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

SUBJECT: PAKISTAN MEDIA REACTION: JANUARY 31, 2008

SUMMARY: Reports of the recovery of dead bodies of 13 missing soldiers from Darra Adamkhel as normalcy started returning to the militancy-hit semi tribal valley dominated headlines in all newspapers on Thursday. The slain soldiers were kidnapped by militants from Kohat Tunnel last Friday. The English daily, "The News," reported that the Tuesday "drone attack was to hit Obaidah al-Masri and Abu Laith al-Libi," two senior Al-Qaeda commanders. Most newspapers also reported the Foreign Office Spokesman's remarks that "there were no U.S. troops in Pakistan," and that any "foreign operation on Pak soil to be defied."

Several major dailies highlighted a report that "U.S. plans to spend \$2b to befriend Pakistani tribesmen," as "education and jobs may make FATA less hospitable for Al-Qaeda and Taliban." Also

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
 REVIEW AUTHORITY: ARCHIE M BOLSTER  
 DATE/CASE ID: 24 JUN 2011 201000373

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underscored by some major dailies ~~UNCLASSIFIED~~ that U.S. "lawmakers urge Bush administration to increase pressure on the government in Islamabad to ensure free and fair elections in Pakistan." Several newspapers also continued reporting stories on the death of U.S. diplomat Keith Ryan and reported that the "American diplomat's body flown home."

Most major dailies ran editorials on a host of subjects concerning the current wave of extremism and terrorism. The English daily, "The News," noted that "involving people in the struggle against extremism, unveiling the still hidden faces of those who are behind the violence we see everywhere, is necessary to finally overcome them." Another English daily, "The Post," observed that "if the U.S. actually wants the war on terrorism to be successful and harbors the desire to root out extremist forces, it has to do away with its policy of not backing the forces of moderation represented by the political parties and civil society at large." In its editorial on State of the Union Address, the Urdu daily, "Nawa-i-Waqt," observed that "President Bush has made up his mind to weaken Pakistan to fulfill his crusading Zionist ambitions." Commenting on the alleged maltreatment of Edhi (renowned social worker) by the U.S. immigration officials, the Urdu daily, "Jang," wrote: "This kind of behavior is a result of their (Americans') prejudice and narrow-mindedness against Islam and Muslims." End Summary.

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News Stories  
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1. "Bodies Of 13 Troops Retrieved From Darra" "The News" (01/31)

"The security forces on Wednesday retrieved 13 bodies of troops from the hilltop near Darra Adamkhel as normalcy started returning to the militancy-hit semi-tribal valley. The 13 soldiers were kidnapped on the first day of the operation in the gun-manufacturing town, when suspected militants attacked an Army radar post on the Japanese-built Friendship Tunnel, sources told "The News." After retrieval of the soldiers' bodies, the losses suffered by the military now stand at 23 while the tally of the militants is reported to be at 64, said a senior Army officer."

2. "Mirali Drone Attack Was To Hit Masri, Libi" "The News" (01/31)

"The Tuesday attack on a house in Mirali town by the CIA-operated spy planes was aimed at targeting two senior Al Qaeda Commanders, sources said. The sources told "The News" that the two men, whom the CIA wanted to kill, were Obaidah al Masri and Abu Laith al Libi. Both of them were described as No. 3 and 4 in Al Qaeda rank, said the sources."

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3. "7 Arabs Among Missile Victims" "Dawn" (01/31)

"Militants retrieved and buried on Wednesday the bodies of 12 foreigners who had been killed in a missile attack on a residential compound in the Khushali Toorikhel area of North Waziristan on Monday night. Local people said the identity of the militants killed in the attack remained unknown but according to unconfirmed reports seven of them were Arabs while the other five from Central Asian."

4. "Operation By Foreign Troops To Be Defied: FO" "The Nation" (01/31)

"Pakistan on Wednesday cautioned against any operation by foreign troops on its soil saying such move would be considered as an enemy act and fully resisted. Foreign Office spokesman Muhammad Sadiq

said at his weekly press briefing in Islamabad. He said there were no US troops in Pakistan adding that Washington had publicly offered to send troops if needed by Pakistan but Pakistan refused."

5. "US Plans To Spend \$2 Billion To Befriend Pakistani Tribesmen" "The News", "The Nation", "Daily Times", "The Post" (01/31)

"The United States this year will start spending in earnest \$750 million where its troops can't go in the hope of making Pakistan's unruly tribal lands less hospitable for Al Qaeda and the Taliban. If the Americans succeed they hope other nations will join them in putting up a total \$2 billion for development and security in Pakistan's semi-autonomous Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) by 2015, a senior US diplomat in Islamabad told journalists."

