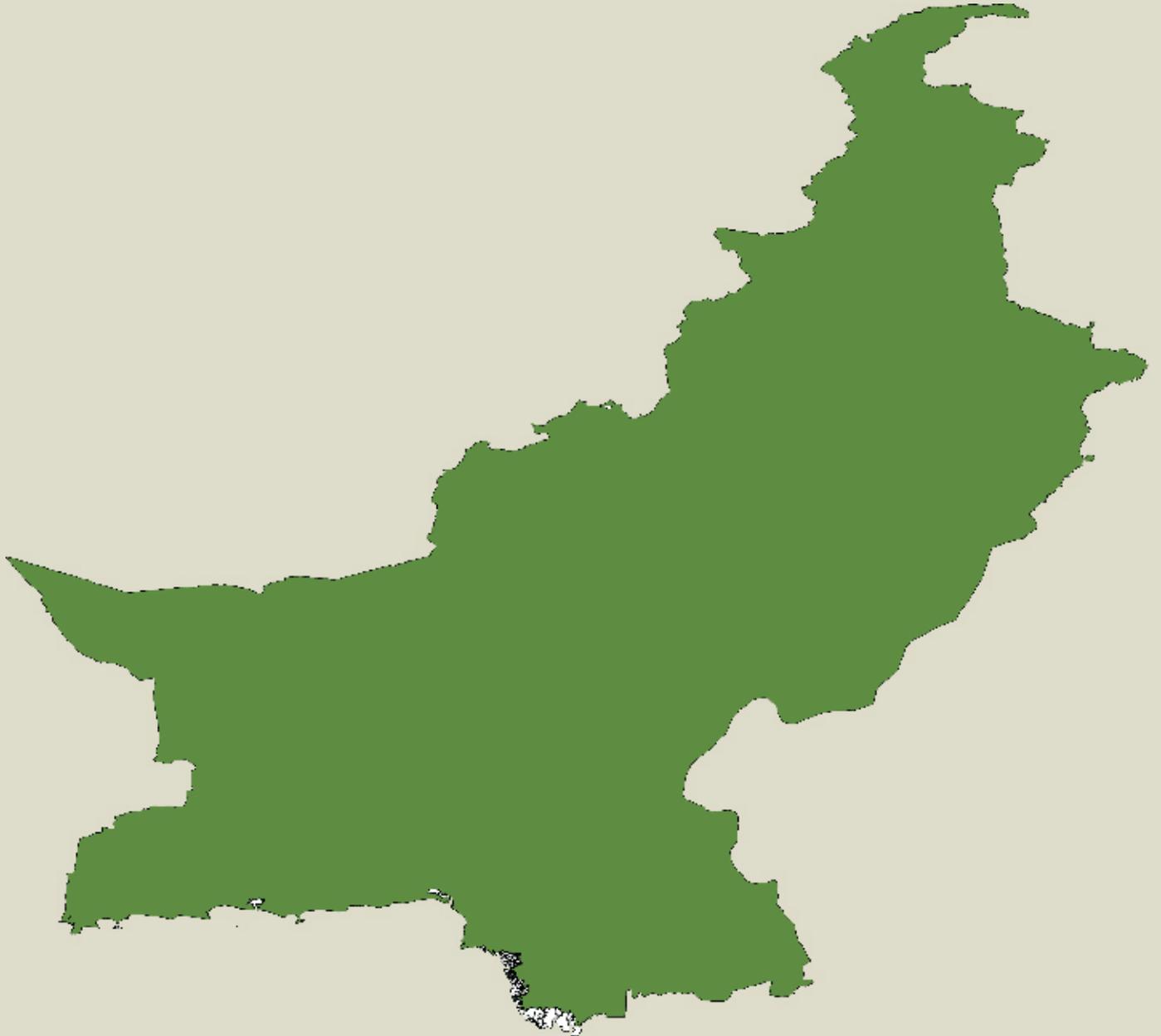


SEPTEMBER 2017

PAKISTAN NEWS DIGEST

*A Selected Summary of News, Views and Trends
from Pakistani Media*



Prepared by
Dr. Zainab Akhter
Nazir Ahmad Mir
Dr. Mohammad Eisa
Dr. Ashok Behuria

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INSTITUTE FOR DEFENCE
STUDIES & ANALYSES
रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

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PAKISTAN NEWS DIGEST, September 2017

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POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

'TTP men' acquitted, two cops convicted in Benazir case, Dawn, 01 September¹

The decade-old mystery of former prime minister Benazir Bhutto's murder remains unsolved, *but on Thursday two senior police officers were sentenced to 17 years in prison for negligence and security lapses that led to the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) leader's assassination.* An Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) in Rawalpindi convicted additional inspector general Saud Aziz and senior superintendent of police (SSP) Khurram Shehzad, and fined them Rs1 million each. *But five suspects allegedly linked with the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) were acquitted for lack of evidence.* ATC Judge Asghar Ali Khan announced the judgement during in-camera proceedings at Adiala jail, declaring former president retired Gen Pervez Musharraf a proclaimed offender in the case and ordering the attachment of his movable and immovable properties...

