in Pakistan fully supported the U.S. anti-terrorist strategy and was also participating in U.S.-led actions against the militants, said White House Press Secretary Dana Perino when asked to comment on the latest U.S. missile strikes in the tribal belt."

3. "U.S. Using Anti-Insurgency Tactics Of Iraq In FATA" "Dawn" (09/09)

"The U.S. decision to conduct raids into Pakistan's tribal areas reflects its desire to duplicate the same strategy in FATA and Afghanistan that led to a steady decrease in insurgency in Iraq.... U.S. intelligence agencies have also set up a network of human intelligence collectors, which employs hundreds of Afghan and Pakistani Pashtun tribesmen. The intelligence collected from them and from electronic surveillance is sifted through and analyzed by U.S. experts in Afghanistan and the United States."

4. "Rehman Asks U.S. To Stop Strikes" "The Post" (09/09)

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"Advisor to Prime Minister on Interior Rehman Malik has said that the United States should stop intrusions into tribal areas of Pakistan as a mark of respect for parliamentary and public sentiments."

5. "Kabul Backs FATA Attack" "Dawn" (09/09)

"Afghan Foreign Minister Rangin Dadfar Spanta said on Monday the battle against insurgents in his country must be taken to its 'breeding ground' in Pakistan. Spanta told journalists in Berlin, calling the region a 'breeding ground for terrorists.' 'We need to stop that. We must not give them the chance to use terror as an instrument of foreign policy.'"

6. "Suicide Bombers, Handlers & Financers Are All Pakistanis:

Malik" "The News" (09/09)

"Advisor to Prime Minister on Interior Rehman Malik says all the suicide bombers and their handlers are Pakistani and are being financed from within the country, while talking to a group of reporters at an Iftar-dinner he hosted for them at his residence in Islamabad on Monday. The Advisor said that the government has in its custody two suicide bombers, who have made confessions, apart from nine handlers."

7. "Teenage 'Suicide Bomber' Held In Nowshera" "Dawn" (09/09)

"Security personnel arrested on Monday a teenage boy they claimed was on a suicide mission and defused his explosives-lined vest. The boy was near a church in the Cantonment area when he was apprehended. Officials said that 14-year-old boy, Mir Janan, was from Makeen area of South Waziristan."

8. "Fresh Clashes In Kurram Leave 11 Dead" "Dawn" (09/09)

"Eleven people were killed and 14 injured as clashes continued in the Kurram region on Monday despite a ceasefire declared by the warring tribes."

9. "Asif In Presidency, Takes Oath Today" "Dawn" (09/09)

"President-elect Asif Ali Zardari moved to the Presidency on Monday and will take oath of his office on Tuesday."

10. "Pakistan Gaining Stability: U.S." "The News" (09/09)

"The United States on Monday said Pakistan's elected government is gaining stability as it saw cooperation between all anti-terrorism

partners in the Afghan border region. On the eve of the President-elect Asif Ali Zardari oath-taking as new head of the state from the ruling PPP-led coalition, White House Press Secretary Dana Perino said the 'civilian government is now more fully stood up and stabilizing.'

11. "U.S. Hopes Zardari Will Bring Stability To Pakistan" "Daily Times" (09/09)

"Washington hopes that Asif Ali Zardari's election to the Pakistani Presidency will help provide some stability within the government so that it can get down to the task of countering the terrorism and extremism that currently threatens the Pakistani state, according to Lisa Curtis of the Heritage Foundation, America's leading conservative think tank."

12. "Zardari, Nawaz Stop Short Of Reunion" "The News" (09/09)

"In a rare show of political goodwill, PML-N leader and former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on Monday called on President-elect Asif Ali Zardari and congratulated him on his election to the country's highest office. But at the same time Nawaz politely declined Zardari's request to rejoin the coalition government, while Nawaz Sharif said he would not do so unless the 17th Amendment was repealed and all the deposed judges, including Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry, were reinstated."

13. "Zardari Will Retain Powers To Name COAS" "The News" (09/09)

"President-elect Asif Ali Zardari will retain the discretionary powers of making key appointments, especially of the services chiefs, but will shed the authority to dissolve the National Assembly or dismiss a government, informed official circles say."

14. "Zardari To Visit China Next Week To Negotiate Nuclear Deal" "Daily Times" (09/09)

"Asif Ali Zardari, the president-elect of Pakistan, will visit China next week to negotiate a nuclear deal similar to the one between India and the U.S., 'Times of India' quoted an official as saying on Monday. 'Pakistan is already in touch with China for the nuclear deal to meet its energy crisis and the talks would start during Zardari's visit,' an official told the Times on condition of anonymity."

Editorials/Op-eds

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15. "A Flawed Strategy," an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (09/09)

"The War on Terror has certainly veered off track, forcing Pakistan to seriously rethink its policy in the global struggle.... It is worrisome to learn that Pentagon officials have warned that missile strikes of the sort could continue indefinitely.... Thus by creating trouble in our tribal region and forcing the tribal population to stand up against the government, the U.S. seems intent on destabilizing the democratic regime. This would be contradictory to the U.S. claims of supporting democracy throughout the world. Moreover, by taking the war to Pakistan, the U.S. wants to sell the idea around that its struggle had been successful."

16. "A Wake-Up Call," an op-ed by Rasul Bakhsh Rais in the Lahore-based liberal English language daily "Daily Times" (cir. 10,000) (09/09)

"Analysts are unsure about the recent ground assault by U.S. forces on a Pakistani village in South Waziristan. Is it a wake-up call for the political and military leadership of Pakistan to get serious about the Taliban insurgency? Or does it indicate that Washington has decided to extend its counterinsurgency operations to the border areas of Pakistan? Whichever way one interprets the motives behind the Angoor Adda attack, it has shocked the government as well as the general population of the country, and may have serious ramifications for our partnership with the U.S. If this is the new strategy being adopted by NATO-ISAF, it is surely going to add to the political troubles of the elected government in the coming days and months."

