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Pakistan: Chronology of Recent Events

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Summary

This report provides a chronology of recent events involving Pakistan and Pakistan-U.S. relations. Sources include, but are not limited to, major newswires, the U.S. Department of State, and Pakistani news outlets. For a substantive review, see CRS Issue Brief IB94041, *Pakistan-U.S. Relations*. This report will be updated regularly.

- 02/07/06** — Some 5,000 people marched in Peshawar in protest over the publication in European newspapers of cartoons deemed offensive to Muslims. On the same day, tribal militants blew up a major gas pipeline in the Baluchistan province in the fourth such attack in one month.
- 02/06/06** — The Governor of Baluchistan province claimed Afghan warlords and drug traffickers were arming Baloch militants and India was financing them.
- 02/05/06** — **A bomb exploded on a bus in Quetta, killing at least 13 people and injuring 20 others.** Police later arrested 11 Baloch tribesmen in connection with the attack. On the same day, six people were killed and at least a dozen others, including women and children, were wounded in a missile attack in Sui, Baluchistan.
- 02/04/06** — The commander of the U.S. Disaster Assistance Center in Pakistan, Gen. LeFever, announced that the U.S. military's unprecedented earthquake relief mission will end on 3/31, but that U.S. forces will leave behind more than \$6 million worth of medical and construction equipment. On the same day, fierce fighting between Afghan security forces and Islamic militants in eastern Afghanistan spread across the border, leaving at least three Pakistani soldiers dead in South Waziristan.
- 02/03/06** — President Musharraf condemned "in the strongest terms" **the publication in European newspapers of cartoons deemed offensive to Muslims.** The Pakistani Senate passed unanimously a resolution denouncing the publication, calling it part of a "vicious, outrageous, and provocative campaign" against Islam. Hundreds of Islamic activists marched in

Acronyms:

LOC:	Line of Control (Kashmir)
MMA:	Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal
PML:	Pakistan Muslim League
PPP:	Pakistan People's Party

protest in Pakistani cities. A State Department spokesman said the U.S. government found the images “offensive” while characterizing the issue as a matter of press freedom.

- 02/02/06** — **Director of Intelligence Negroponte told a Senate panel** that Pakistan’s commitment to counterterrorism efforts has enabled some key Al Qaeda captures, but that Pakistan “remains a major source of extremism that poses a threat to [President] Musharraf, to the United States, and to neighboring India and Afghanistan.” He also said Musharraf has made “only limited progress” in democratization efforts. On the same day, Saudi King Abdullah visited Islamabad, where **Pakistan and Saudi Arabia signed five agreements** meant to enhance diplomatic, educational, and trade interactions.
- 01/31/06** — **Pakistan and India signed an agreement to relaunch a cross-border train service** that was halted in 1965. On the same day, NATO forces announced an end to their 90-day earthquake relief and rescue mission.
- 01/30/06** — **Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Patterson visited Islamabad** for meetings with top Pakistani leaders. On the same day, **a new video of Al Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahri surfaced**, demonstrating that he had not been killed in the 1/13 Bajur attack. Also, two Pakistani paramilitary soldiers were killed by an improvised explosive device in North Waziristan.
- 01/29/06** — A *Washington Post* interview quoted President Musharraf as claiming the 1/13 Bajur attack “was definitely not coordinated with us [Pakistan]” and calling the strike “a violation of our sovereignty.” Musharraf also claimed that Pakistan-India relations “have never been as good as they are today,” but he expressed disappointment that dispute resolution was not moving forward, especially with regard to Kashmir. On the same day, exiled former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif accused Musharraf of failing democracy and “degrading Pakistan’s name across the world.” Also, a British press report claimed that “prevarication by the Pakistani government” had cost the United States an opportunity to target Osama bin Laden in Baluchistan two years earlier.
- 01/28/06** — A *New York Times* editorial asserted that the Pakistani people “deserve a good explanation” for the 1/13 Bajur attack and said President Bush should have provided one.
- 01/27/06** — The Senate passed **S.Res. 356**, commending earthquake relief and recovery efforts, and urging the U.S. government to take the lead in encouraging continued efforts. On the same day, police in Lahore arrested several hundred Islamic activists who were protesting against a planned mixed-gender marathon there. The marathon later took place peacefully, although 2,000 women reportedly withdrew due to fears of violence.
- 01/26/06** — **Former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto held a press conference in Washington**, where she claimed that Pakistan’s military-dominated government was sidelining the country’s secular democratic forces and creating a vacuum that is being filled by Islamist extremists. She called for countering terrorism with “stable, pluralistic structures through democratic reform.” Earlier in the day, Interpol had (at Islamabad’s request) issued “red notices” seeking the arrest of Bhutto and her husband on corruption charges, charges Bhutto called “scurrilous” and “politically-motivated.” On the same day, President Musharraf told an interviewer