Deepening fault lines, Afrasiab Khattak, The Nation, 02 September²

If the narrative originating from the deep state and echoed by its wide spread media tentacles is to be believed Pakistan is confidently marching ahead on the path of progress. ... *However the fact of the matter is that a security establishment that excels in physically, is very weak at 'thought culture'. The real rulers of the country have little sense of history and lack the capacity to learn from historical experience.* For example, even after the debacle of 1971 that led to the disintegration of the country the bureaucratic usurpers of political power can't grasp the fact that unlike its four neighbours that are remnants of old empires, Pakistan is a totally new state entity that can survive only on the basis of the social contract that was envisioned by its founding fathers. ... *The most serious failure of state policy is on the front of extremist violence. Pakistan has lived in denial for years. The problem of extremist violence has its roots in the jihadist project of 1980s.* For decades denial of the existence of this problem was the official narrative. ...

¹ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1355330/ttp-men-acquitted-two-cops-convicted-in-benazir-case>

² <http://nation.com.pk/columns/02-Sep-2017/deepening-fault-lines>

Reopening MQM offices, Editorial, *The Nation*, 05 September³

Muttahida Qaumi Movement - Pakistan's (MQM-P) quid pro quo with the Prime Minister seems to have fallen through. *The MQM-P voted for Shahid Khaqan Abbasi in the Prime Ministerial elections with the explicit hope of securing a development package for Karachi, and more importantly, permission to reopen the unit offices closed by the law enforcement agencies following Altaf Hussain's controversial speech on 22 August 2016.* ... Upon his recent visit to Karachi the new Prime Minister did announce a RS25 billion development package, *but informed the MQM that on the "recommendations of the security apparatus actively engaged in restoring normality to the city", the offices cannot be reopened.* ... The real problem here continues to be MQM-P believed association with Altaf Hussain despite their best efforts to portray otherwise. ...

BRICS declaration, Editorial, *Dawn*, 06 September⁴

... In truth, while Pakistan has made significant strides in the domestic fight against militancy, there is a contradiction at the heart of the country's efforts to fight militancy, terrorism and extremism: an unwillingness to acknowledge that past policies, and an ongoing selective approach to fighting militancy, have contributed to the problem. Without an honest reckoning with the past, the reorientation of the state from one that supported jihad under the umbrella of the Cold War to one that recognizes the great cost that it inflicted on Pakistan's economy, society and standing in the global community cannot be complete. *And without recognizing that Pakistan's record in fighting militancy, terrorism and extremism at home has been patchy and inadequate, greater success is likely to prove elusive.* ...

BRICS and the Chinese game changer, Editorial, *Daily Times*, 06 September⁵

... Yet what could prove problematic for Pak-Sino ties is the inclusion of Kashmir jihadists led by JeM. For let us not forget that it was at our behest that China twice stalled the UN process of designating the JeM's leader a global terrorist. We would not blame Beijing if the BRICS statement was a direct message to us that — given all the cash it is injecting here — enough is enough. Sadly, Pakistan is also turning into a dangerous foreign outpost for Chinese nationals. Though we have a fair response when we tell the world that there has been a reported decrease in terror-related civilian deaths that is, down by 80 percent in 2016 as compared with 2013, the year that CPEC was established, according to SATP figures. *However, the key worry for*

³ <http://nation.com.pk/editorials/05-Sep-2017/reopening-mqm-offices>

⁴ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1355909/brics-declaration>

⁵ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/editorial/06-Sep-17/brics-and-the-chinese-game-changer>

Pakistan's security establishment is if recent events are a message that we are approaching the end of the Chinese free lunch. Thus who can say which way Beijing will tilt when the UN vote comes around again next year? Pakistan had better be prepared.

New paradigm to emerge after foreign policy reset, FM, Dawn, 08 September⁶

With the government reconsidering its foreign policy priorities, *Foreign Minister Khawaja Asif said on Thursday the country's interests would take precedence over other considerations in all external dealings and no one would be allowed to scapegoat Pakistan in future.* Mr Asif was addressing his maiden press conference as foreign minister at the conclusion of the envoys' conference at the Foreign Office. The diplomats' meeting had been convened to assess the challenges faced by the country in the foreign policy domain and suggest changes for dealing with those challenges...