6. "Lawmakers Urge Bush To Increase Pressure For Fair Polls; Education, Jobs May Make FATA Less Hospitable For Al Qaeda, Taliban" "Dawn" (01/31)

"US lawmakers have urged the Bush administration to increase pressure on the government in Islamabad to ensure free and fair elections in Pakistan. 'We absolutely have a crucial interest in ensuring that the government in Pakistan has the popular mandate to confront extremism and terrorism within its borders,' said Congressman John Tierney, a Massachusetts Democrat. Congressman Chris Shays, another member of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, told a hearing that rigging in the February 18 elections could lead to widespread protests and violence in Pakistan."

7. "American Diplomat's Body Flown Home" "The News" (01/31)

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"The Capital Police have closed down the case of American diplomat Keith Ryan, declaring that he committed suicide, in the light of preliminary investigation, sources told "The News"... 'The body has been sent to the US for autopsy and further necessary action,' the SSP Islamabad, Syed Kaleem Imam maintained."

8. "Boucher Defends US Assistance For Pakistan" "The Post" (01/31)

"A senior Bush administration official strongly defended US assistance for Pakistan in socio-economic and counterterrorism fields, citing the South Asian ally's key efforts in the fight against terrorism and a broad-ranging mutually beneficial bilateral relationship. In a congressional testimony, Richard Boucher, assistant secretary of state for South Asia, also renewed US commitment to cooperation in Pakistan's plan for the development of federally administered tribal areas along Afghan border and stressed the US aid will contribute to the country's long-term progress (APP)."

9. "US Remarks On Polls Baseless: FO" "The Post" (01/31)

"Government is committed to free and fair elections, the foreign ministry said Wednesday, following remarks by a top US diplomat that next month's vote could be tainted. US Assistant Secretary of State Richard Boucher on Tuesday told a congressional hearing on Pakistan's February 18 elections that some fraud should be expected during polling. Asked about Boucher's comments, Foreign Ministry spokesman Muhammad Sadiq told reporters that there was nothing to say about them as the government had already committed itself to hold fair elections. "I think that is the most important commitment, the government of Pakistan will keep that commitment."

10. "Veteran US Diplomat Sees Post-Poll Crisis" "Dawn" (01/31)

"Pakistan will face yet another crisis if the government refuses to accept the election results or if an opposition-led future government tries to impeach President Musharraf, warns Ambassador Robin Raphel. Ambassador Raphel, who was the first head of the South Asia Bureau at the US State Department, felt that the February 18 elections in Pakistan might lead to a hung Parliament with PPP as the single largest party."

11. "US Plays Matchmaker To Pakistan, Israel" "The Post" (01/31)

"Geopolitics around Pakistan are taking dramatic turns. Details are emerging of a meeting between Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf and Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak, according to a report

published by Asia Times. In all probability, Israel's close ally on Capitol Hill in Washington DC, the resourceful US Senator Joseph

Lieberman, who visited Pakistan as UNCLASSIFIED early January, put together the Musharraf-Barak meeting."

12. "General Tariq Meets US Naval Commander" "The Nation" (01/31)

"Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, General Tariq Majid, has met Commander of Bahrain-based US Naval Forces Central Command (NAVCENT), Vice Admiral Kevin J. Cosgriff and discussed with him the overall maritime security situation in the region."

13. "US Eager To Enhance Economic Ties With Pakistan" "The Post", "Pakistan Observer" (01/31)

"Addressing a meeting of the Multan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) executive committee, US Principal Officer, Bryan D. Hunt said Pakistan is a valuable trade partner of the United States and observed that the US is helping Pakistan in all the fields. He said that US is eager to enhance economic cooperation with Pakistan, adding that the election process is presently under way in both the countries and as soon as a new government takes charge in Washington, he will take up the issue of zero-rating duty on cotton exports to Pakistan."

14. "USAID Holds Workshop For Journalists" "The Nation" (01/31)

"Media industry can play a very important role in maintaining the good governance in the country, said Ziaghham Khan, the trainer of a workshop entitled Parliamentary Journalists held in Karachi on Wednesday under the auspices of the USAID."

15. "Teenage Suicide Bombers Keep Cops On Their Toes" "The News" (01/31)

"Intelligence agencies have tipped off police and other law enforcing departments about a group of 14 teenagers who have been assigned the task to carry out suicide attacks on important personalities and sensitive installations across the country."

16. "Two Soldiers Die In Attack On Razmak Camp" "The News" (01/31)

"Two more Pakistan Army soldiers were killed and several others sustained serious injuries on Wednesday when militants from adjacent South Waziristan Agency (SWA) fired 40-50 rockets on the Razmak Military Camp in the North Waziristan Agency, Sources told "The News."