that Pakistan is moving forward with a proposed gas pipeline project involving Iran and that, if “somebody” wants to stop the project, Pakistan should be compensated.

- 01/25/06** — A *Washington Post* editorial asserted that Pakistan’s “meretricious military ruler” had avoided an all-out campaign against Islamic extremism at significant cost in American lives and resources. On the same day, the Pakistani Senate passed unanimously a resolution condemning the 1/13 Bajur attack as a violation of the country’s sovereignty. Also, six people, most of them women and children, were reported killed in a landmine explosion in the Baluchistan province.
- 01/24/06** — **President Bush hosted Prime Minister Aziz at the White House**, where he lauded the “strategic” and “vital” U.S.-Pakistan relationship and said he would travel to Pakistan in March 2006. On the same day, the U.S. Trade Representative determined that **Pakistan had made “significant progress” in protecting and enforcing intellectual property rights**, especially with regard to the pirating of optical media. Also, President Musharraf, contradicting the prime minister’s earlier remarks, claimed evidence had been found suggesting that Al Qaeda members had been killed in the 1/13 Bajur attack.
- 01/22/06** — Prime Minister Aziz told an American television interviewer that the apparent 1/13 U.S. attack in the Bajur Agency was not coordinated with the Pakistani government and that “not one shred of evidence” had been found indicating that Islamic militants had been at the site of the attack. He condemned the incident and called for greater relevant U.S.-Pakistan communication and coordination in the future. On the same day, a *New York Times* report claimed that Pakistan’s military campaign against Islamic militants in western tribal areas “is bogged down, the local political administration is powerless, and the militants are stronger than ever.” Also, a spokesman for Baloch tribal militias claimed that 16 people, including women and children, had been killed in two days of heavy fighting between militants and security forces in Baluchistan.
- 01/21/06** — **Under Secretary of State Burns visited Islamabad**, where he met with top Pakistani leaders and officially commenced a four-year, \$200 million earthquake reconstruction grant agreement.
- 01/20/06** — The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom urged President Bush to raise in upcoming meetings with Prime Minister Aziz the issue of “severe violations” of religious freedom in Pakistan. On the same day, anti-U.S. protests continued in Pakistani cities, with thousands of marchers reportedly chanting “Death to America” in Peshawar.
- 01/19/06** — Career Foreign Service officer **Richard Boucher was nominated to be Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs**.
- 01/18/06** — **Two days of foreign secretary-level Pakistan-India talks ended** with Foreign Secretary Khan expressing satisfaction with the achievements of the bilateral “composite dialogue” while also calling for movement on “more difficult questions.” The Indian foreign secretary echoed the positive assessment of progress while also asserting that Pakistan had not taken sufficient steps to end “cross-border terrorism” in India. On the same day, New York-based Human Rights Watch released an annual report claiming that President “Musharraf’s military-backed government