Cronyism, lawyers and big money, Editorial, The Express Tribune, 10 September⁷

There is something more than usually offensive about reports that the government of Khyber-Paktunkhwa (K-P) is willing to spend Rs10 million on lawyers' fees in pursuit of the reinstatement of Akhtar Ayub, previously of the Pakhtunkhwa Energy Development Organisation (Pedo). ... There is no shortage of highly priced lawyers anywhere and in a meeting of the PEDO board on June 9th 2017 there was approval of a budget of Rs8-10 million to hire a lawyer to plead the PEDO case. *Why the matter is so odious is that this is yet another example of cronyism. The man ousted by the court is a close associate of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) central leader Asad Umar and the party, currently in power in K-P, is willing to go to considerable lengths to ensure that their placeman in an important entity is reinstated.* ...

Political change and economic progress, Shahid Javed Burki, The Express Tribune, 11 September⁸

Some of the commentary in the West following the removal of Nawaz Sharif from his seat in the National Assembly and hence from the position of prime minister has concluded that political instability has returned to the country. ... *There is also the suggestion that the political change may have come about because of military intervention. History, in other words, was repeating itself.* ... *It seems to me that for once change in the regime has*

⁶ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1356320/new-paradigm-to-emerge-after-foreign-policy-reset-fm>

⁷ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1502195/cronyism-lawyers-big-money/>

⁸ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1502930/political-change-economic-progress/>

been precipitated by actions taken by the institutions of governance and has not been forced by the men in uniform. If that is the case, with this episode Pakistan will emerge politically strong. That in turn will help in making economic advance and dealing with America's withdrawal.

Who got NAB to open Hudaibya case, asks Ahsan, *The Dawn*, 17 September⁹

The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) appears perturbed over the National Accountability Bureau's (NAB) decision to file an appeal in the Supreme Court to reopen the Hudaibya Paper Mills case against former prime minister Nawaz Sharif and his brother and wants the Supreme Court to find out "who had pressurised the anti-graft body to do so". *Speaking at a press conference on Saturday, Interior Minister Ahsan Iqbal made thinly veiled references to the establishment as he spoke about the ruling party's unease over NAB's plan to request the Supreme Court to reopen the Hudaibya Paper Mills money laundering case...*

Religious parties gaining ground, Editorial, *The Nation*, 19 September¹⁰

While the entire population is contemplating the close contest between Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) and Pakistan Tehreek e Insaaf (PTI) in NA-120 elections; *the factor that is going unnoticed is the rise in support of the extremist parties. Two ultra-right religious parties were contesting the elections from the constituency, and if these elections were a litmus test for the coming general elections, than the support these parties garnered is alarming. ...*

Zardari had Benazir murdered, says Musharraf, *The Express Tribune*, 22 September¹¹

Former military ruler Pervez Musharraf has accused PPP Co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari of being behind the assassination of his wife Benazir Bhutto and his brother-in-law Mir Murtaza Bhutto. *The accusation comes just days after Zardari and the PPP accused Musharraf of masterminding the murder. "The one responsible for all miseries of the Bhutto family as well as the assassination of Benazir and Murtaza Bhutto is none other than Zardari," Musharraf said in a video message released on Thursday. "Zardari did nothing to investigate the murder of Murtaza Bhutto in his five years as president."*

⁹ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1358188/who-got-nab-to-reopen-hudaibya-case-asks-ahsan>

¹⁰ <http://nation.com.pk/editorials/19-Sep-2017/religious-parties-gaining-ground>

¹¹ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1512951/zardari-benazir-murdered-says-musharraf/>

ECONOMIC ISSUES

Economic pressure points, Sakib Sherani, Dawn, 01 September¹²

The net effect of the overall policy framework under the PML-N government has been to exacerbate pressure on Pakistan's perennial Achilles' heel and the source of one of its biggest vulnerabilities — its external account or balance of payments. With the external current account deficit rising to over \$12bn in 2016-17, and expected to surge a further 50pc in 2017-18 with no change in policies, the gross external financing requirement is estimated to cross \$25bn in the current fiscal year. This is a true measure of the extent of external dependence created by the PML-N government's policies. *The danger is that with the government blissfully unaware of the macroeconomic crisis Pakistan is heading into — which could be very similar in magnitude as well as nature to 2008 — a crisis which could have been contained if not prevented with a forceful course correction, Pakistan is sleepwalking its way to the IMF.*

Transparency of CPEC projects, Dr. Ahmad Rashid Malik, The Nation, 05 September¹³