17. "Blast Kills 3 'Suicide Bombers' In Peshawar" "Daily Times" (01/31)

"An explosion in a house in the outskirts of Peshawar killed three

men who police said were making bombs when the explosives detonated prematurely. The blast occurred at about 5am on Wednesday, in the guestroom of a house located in the Badshah Dak area of Tauheed Colony in Phandu police precincts, Gulbahar Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Ijaz Khan told "Daily Times."

18. "Pak Polls Won't Result In Clean Government" "The Post" (01/31)

"Elections may be a key benchmark of reform around the world but there is little evidence to suggest they are strongly related to improved government accountability, a global poll showed Wednesday."

19. "Benazir Was Denied Private Security, Says Kerry" "Dawn" (01/31)

"US Senator John Kerry, who will travel to Pakistan to monitor the February 18 elections, said on Wednesday that President Musharraf had denied private security to Pakistan People's Party leader Benazir Bhutto."

20. "Former Chief Justice Was Corrupt, Musharraf Tells West" "The News" (01/31)

"President Pervez Musharraf distributed a 15-page letter against the detained Chief Justice of Pakistan Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry among 30 top journalists of London on an exclusive breakfast meeting last Monday, to convince the western media that the top judge was corrupt and was rightly dismissed on March 9 followed by his detention on November 3."

21. "Edhi Gets Back His Passport" "Dawn" (01/31)

"US immigration authorities have returned the passport of prominent social worker Abdul Sattar Edhi and issued a new green card. According to a Pakistan Embassy official, Mr. Edhi has been advised by the US authorities to stay 'longer' the next time he visits the country so that his green card and American citizenship issues can be resolved. Mr. Edhi's new green card is valid for only one year, even though normally there is a 10-year limit."

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Editorials/Op-eds  
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22. "Militant Madness," an editorial in the English daily, "The News" (01/31)

"The fact that in NWFP Pakistan's military ~~UNCLASSIFIED~~ to have opted to go in against the militants with full force is a necessary and welcome decision, but it also means more retaliatory strikes could come from the extremists.... Involving people in the struggle against extremism, unveiling the still hidden faces of those who are behind the violence we see everywhere, is necessary to finally overcome them. This task is not an easy one. It will take time, effort, and, sadly, more loss of life. But without the support of citizens the struggle may prove a losing one -- and the consequences of this are too terrible even to contemplate. Our armed forces need to think hard how to get the consensus of the people behind them to face this menace. Such a consensus will need rebuilding bridges with the people and civil society throughout the country."

23. "Broader Approach," an editorial in the English daily, "The Post" (01/31)

"If the US actually wants the war on terrorism to be successful and harbors the desire to root out extremist forces, it has to do away with its policy of not backing the forces of moderation represented by the political parties and civil society at large. Only by engaging all forces on the political horizon, the media and civil society can the public sentiment be turned against this current wave of radicalism. Only then can the world win this war against terrorism. The US should broaden and diversify its engagement with Pakistan rather than working within a rigid policy framework."

24. "Will U.S. Take Care Of Pakistan's Security While Launching Military Operation?," an editorial in the Urdu daily, "Nawa-i-Waqt" (01/31)

"President Bush has made up his mind to weaken Pakistan to fulfill his crusading Zionist ambitions. He revealed as much when during the State of the Union address he said that this is a decisive year in the war on terror. He added that terrorists want to suppress public aspirations for freedom in Afghanistan, Iraq, Lebanon and Pakistan; we will take aggressive measures if their activities harm U.S. troops and allies in the Gulf. This threat is aimed at Pakistan and Iran, because the U.S. has already occupied Afghanistan and Iraq."

25. "US Interference," an editorial in the English daily, "The Nation" (01/31)

"One would not dispute the President's contention that the US aims coincide with Pakistan's in the fight against terrorism and extremism, though what really constitutes that dual phenomenon might mean different things to different folk. However, even if the conflict of interpretation could be resolved, the strongest roadblock to any foreign adventurism is to iron out internal

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political contradictions. Only the people willingly line up behind the government, enabling it meet internal as well as external challenges. A foreign power, least of all an ally in the War on Terror, would not think of making any forays into our territory."

26. "Orakzai Agency's Laudatory Approach," an editorial in the English daily, "Pakistan Observer" (01/31)

"Now the Government is undertaking developmental activities to improve socio-economic profile of the area and wean away people from negative pursuits. The United States is also willing to extend a helping hand for the purpose but welfare programs can be implemented effectively only in peaceful environment. Formation of a Lashkar by tribes, of Orakzai Agency shows that people of FATA are realizing the need for strengthening efforts of the Government to restore peace and normalcy."

