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Subject: PAKISTAN MEDIA ANALYSIS - May 13, 2011

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PAKISTAN MEDIA ANALYSIS May 13, 2011

- **Some English media continue discussion of Pakistani complicity**
- **Shaded Urdu coverage exaggerates bilateral tensions**
- **Urdu editorialists toe official line; defend honor of Army and nation**
- **Embassy pushes back on inaccurate reporting**

While leading English dailies continue to run limited domestic and foreign news stories, commentaries, and even editorial cartoons questioning Pakistani complicity with OBL's presence, and criticizing the role and competency of the Armed Forces, critical voices are now much harder to find in the Urdu broadcast and print media. The Urdu "discussion" consists of laments for Pakistan's lost sovereignty and honor and calls to rally to the patriotic defense of the military/intelligence establishment. The establishment has seemingly reasserted control through scripted editorials in the leading Urdu dailies and planted stories mischaracterizing Embassy statements and activities. Friday morning's lead story, however, was the horrific bombing of a Frontier Constabulary training center in Charsadda, near Peshawar, that may have killed as many as 100 recruits; as the day went on and the Taliban claimed responsibility, speculation began that this was retribution for OBL's death.

Urdu TV and papers headlined Prime Minister Gilani's comments in a "Time" magazine interview that the OBL raid has severely strained relations between the U.S. and Pakistan, particularly in the intelligence area. The interview was reported straightforwardly in English, but badly mistranslated in many vernacular outlets to imply that bilateral ties had been "ruptured." Most media mischaracterized Ambassador Munter's routine call on the Foreign Secretary as a "summoning" to receive a protest, and some reported that the Ambassador had

“apologized” for the U.S. raid. PAS reached out to major media and succeeded in having most TV stations correct these inaccurate story lines, and most dailies at least to include our rebuttal of this interpretation.

Vernacular editorial pages are once again, lined up in such a way as to suggest strong official guidance; PAS contacts tell us that such guidance “from above” is in fact being given. The evident intent is to rally popular support for the military and its intelligence apparatus, and counter PML-N leader Nawaz’s call for an independent inquiry. Top-circulation “Jang” asserted, “We must avoid using irresponsible words against those national institutions whose exemplary discipline is acknowledged by all, and whose very existence is not acceptable to those powers which want to harm our country.” The second largest Urdu daily, “Nawa-i-Waqt,” noted, “No doubt, we must conduct an independent inquiry of the Abbottabad operation so that we can fix our intelligence and security lapses, but for this purpose, we don’t need to be apologetic.” “Express” editorialized that “this is the army that showed feats in the war on terror, and the whole world has recognized these achievements. Therefore there is no need to condemn them unjustifiably.”

Thursday evening’s TV talk shows continued to focus on the Abbottabad operation. PAS arranged for South Asia expert Daniel Markey of the Council on Foreign Relations to appear on both Hamid Mir’s top-rated show on Geo TV and Moeed Pirzada’s show on PTV. He discussed the popular outrage in the U.S that OBL was found in a Pakistani garrison city, and underscored the growing frustration in Washington with Pakistan, and asserted that Pakistan would have to provide credible answers to the world. Markey injected a sense of the global suspicion toward Pakistan into a media space where such perspective has been notable by its absence. On Dawn News TV, PML-N leader Nawaz questioned why Pakistan should spend billion of rupees on its defense budget, if the military cannot stop four helicopters from intruding into its airspace.

Urdu Editorials:

“National Leadership Must Act Sensibly,” an editorial in the leading mass-circulation populist, often sensational Urdu daily “Jang” (cir. 300,000) (05/13)

“The state of affairs necessitates that no political party should exploit the situation to take advantage or to harm others. This is not the time to condemn or criticize others; in fact, this is the moment that we must utilize our all energies to protect our country. We must avoid using irresponsible words against those national institutions whose exemplary discipline is acknowledged by all, and whose very existence is not acceptable to those powers which want to harm our country.”

“Nawaz Sharif’s Demand for a Judicial Inquiry into the Abbottabad Operation,” an editorial in the second-largest Urdu daily “Nawa-i-Waqt” (circ. 150,000) (05/13)

“Undoubtedly we must conduct an independent inquiry of the Abbottabad operation so that we can fix our intelligence and security lapses, but we do not need to apologize for this. If there

were some flaws in our defense mechanism, does it mean that our security force, under General Kayani's leadership, was not aware of such weaknesses? There is nothing harmful in Nawaz Sharif's demand for a judicial probe alongside the military inquiry. Nawaz Sharif did not send a strong message to the U.S. and he, in fact, supported the U.S. allegations that our agencies were not able to hunt down OBL who was living under their noses. The U.S., with its propaganda, proved that OBL was in Abbottabad, and forced us to assume a defensive position."

"Abbottabad Operation Probe," an editorial in liberal Urdu daily "Express" (cir. 25,000) (05/13)

"These are the security and intelligence agencies which had major achievements during the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. And this is the army that showed feats in the war on terror. The whole world has recognized these achievements; therefore there is no need to condemn them unjustifiably."

"Don't Politicize the Abbottabad Tragedy," an editorial in the populist Urdu daily "Khabrain" (circ. 50,000) (05/13)

"Unfortunately, the culture of accountability never flourished in this country. Whenever commissions were formed in the past to carry out earnest investigations, their reports were either changed or put in cold storage... A lot of what Mian Nawaz Sharif has said is right, but he could have handled the commission (into the Abbottabad operation) issue by suggesting that members of the judiciary be included in the military commission (instead of rejecting the army commission outright)."