The CPEC projects are not promoting corruption in Pakistan. They are clean, spotless, full transparency, honesty, and sincerity. ... Both the government of Pakistan and China upheld their unwavering commitment to CPEC projects. ... We cannot afford a scandal, or even a joke about this. ... *However, a few days ago a scandal was erupted in the media that the Multan Metro Bus Project entertained malpractices and financial wrong doings worth billions of rupees. Different figures were given for alleged kickbacks in the projects. The name of a Chinese company, Jiangsu Yabaite Technology Co. Ltd., was also forwarded involving kickbacks. They even forwarded fake letters from Pakistani and Chinese authorities to prove their allegations. The story brought the Chinese Government to the point that an inquiry was conducted by the China Securities Regulatory Commission (CSRC) and alleged kickbacks were found in the project.* They even tried to misrepresent the opinion of the Chinese Government. *The allegations became more serious as the Government of the Punjab was involved in such allegations.* The Government of the Punjab is known for early and a quick implementation of the CPEC projects and has been saving billions of rupees in the past two years. ...

¹² <https://www.dawn.com/news/1355187/economic-pressure-points>

¹³ <http://nation.com.pk/columns/05-Sep-2017/transparency-of-cpec-projects>

Pakistan gets \$230m loans to cushion forex reserves, *The Express Tribune*, 09 September¹⁴

Pakistan has received two short-term loans worth \$230 million from international creditors, meant to keep the official foreign exchange reserves at a level sufficient to provide cover to three-month import bill. *According to officials, the country received an amount of \$153 million from Citibank in August. Besides, Islamic Development Bank (IDB) gave a \$77 million short-term loan in July for crude oil import.* The IDB's short-term facility is meant for import of crude oil from Saudi Arabia and the lender directly makes payments to the oil supplier on behalf of an oil importer. It partially helped lower pressure on the country's forex reserves.

CPEC-myth from realities, Dr. Kamal Monnoo, *The Nation*, 27 September¹⁵

The China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a key component in China's ambitious 65-nation "One Belt-One Road" (OBOR) economic integration and development initiative, has long been the target of criticism. The concerns of skeptics are wide ranging, from security to political to economic. *As soon as the 'Long-Term Plan' on CPEC' was unveiled in May 2017, it was immediately labeled as one that would have long-lasting impact on Pakistan's surveillance, entertainment, agriculture, tourism, transportation, finance, and security situations. Some have likened it to neo-colonialism claiming that China is not an NGO coming to distribute jobs and aid packages; nor is it a wealthy relative visiting us from abroad, bringing presents without demanding anything substantial in return.* ... Now it is all very well to get carried away with all these dooms day theories, but surely sanity must prevail in the end. China is a friend, - perhaps our most dependable friend – and has decided to put its trust and capital in Pakistan at a time when no other country was willing to do so. ...

CPEC hurdles, Editorial, *The Express Tribune*, 30 September¹⁶

Pakistan has seen a small but significant improvement in the global competitiveness scale, as measured by the World Economic Forum Report (WEFR), climbing from 115th to 122nd place. The progress is due mainly to the promising China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). ... *At this point we must not be carried away by the hype surrounding the project because questions still remain about our capacity to undertake the tougher tasks that lie ahead. The first among these is to ensure the country completes the projects under CPEC, especially those related to infrastructure*

¹⁴ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1501689/money-matters-pakistan-gets-230m-loans-cushion-forex-reserves/>

¹⁵ <http://nation.com.pk/columns/27-Sep-2017/cpec-myths-from-realities>

¹⁶ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1519412/cpec-hurdles/>

development, on time. ... If we are to be competitive in today's world, there is absolutely no room for complacency or excuses. ... As academics have pointed out, CPEC and other mega projects can go forward only if we are committed to education and the pursuit of scientific knowledge. Our success or failure depends upon it.

SECURITY SITUATION

Six men accused of facilitating slain Taliban chief get Pakistani CNICS out on bail, *The Express Tribune*, 01 September¹⁷

The six men accused of facilitating slain Afghan Taliban supremo Mullah Akhtar Mansoor acquire a Pakistani identity have been bailed out, according to the interior ministry records. Mullah Mansoor, along with another man, was killed when a taxicab he was travelling in was targeted by a remotely-piloted American aircraft near Nushki district in Balochistan in May 2016. *A Pakistani passport and computerised national identity card (CNIC) were found near the charred wreckage of the taxi which identified him as Wali Muhammad.* A DNA test conducted on the body later confirmed it was Mullah Mansoor who had acquired Pakistani CNIC under a fake name.