- did little in 2005 to address ongoing human rights concerns” and that Musharraf himself “continued to tighten his personal grip on power.”
- 01/17/06** — **Pakistani officials claimed that at least four Al Qaeda militants, including Ayman al-Zawahri’s son-in-law and a top bomb expert, had been killed in the 1/13 Bajur attack.** A State Department spokesman would not offer details or confirm that any Al Qaeda members had been present during that attack. On the same day, a U.S. delegation arrived in Islamabad for a **fourth round of U.S.-Pakistan bilateral investment treaty negotiations.** Also, President Musharraf gave a major address to the nation in which he sought to justify his government’s water and dam policy, commended earthquake relief efforts, decried the activities of “subversive” tribal leaders in the Baluchistan province, and made no mention of the 1/13 Bajur attack. Finally, U.N. and other international aid groups suspended their operations in Baluchistan due to security concerns.
- 01/16/06** — Pakistan’s ruling PML party issued a statement demanding a U.S. apology for the 1/13 Bajur attack. On the same day, Secretary of State Rice declined to provide details about the attack, but said the United States will not deal “lightly” with Al Qaeda-linked militants. Also, anti-U.S. protests continued in Pakistani cities, with up to 10,000 marching in Karachi. Finally, Paris-based Reporters Without Borders condemned Islamabad’s ban on journalists from going to the Bajur Agency and the arrest of two leading reporters who were investigating a 1/13 attack there.
- 01/15/06** — The Leader of the Opposition in the Pakistani Senate strongly condemned the 1/13 “violation of Pakistani airspace and missile attack on civilians” in Bajur. On the same day, eight people were reported killed in clashes between security forces and militants in Baluchistan.
- 01/14/06** — The Foreign Ministry condemned the loss of civilian lives in the 1/13 Bajur attack and delivered a protest to the U.S. Ambassador in Islamabad.
- 01/13/06** — **A missile attack on a residential compound in northwest Pakistan near the Afghan border killed up to 18 people,** reportedly including numerous women and children. Some reports said the death toll was higher and included up to one dozen Islamic militants. Pakistani officials and local **witnesses blamed the attack on U.S. air forces,** possibly Predator drones that were targeting top Al Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahri, who was not at the scene. U.S. officials would not confirm U.S. involvement. The incident led to **major public anti-U.S. demonstrations.** On the same day, at least 18 people, one-third of them Pakistani soldiers, were reported killed and many more injured in gunbattles and landmine blasts in Baluchistan.
- 01/10/06** — **A fierce battle between Pakistani soldiers and suspected Islamic militants in North Waziristan** left 14 militants and 7 soldiers dead.
- 01/09/06** — The Pakistani government lodged a strong protest with U.S.-led forces in Afghanistan after cross-border firing killed eight people in North Waziristan. U.S. authorities denied the involvement of U.S. troops.
- 01/08/06** — **President Musharraf accused India of arming and financing militants Baluchistan.** New Delhi rejected the allegations as “utterly baseless and false.” On the same day, the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad reported that U.S. helicopters were delivering more than 100 tons of earthquake relief supplies in the region daily.

- 01/07/06** — **A missile attack on a residence in North Waziristan killed eight people** and injured nine others. Local residents said an American helicopter had launched the missile, but U.S. officials did not confirm or deny the report. Separate incidents left 16 people, including 8 Pakistani soldiers and 5 members of a tribal elder's family, dead in the region. On the same day, President Musharraf offered a new initiative calling for the withdrawal of Indian troops from three key Kashmiri cities in return for Pakistani assistance in ending Islamic militancy in the region. New Delhi quickly rejected the proposal, saying such decisions are a matter of India's sovereignty and "cannot be dictated by any foreign government."
- 01/06/06** — The Defense Department FY2006 Authorization Act became **P.L. 109-163**, which authorizes \$40 million for Pentagon-funded humanitarian assistance to victims of the 10/8 earthquake.
- 01/05/06** — Foreign Minister Kasuri apologized for the illicit nuclear smuggling activities of A.Q. Khan and said "appropriate action" had been taken to fully dismantle Khan's network. On the same day, suspected Islamic militants shot dead seven tribesmen in South Waziristan.
- 01/04/06** — A senior State Department official said the United States is "absolutely opposed" to any gas pipeline projects involving Iran. On the same day, Baloch political figures claimed that ten people, including two women and four children, had been killed in government shelling in Baluchistan.
- 01/03/06** — U.N. Secretary General Annan appointed former U.S. President George H.W. Bush as special envoy for South Asian earthquake relief efforts.
- 01/02/06** — Press reports indicated that Pakistan was negotiating with China to purchase 6-8 new nuclear power reactors for \$7-10 billion. Islamabad denied the reports as "baseless." On the same day, fighting between Pakistani security forces and suspected tribal militants near Dera Bugti, Baluchistan, left two people dead and eight women and children injured, and a key gas pipeline damaged by an explosion.
- 12/31/05** — Two Pakistani paramilitary troops were killed and key bridge was destroyed by suspected tribal militants in Baluchistan.
- 12/30/05** — The Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2006 became **P.L. 109-148**, which allows that up to \$195 million in Pentagon funds be used to reimburse Pakistan and other key cooperating nations for their support of U.S. military operations. On the same day, President Bush directed the drawdown of up to \$30 million worth of Pentagon defense articles and services for international disaster relief efforts in Pakistan. Also, the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan called for a halt to government military operations in Baluchistan.
- 12/28/05** — An organization representing some 12,000 Pakistani madrassas said they would not comply with a government order to expel foreign students, calling the order unconstitutional and a human rights violation. On the same day, Pakistan launched Chinese-assisted construction of a second nuclear power plant at Chasma.
- 12/27/05** — An Indian official told a questioner that India noted "the heavy military action" in Baluchistan and that New Delhi hoped Islamabad would "exercise restraint" in the region. Pakistan's Foreign Ministry spokeswoman later sternly advised Indian leaders to "mind their own business." On the same day, Paris-based Reporters Without Borders