17. "Stability Of Pak-U.S. Relations?," an op-ed by Tayyab Siddiqui in the Lahore-based liberal English daily "The Post" (cir. 5,000) (09/09)

"The U.S. has declined any comment on any aspect of this raid at any level. We too, ought to be circumspect in our reaction. No doubt that such emotional outbursts can further strain the existing relationship, already tormented by growing doubts and suspicions....

Both sides need to ask what they have been able to achieve after so many years. What costs were they paying in human, political and economic terms? U.S. Hawks need to be convinced that such cross-border strikes would further alienate the locals and ultimately prove to be counterproductive. With the change of guard in the White House in the next couple of months there are better chances of such messages falling over receptive ears. In the present context both the U.S. and Pakistan need each other and hence any reckless step needs to be avoided."

18. "Change In Policy [Towards The U.S]," an editorial in the

"Federal Interior Advisor Rehman Malik has said that we have changed the policy towards America; if U.S-Allied troops conduct another operation in the tribal areas, they will get a befitting response.... The interior advisor's intent is of great significance for the nation. In fact it would not be wrong to say that this is the voice of the nation. We hope that what Rehman Malik has said is true: that we have changed the policy and every attacker will receive a befitting response; and that no foreign attacker will be tolerated on Pakistani territory."

19. "President's Oath-Taking And National Responsibility," an editorial in the second-largest, center-right nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 125,000) (09/09)

"The new President should provide leadership for chalking out independent foreign policy; he should encourage the parliament to hold debate on the pro-America policy and to change it, as many of the problems have resulted from this policy."

20. "Zardari's Pledge," an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English daily "The Post" (cir. 5,000) (09/09)

"Talking to a U.S. television channel, President-elect Asif Ali Zardari said that the president was subservient to parliament, adding, he would hand over many responsibilities to it. Separately, Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gillani assured a U.S. congressional

delegation that he would restore the 1973 Constitution in its original form. Coming as it did from two pillars of the state, both statements are positive, nay reassuring. Indeed, they point to a mindset that is cognizant of the centrality of parliament in democracy. This is what the country needs to wriggle out of its manifest confusion. Pakistan today sports a system that is neither parliamentary nor presidential."

21. "Over To Asif," an editorial in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (09/09)

"Mr. Zardari's success in the presidential contest has brought in swift congratulations from India and an equally quick agreement to attend his oath-taking from Hamid Karzai in Afghanistan. These gestures from both nations offer a possible opening to making a good start with them. The reality is that cooperation with both is critical to solving Pakistan's multi-faceted internal problems, ranging from terrorism, to food shortages to inflation."

22. "Nawaz-Zardari Meeting" an editorial in the Lahore-based populist center-right Urdu daily "Khabrain" (cir. 50,000) (09/09)

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"Despite separation from the government, the top leaders [of PPP and PML-N] have avoided making statements against each other. However, when the lower tier starts making such statements, an impression is created that it is being done at the senior leaders' behest. Hence if the senior leaders have agreed to deal with each other in a civil manner, it should trickle down to the lower tiers also."

23. "Challenges And Scenarios," an op-ed by Dr. Maqbool Ahmad Bhatti in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (09/09)

"As president, Mr. Zardari will undoubtedly continue the Bhutto legacy of close relations with China, though he will also seek a good relationship with the U.S. and India. Tackling the threats of extremism and terrorism will be a major challenge and he has already complicated matters by backing self-reliance and negotiations along the Pak-Afghan and opposing a pro-active role by U.S. and NATO forces.... If Mr. Zardari confirms the worst fears by failing to tackle the formidable challenges facing him, the return to democracy may be short lived. Once again top generals may intervene and the U.S. would be ready to work with them, both for domestic peace in a critical country, and an effective war against terror."

24. "Causes Of Distrust," an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (09/09)

"Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's congratulatory message to President-elect Asif Ali Zardari, indeed, contains noble thoughts about turning the corner in Pakistan-India relations that 'responds to the aspirations of our two people.' There is little doubt that like anywhere else in the world most people in the two countries would like to have friendly ties with their neighbors to live in peace and harmony. But mutual trust that invariably serves as the bedrock of such an equation is woefully lacking between Pakistan and India, and that makes the development of a relationship of understanding improbable."

25. "Kashmir On The Boil And Our Reaction," an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English language daily "Daily Times" (cir. 10,000) (09/09)

"At this juncture Pakistan must not think of reverting to policies that have failed in the past and recoiled on us through the creation of multiple centers of power within the state and civil society. Unless we are cautious, we run the risk of giving ourselves the identity of a failed-cum-rogue state with hardly anything holding together inside it. The Jihadi militias held in reserve should be disbanded. The option of jihad is at an end. It is time to save the country from the clutches of the Taliban, many of whom are

veterans of the Kashmir Jihad."

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

"What can be done now to avert a second violent uprising in Jammu and Kashmir? New Delhi has recourse to at least two safety valves. First, the troops in Kashmir - the visible arm of Indian repression - must be reduced. Second, cross-LoC trade and the movement of people must be rapidly increased."

27. "Kashmir Bloodshed," an editorial in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (09/09)

"The resurgence of militancy, that New Delhi alleges emanates from Pakistan-based groups, raises once more a long-standing issue between the two nations. It also seems obvious that despite Musharraf's promises, these groups were not disbanded, but simply asked to adopt a low profile."
Patterson

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