Who killed Benazir Bhutto? Zahid Hussain, *Dawn*, 06 September¹⁸

The ruling is inexplicable but not surprising given the callous way in which the case was handled by successive governments. Besides forming several joint investigation committees, the help of Scotland Yard and even the United Nations was acquired. But all that seems to have failed to bring the culprits to justice. Surely, political gamesmanship made the investigations more intricate. It was apparent that the case became a tool for settling political scores with the result that investigations conducted by various agencies were thrown into the bin. *In his ruling, the judge declared that the prosecution appeared confused. In fact, the case was doomed from the very outset with the frequent change of judges and prosecutors. One of the prosecutors was also killed in mysterious circumstances.*

Bullets alone won't do, Hasnain Iqbal, *Daily Times*, 06 September¹⁹

Present day Pakistan seems ambivalent in taking on the daunting but vital challenge of crafting a counter narrative that shuns extremist ideologies as irreligious. Our society is disturbingly fractured along religious lines. This

¹⁷ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1497150/six-men-accused-facilitating-slain-taliban-chief-get-pakistani-cnic-bail/>

¹⁸ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1355911/who-killed-benazir-bhutto>

¹⁹ <http://dailytimes.com.pk/opinion/06-Sep-17/bullets-alone-wont-do>

polarisation is further compounded by inequalities in the realms of education, income distribution, and access to opportunity and justice. *Fanaticism and xenophobia are deeply embedded in the bowels of our society and it will take a concerted effort by the state, civil society and scholars to devise a powerful discourse underpinned by citations from Quran and Islamic history and then disseminate the same through the formal education system, mosques, media and madrassas here are 400 Auqaf mosques in Punjab alone.* The imams of these mosques are state employees and must be made subservient to the state line. Imagine the footfall in these mosques five times a day and then the faithful going back to their families, carrying with them the message from the mosque. Fighting extremism is intimidating for its sheer intricacy, breadth of scope, diversity of stakeholders and warrants a breathtaking degree of coordination and intellectual effort.

Anti-extremism efforts falter, Editorial, Dawn, 07 September²⁰

Religious extremism has been percolating through this society since decades, becoming increasingly blatant over time. At best, it has divided society along the lines of faith; at worst, it has been the impetus for committing murder in the name of God. Acts of terrible violence targeted killings, lynchings and bombings, etc. have claimed tens of thousands of lives instead, perversely enough, the state has muzzled voices of reason, 'disappeared' individuals with views critical of the establishment, and demonized those professing 'secular' opinions. In other words, progressive ideas that should have been allowed space have been further marginalized. *It is hardly surprising that despite the success of the military operations against terrorist groups, almost every day continues to bring forth evidence that Pakistan's slide towards obscurantism continues unchecked.*

Four Hazaras gunned down in Kuchlak, The Express Tribune, 10 September²¹

Four people belonging to the Hazara community were killed and two others severely injured in an attack by armed men in the Kuchlak area on Sunday evening. *A 12-year-old boy was among the victims, while two women travelling with them remained unhurt as they were sitting in a vehicle when the attackers opened fire on the men who were standing outside. According to officials, eight members of the Hazara Shia community were coming to Quetta from Chaman town on the Afghan border.* They stopped their vehicle near a petrol station at Jalogir turn on the Quetta-Chaman road to take rest...

²⁰ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1356007/anti-extremism-efforts-falter>

²¹ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1502748/five-hazaras-dead-quetta-gun-attack/>

TTP magazine: more fiction than fact, Tahmina Rashid, *The Express Tribune*, 16 September²²

Last month the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan released the inaugural issue of its English-language magazine *Sunnat-e-Khola* following in the footsteps of the Islamic State or Da'ish. *Notably the 45-page magazine is from those women who migrated to Khurasan, supposedly a caliphate established by Da'ish in Afghanistan. But unlike Dabiq, a high-quality magazine issued by Da'ish, this is an amateur effort with low-quality images.* The pieces are also poorly written and riddled with typos. On the cover or title page is the image of a lone woman clad in a black, Saudi-style abaya. On the contents page is the image of a woman holding a child in Afghan-style burqa. Both are shown walking on the sand in a desert, in an effort perhaps to convey the hardship of migrant women believers. ...

Civil-military cooperation, Editorial, *The Nation*, 20 September²³

... *There are very positive and welcome overtures from the military, which need to be followed up by actions that reinforce this stance. Politicians and interest groups have been trying to pit the government and the military against each other for a while now and efforts have redoubled following the US announcement of an increase Afghanistan deployment and its response.* In the face of such efforts both the military and the government need to work together to dispel this notion - not only to preserve internal stability but also to present a united front to the international community. ... *We have recently witnessed how success is inevitable when the two institutions combine. The army and the government were very vigilant when it came to ensuring not only the success of the PSL final but also the World XI series.* This is the precedent that should be set. Especially that in order to rid Pakistan of extremism we need to put our own house in order.