"U.S. Allowed Access to Osama's Widows?" an editorial in the center-right Urdu daily "Pakistan" (circ. 10,000) (05/13)

"Interior Minister Rehman Malik said in an interview with CNN on May 10 that America could be given access to the widows of Osama bin Laden. However, he did not give a timeframe for this.... After the death of OBL, his three widows, hailing from Saudi Arabia and Yemen were taken into custody by the government of Pakistan.... If the government of Pakistan decides to hand over the widows to America, it will be a grave mistake. They are purdah (veiled) observing women, and should not be handed over to America.... Pakistan intelligence agencies should complete the interrogation of the three widows ASAP and hand them over to the governments of the countries of their origins."

"Restore Nation's Confidence in State," an editorial in the Karachi-based, pro-Taliban Jihadi Urdu daily "Islam" (cir. 15,000) (05/13)

"Although a judicial investigation into the Abbottabad operation should be conducted, it also should be asked in court which agreement allowed the U.S. helicopters to enter Pakistani air space. We think that such clandestine agreements have jeopardized the security and sovereignty of our country."

“Proposal to Constitute an Inquiry Commission,” an editorial in the Peshawar-based Urdu-language daily “Mashriq” (cir. 55,000) (05/13)

“It seems that the government is not taking the Abbottabad operation seriously. It would be better for Prime Minister Gilani to evolve a consensus among the political parties, security force, and all other stakeholders, and institute an independent inquiry commission to investigate the incident.”

Editorial Cartoons

“The News” (05/13)



“The Statesman” (05/13)



‘Daily Times’ (05/13)



“The Nation” (05/13)



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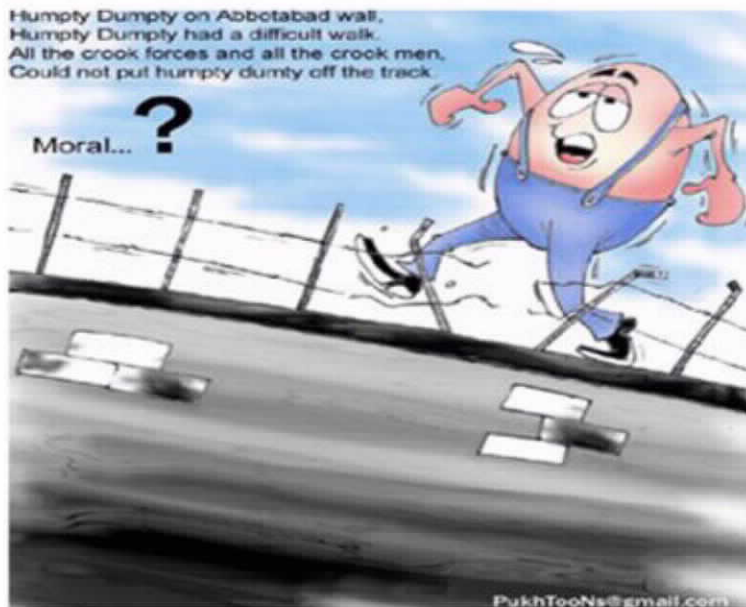
“Pakistan Today” (05/13)

PRO-ARMY RALLY IN ISLAMABAD: NEWS ITEM.

SARFATY/2013
sarfaty@nytimes.com



“The Frontier Post” (05/13)



TV Talk Shows:

Program: “Capital Talk” Geo TV (05/12)

Host: Hamid Mir

Participants: Ahmar Bilal Sufi (Expert, International Law); Khawaja Muhammad Asif (PML-N); Waseem Akhtar (MQM); Daniel Markey (Senior Fellow, Council on foreign relations)

Topic: America, Our Friend or Foe?

Summary: This program examined Pak-US relations in the wake of the Abbottabad operation. Responding to a question whether the U.S. is a friend or foe of Pakistan, Daniel Markey said he thinks that, right now, the people in the United States are on the fence. He added that there is a general observation that Pakistan has been very helpful, but there also are deep concerns about the way Osama bin Laden was found. Following the Abbottabad incident, the American people are wondering about the intentions of the Pakistani state and about its commitments to the ongoing war against international terrorism. He further said that Nawaz Sharif’s demand to set up a judicial commission to investigate the Abbottabad operation is reasonable.

Program: “Aaj Kamran Khan Kay Saath” Geo TV (05/12)

Host: Kamran Khan

Guest: Javed Jabbar (Former Information Minister)

Topic: Condemnation of the Abbottabad operation by Civil and Military Leaders

Summary: This program focused on Thursday’s meeting of the cabinet’s defense committee. Commenting, former Federal Information Minister Javed Jabbar said that this meeting should have been convened within 48 hours of the incident. He said that there should have been an

emergency meeting regarding the brazen violation of Pakistan's airspace. Jabbar added that Pakistan needs to change its mindset if it wants to emerge and live like an independent and sovereign nation. He welcomed the belated condemnation of the U.S operation in Abbottabad.

Program: "News Night With Talat" Dawn TV (05/12)

Host: Syed Talat Hussain

Guest: Mian Nawaz Sharif (PML-N)

Topic: An Exclusive Interview

Summary: In this interview, PML-N chief Nawaz Sharif said that the Abbottabad operation had not only plunged the entire Pakistani nation into a state of utter shock, but also uncovered serious defects in its defense system. He asked why Pakistan should spend billions on its defense budget if the country's security forces could not stop foreign helicopters from entering the nation's airspace. The PML-N leader further said that the Abbottabad operation humiliated the entire nation, therefore the Pakistani masses should not be kept in the dark regarding the true facts behind this episode. Nawaz Sharif said he is not against the army and intelligence agencies of the country, but he wants all institutions to work within the parameters of their constitutional mandate. He demanded that the government punish those who facilitated the release of Raymond Davis.

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