27. "The Trail Of Jandullah," an editorial in the English daily, "Daily Times" (01/31)

"Jandullah never left Karachi after 2004 and kept looting banks to finance its operations.... Jandullah was created by the mastermind of 9/11, Khalid Sheikh Muhammad, who was arrested in 2003 from Rawalpindi and handed over to the Americans, after which Jandullah went wild.... Jandullah was not without its support system in Karachi as it proceeded to avenge the arrest and handover of its mastermind after 2003. The support system in Karachi included two doctors who more or less performed the same kind of service for the terrorists as the Khwaja brothers of Lahore.... There was a widespread rumor last year that Pakistan was facilitating American mischief inside Iran through this Baloch Jandullah. But this organisation had nothing to do with the Jandullah whose members have now been involved in a police encounter in Karachi."

28. "Tide Of Violence And Terrorism Stemmed By Armed Forces," an op-ed by Abdul Sattar in the English daily, "Pakistan Observer" (01/31)

"First Swat and now Darra Adam Khel have been cleared of Taliban militants substantiating hope this mortal threat to peace and stability of tribal territories and adjoining areas of Frontier Province can be contained by determined action of the nation's security forces. Use of state forces is unavoidable when religious mountebanks instigate fanatical followers to disrupt efforts for economic and social development, unleash violence and subject peaceful citizens to terrible suffering."

29. "Perceptions Of Rigging," an editorial in the English daily, "The Nation" (01/31)



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"The government needs to realize that the stability of the country would be badly compromised in case the elections are found to be rigged. With a deep-set feeling of deprivation already there in smaller provinces, any perception that the elections have been stolen could seriously harm the federation. What is more, large-scale rigging could shake the confidence of the people in the electoral process as an agent of change and orderly transfer of power, thus strengthening extremist tendencies."

30. "Army On The Constitutional Mend?," an op-ed by Nasim Zehra in the English daily, "The News" (01/31)

"Without the military overtly pulling away from politics there can be no possibility of fair and free elections. The army must distance itself and return to playing its institutional role. Beyond this the army has no constitutional mandate in playing a direct and overt role in the current contest between the President and the opposition. That battle will be fought in Parliament or in the streets depending on how fairly the elections are conducted. The army's loyalty is to the constitution and to constitutional governments, and not to individuals. If rigged elections create chaos it will be time for the President to take the brunt. The army must remain neutral in this power play and overtly partisan to the constitution of Pakistan."

31. "Ideological War Of The 21st Century Will Not End This Way," an editorial in the Urdu daily, "Mashriq" (01/31)

"President Bush in his State of the Union address has reiterated to defeat Taliban and the Al-Qaeda.... The war initiated by the U.S. will be ended only if the U.S. withdraws its troops or if the entire Al-Qaeda network or Taliban are eliminated from the scene somehow."

32. "President Bush's Farewell Address And Global Scenario," an editorial in the Urdu daily, "Express" (01/31)

"Presidential hopefuls Obama and Clinton rejected President Bush's

State of the Union Address and termed his political and economic policies as a failure. And this is a fact, as President Bush neither presented a recipe for peace in the world, nor a solution to the myriad problems it faces."

33. "U.S. Must Review Its Aggressive Attitude," an editorial in the Urdu daily, "Ausaf" (01/31)

"President Bush has announced to withdraw 20,000 U.S. troops from Iraq in a few months.... If the U.S. government abandons its dual

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policy of supporting democracy and UNCLASSIFIED in different parts of the world concurrently, Americans can dispel the negative perceptions and apprehensions of Muslims about the U.S."

34. "Maltreatment With Abdul Sattar Edhi By U.S. Officials," an editorial in the Urdu daily, "Jang" (01/31)

"... This kind of behavior is a result of their (Americans') prejudice and narrow-mindedness against Islam and Muslims. It is essential that all the social groups, charity organizations and activists of the world must lodge a protest with the U.S. administration. Moreover, the government of Pakistan must take this issue seriously, so that no Pakistani will be treated in this way ever in future."

35. "Hatred Against U.S. Heightened" an editorial in the Urdu daily, "Nawa-i-Waqt" (01/31)

"U.S. authorities' discriminatory attitude with Abdus Sattar Edhi is condemnable. Pakistani nation's hatred for the U.S. will be heightened due to this attitude."

36. "Outrageous!" an editorial in the English daily, "The Nation" (01/31)

"At a time when the US should be doing a lot of damage control as far as public image goes, it continues to make gaffes and faux pas of the sort. Even though it is true that at a stage like this, the Americans can probably do no right in the Pakistani public's eyes. But jostling "Pakistan's Mother Teresa" would have been bad even in the best of times."

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