Security clean up, Editorial, *The Express Tribune*, 21 September²⁴

There is an aura of discomfort with the news that militants have been shifted from the Karachi Central Jail to other districts of the province and some even to other provinces. *Members of the LeJ and other outfits have been both bold and crafty in breaking their way out of prison. What is clear is that the prison system needs an urgent revamp as officials at the Karachi Central Jail have themselves faced charges of abetting the escape of inmates.* The Karachi Central Jail is already overburdened making management complicated, and corrupt officials within further exacerbating the system cannot be tolerated. Furthermore, it would serve law

²² <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1507588/ttp-magazine-fiction-fact/>

²³ <http://nation.com.pk/editorials/20-Sep-2017/civil-military-cooperation>

²⁴ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1511688/security-clean-up/>

enforcement in this country well for the government of Sindh to keep intelligence information, especially the whereabouts of such high-profile inmates, hidden from the public. ... It is imperative that high-profile prisoners are entrusted to loyal law-enforcement agents and that any element that even so much as tries to endanger the safety of fellow citizens be censured and imprisoned as per the law.

Gen Qamar warns people badmouthing Pakistan, its army, *The Express Tribune*, 25 September²⁵

Army chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa has said that the people badmouthing Pakistan and its army and talking about dismembering the country cannot escape the law. "No power can harm us as long as we have such valiant sons of the soil and their brave parents in Pakistan," the army chief said during a visit to the parents of a young army officer, Lieutenant Arsalan Alam Shaheed at his village in Murree on Monday. ... Gen Qamar said, "We are sacrificing the best for this nation". On the contrary, some people and hostile agencies from abroad were badmouthing Pakistan and its army and talking about dismembering the country...

Growing influence of IS, Editorial, *The Nation* 27, September²⁶

One of the major denials of the government of Pakistan has always been the insurgency in Baluchistan, and the growing influence of the so called Islamic State (IS) in that region and across the country. *The earlier proof of the extremist organisation's presence in the region was the abduction and murder of a Chinese couple in Quetta. The second incident, fairly recent, which supports their presence is the IS flag which was put up on major thoroughfare in the city of Islamabad on Sunday. ...* At the same time, this incident did not happen anywhere remote. We are talking about Islamabad; the capital of Pakistan - a city heavily guarded and monitored via surveillance mechanisms. ... The stringing up of IS's black flag in the heart of Islamabad is a huge test for our police; especially with the inauguration of the Safe City Project which is supposed to monitor all activity in the city.

²⁵ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1516095/foreign-hostile-agencies-trying-destabilise-country-gen-qamar/>

²⁶ <http://nation.com.pk/editorials/27-Sep-2017/growing-influence-of-is>

FOREIGN POLICY

Pakistan ready to help US for peace in Afghanistan, Dawn, 07 September²⁷

Army Chief Gen Qamar Bajwa said on Wednesday that Pakistan was ready to help the United States and Nato for peace in Afghanistan, but Pakistan's security concerns need to be addressed. *Speaking at the end of the event held on the lawns of General Headquarters (GHQ) to mark the country's 52nd Defence Day in commemoration of the 1965 war with India, the army chief sought to respond to international concerns about the alleged presence of terrorist groups and their safe havens on Pakistani soil.* In his 15-minute speech delivered in Urdu, the army chief gave an insight into how Pakistan planned to stay away from conflict in Afghanistan and carry forward its domestic fight against terrorism. ...

Making BRICS out of straw, M. A. Niazi, The Nation, 15 September²⁸

That the BRICS declaration is being regarded in Pakistan as anything more than a furtherance of US President Donald Trump's recent remarks about Pakistan providing safe havens to militants fighting the USA in Afghanistan, is because China is one of the members of BRICS, and has indicated that it will not support Pakistan in whatever it does. *The reason for such a declaration is the 'I' in BRICS: India, which has managed a diplomatic triumph over Pakistan by this move.* ... Actually, the BRICS declaration should be seen by Pakistan as the second drop of a deluge. The first was Donald Trump's Afghan policy remarks, which apparently declared open season on the Pakistani establishment's support of militant organisations. The BRICS Summit Declaration implied that it was all right for multilateral forums to express a view about this support. *The next step, for which Pakistan should be prepared, is that India will push through declarations at other multilateral forums, this time at those where Pakistan is a member.* Though Pakistan may well be able to stop India by the simple means of preventing a consensus, the knowledge of Pakistani isolation at such forums as the SCO, NAM and the Commonwealth would become well-known in diplomatic circles. *It has been China so far which has prevented Jaish-e-Muhammad founder Maulana Masood Azhar from being placed on the UN list of terrorists. Maulana Masood is not so much a mujahideen leader as much an asset for the agencies for the Kashmir movement.* ...