- condemned the Pakistani government for issuing a ban on 30 foreign television channels, most of them Indian.
- 12/24/05** — **Tribal leaders claimed that at least 100 people had been killed** in a “military operation” being conducted against “unarmed” people in Kohlu, Baluchistan. The Islamabad government denied that any military operations were underway.
- 12/21/05** — A public opinion poll found **Pakistanis holding a more favorable view of the United States** than at any time since September 2001, with U.S. humanitarian assistance efforts dramatically improving America’s image. On the same day, Pakistani and Indian officials meeting in Lahore agreed to launch new cross-border bus service.
- 12/18/05** — **Pakistani troops backed by helicopter gunships launched an operation** against what the government called “miscreant hideouts” in Baluchistan after the head of Pakistan’s Frontier Corps and his deputy were injured in an attack on their helicopter over in the region.
- 12/17/05** — Pakistan and India agreed to begin work by 2007 on a proposed Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline project.
- 12/16/05** — **The Pentagon notified Congress of a possible Foreign Military Sale to Pakistan of 115 self-propelled howitzers** worth up to \$56 million.
- 12/13/05** — Rockets were fired at an army camp in Baluchistan during a visit to the site by President Musharraf.
- 12/12/05** — U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Crocker said the United States believes President Musharraf is leading Pakistan toward stable democracy. He also expressed concern that banned Islamic extremist groups had been allowed to join earthquake relief operations.
- 12/08/05** — A bomb exploded in South Waziristan near the Afghan border, killing 12 people and injuring at least 35 more.
- 12/07/05** — A gunbattle between Islamic militants and “bandits” in North Waziristan near the Afghan border killed 15 people.
- 12/06/05** — Four paramilitary soldiers were reported kidnaped in South Waziristan. The beheaded bodies of two were found two days later.
- 12/05/05** — A journalist who reported evidence that a U.S. drone had fired a missile at suspected terrorists on 12/1 — and thus contradicting Islamabad’s official explanation — was kidnaped by unidentified gunmen.
- 12/03/05** — Press reports indicated that “**senior**” **Al Qaeda figure Hamza Rabia was among those killed in an apparent 12/1 missile attack in North Waziristan.** The missile reportedly was fired from a U.S. aerial drone.
- 12/01/05** — Five militants, including three Uzbeks, were reported killed in what the Islamabad government called an detonation of stored explosives in North Waziristan near the Afghan border. Some local residents disputed the report, saying a helicopter fired rockets into the house.
- 11/19/05** — **Delegates from 75 countries and institutions met in Islamabad for a donor conference** to raise funds for earthquake relief efforts. More than \$5.8 billion was pledged in soft loans, cash, and in-kind donations, exceeding Pakistan’s financing target.
- 11/17/05** — **H.Res. 561** and **S.Res. 319**, commending relief efforts in response to the 10/8 earthquake, were introduced in the House and Senate, respectively.