²⁷ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1356146/pakistan-ready-to-help-us-for-peace-in-afghanistan>

²⁸ <http://nation.com.pk/15-Sep-2017/making-brics-out-of-straw>

America's Afghan saga, Fahad Idrees Virk, *The Nation*, 23 September²⁹

Fortunately or unfortunately Pakistan is a pivot to the Afghan Crisis; without addressing her reservations, the Trumpism will eventually turned into Dumpism. *The Trump Administration decided to bolster the size of American troops on Afghan soil, which will add 3,000 to 5,000 to an already deployed 8,800. This new development marks the third phase of the 'The Third American-Afghan War' and completes the 16th year of this prolonged conflict.* ... The stopgap American strategy of sending more boots to Afghan soil has a limited chance to succeed. ... It would add fuel to fire in an already vulnerable and hostile environment. The Taliban are on and off engaging in peace talks with the condition of a complete withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan – a condition unlikely to meet by the government which is struggling for their own survival. *The American carrot and stick policy, sabotaging dialogues processes, and siding with India further created an environment of mistrust and hostility.* Throughout the “war on terror” Pakistan lend her helping hand to America militarily as well as politically but, the “do more” mantra demoralised the spirit of the country which rendered invaluable contribution in an alien war. Moreover, the drone strikes within the jurisdiction of the country further created a trust deficit. ...

Afghan Taliban's pledge, Editorial, *The Nation*, 16 September³⁰

The new Interior Minister has picked the worst time to be bullish on terrorism. While answering the questions of the Senate – by letter, it must be mentioned – Ahsan Iqbal ducked and weaved like a professional boxer; ignoring most of the queries and pleading ignorance to others. The ones that he answered, he did to divest himself of responsibility. *According to our honourable Interior Minister, it is not the job of the federal government to keep an eye out for banned groups and to take action against them – it is the job of the provincial governments.* ... *This is all the more important considering that on the same day Mr Iqbal was saying it was not his job to look after terrorism, the Afghan Taliban were calling him out by name and pledging their support to the Pakistani government against the US.* One can wonder whose responsibility it is to answer for that – perhaps the person named by the terrorist group. ...

Is mending relations with US possible? Talat Masood, *The Express Tribune*, 27 September³¹

Pakistan is experiencing a prolonged period of highly strained relations with the US and the prospects in future do not seem bright. President

²⁹ <http://nation.com.pk/columns/23-Sep-2017/america-s-afghan-saga>

³⁰ <http://nation.com.pk/16-Sep-2017/afghan-taliban-s-pledge>

³¹ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1517037/mending-relations-us-possible/>

Trump's speech last August that was meant to give out the broad contours of his Afghan policy included a blistering attack on Pakistan. ... Trump, however, offered a sort of carrot by saying that Pakistan had much to gain by supporting US policies in Afghanistan and abandoning its support of terrorists, implying thereby the Taliban. ... *Despite current serious differences with the US, Pakistan's leadership would like to mend its relations with it. It realises the unique position of the US as a superpower and is aware that it is likely to stay in Afghanistan up to 2020 and beyond.* In any case it is never helpful to be on the wrong side of a superpower. The striking feature is that it is not looking to Washington for financial or military aid, as was the case in the past. But it would justifiably expect that its role in the fight against terror would be recognised. ...

PROVINCES & REGIONS

Supreme Court, Islamabad High Court jurisdiction extended to Fata, *The Dawn*, 13 September³²

The federal cabinet on Tuesday approved extension of the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court and the Islamabad High Court (IHC) to the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (Fata) as a first step towards implementation of the long overdue reforms in the country's restive tribal areas. In the initial draft that had been prepared in the light of suggestions of a six-member special committee that had proposed merger of the tribal areas with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the jurisdiction of the Peshawar High Court (PHC) was to be extended to the tribal areas. *The cabinet which met under Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi approved that a bill seeking extension of the jurisdiction of the superior courts would soon be placed before parliament after which the controversial Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR) would be abolished.*

PM urges the Baloch to join national mainstream for development, *The Nation*, 14 September³³

Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi has urged the estranged Baloch to leave the path of confrontation and join the national mainstream for the development of Balochistan as he announced various development projects for Balochistan. *Speaking after the Kacchi Canal inauguration ceremony in*

³² <https://www.dawn.com/news/1357347/supreme-court-islamabad-high-court-jurisdiction-extended-to-fata>

³³ <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2017/09/14/pm-urges-the-baloch-to-join-national-mainstream-for-development/>

Dera Bugti on Thursday, PM Abbasi said every district of Balochistan will be provided with gas facilities at the cost of Rs 15 billion and a hospital will also be established in Dera Bugti. Commenting on the Kacchi Canal, the premier said the first phase of the project completed at a cost of Rs 80 billion will irrigate 72,000 acres of barren yet cultivable land in Dera Bugti. He said the foundation of Kacchi Canal was laid in 1998 government of Nawaz Sharif but the subsequent governments did not release funds for this project. "Today, Nawaz Sharif should have been here," he said, adding that the former premier had been involved in every phase of the project.

RELATIONSHIP WITH INDIA

Indian democracy; a sham, Editorial, *The Nation*, 26 September³⁴

On Saturday, Indian External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj addressed the leaders of the world at the meeting of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). She addressed the issue of terrorism in the region, and in a reply to Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi's highlight of the Kashmir issue; her response was that Pakistan is the country in the region which is responsible for terrorism and has only produced terrorists, whereas India has given the world scientists, innovators, and doctors. *However, the crowd of protestors outside the UN building tell a completely different story. These people were mainly Kashmiris and Sikhs protesting against the atrocities committed by Indian government in both, Indian Occupied Kashmir (IOK) and Punjab. ... It is no secret that the Indian army appointed for IOK is using pellet guns against innocent and weapon less citizens. The images of the victims are all over the internet. The story of the young man who was tied to a jeep and used as a human shield against the protestors is also a known fact. ... These are all burning issues, which the UN cannot afford to ignore. For several years, India has claimed to be a democracy which offers every basic human right according to the Charter of the UN. If such is the case, India should have no problem in conducting a plebiscite or giving the people of IOK agency to decide what they think is best for them. Indian democracy is a sham – especially in Kashmir and Punjab - and it is about time that they are called out for their atrocities.*

How we lost Kashmir, Hussain Nadim, *The Express Tribune*, 26 September³⁵

It was nothing short of an exceptional speech by our seasoned ambassador to the UN at the General Assembly. *Grounded both, in reality and higher moral footing, it was a befitting response to a xenophobic characterisation*

³⁴ <http://nation.com.pk/editorials/26-Sep-2017/indian-democracy-a-sham>

³⁵ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1515936/how-we-lost-kashmir/>

of the people of Pakistan as terrorists by the Indian foreign minister. The ambassador's speech was, however, short-lived and lost credibility before it could even develop one. ... It was after all our incompetence that what was once known as Kashmir 'freedom fight' globally, in a matter of years got labelled as 'terrorism'. And it is our incompetence today that the Kashmiris suffer on a daily basis. In times like these, it's not India but incompetence that is our biggest enemy, and Kashmir is the victim.

The Bipin Doctrine, Muhammad Ali Ehsan, *The Express Tribune*, 28 September³⁶

Most military planners are familiar with the Powell Doctrine devised by the retired four-star general of the United States. Simply put, it means 'an approach to military conflicts that advocates using overwhelming force to maximise success and minimise casualties'. *Given his experience in conducting a surgical strike in Myanmar and now threatening to do so against Pakistan, the Indian military chief may also be credited with a 'Bipin Doctrine' – a doctrine that advocates breaching the sovereignty and territorial integrity of another county by executing surgical strikes without considering its consequence. ...*

STATISTICS

BOMBINGS, SHOOTINGS AND DISAPPEARANCES

(Select incidents culled out from the Pakistan media)

Place	Date	Description	Killed	Injured
Karachi				
FATA				
Kurram ³⁷	16/09/2017	Three 'Afghan Taliban' Killed by US drones Two soldiers martyred in SWA blast	02	02

³⁶ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1517879/the-bipin-doctrine/>

³⁷ <http://nation.com.pk/16-Sep-2017/us-drone-kills-three-afghan-taliban-in-kurram>

Bajaur ³⁸	16/09/2017	Tehsildar Fawad along with his five guards killed	06	
Punjab				
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa				
Rajgal Valley ³⁹	24/09/2017	Army officer in cross border attack killed	01	0
Dera Ismail Khan ⁴⁰	25/09/2017	Three suspected militants killed	03	
Balochistan				
Kuchlak (Balochistan) ⁴¹	10/09/2017	Four Hazaras gunned down	04	02
Quetta ⁴²	25/09/2017	Four wanted Baloch Republican Army militants killed	04	

³⁸ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1509015/tehsildar-among-five-dead-bajaur-ied-blast/>

³⁹ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1359693/army-officer-martyred-in-cross-border-attack>

⁴⁰ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1359858/three-militants-killed-in-encounter>

⁴¹ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1502748/five-hazaras-dead-quetta-gun-attack/>

⁴² <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1516000/radd-ul-fasaad-four-wanted-terrorists-killed-balochistan-raids/>