

Dawn, 3 November 2008

US should help resolve Kashmir issue: Obama: 'Militants, not India, biggest threat to Pakistan'

WASHINGTON, Nov 2: The United States should try to resolve the Kashmir dispute, says US presidential front-runner Barack Obama while backing American efforts to promote a better understanding between India and Pakistan. 'We should probably try to facilitate a better understanding between Pakistan and India and try to resolve the Kashmir crisis so that they can stay focussed not on India, but on the situation with those militants,' said Mr Obama in an interview to MSNBC

Hindu, 3 November 2008

Nuclear deal not at the cost of pipeline: Pranab

Tehran: India said on Sunday that the India-U.S. civil nuclear deal was not at the cost of the Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline. 'Nuclear power is one source of energy. The other important source is the Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) gas pipeline. One is not exclusive to the other,' External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee said at a joint press conference with Iranian Economic Minister Shamseddin Hossein. They were interacting with reporters at the conclusion of the two-day Joint Commission Meeting of the two countries

Dawn, 3 November 2008

Petraeus and Boucher arrive in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD, Nov 2: US Central Command (Centcom) chief Gen David Howell Petraeus and Assistant Secretary of State Richard Boucher arrived here on Sunday to discuss various aspects of the 'war on terror' with government and military leaders. It is Gen Petraeus' first foreign visit after he assumed the command of Centcom on Oct 31. Although little has been made public about the agenda of talks Gen Petraeus and Mr Boucher will hold, analysts believe that they will explore the possibility of further raids inside Pakistan on hideouts of foreign militants

Daily Times, 4 November 2008

Attacks difficult to explain, says Zardari : No US assurance to halt missile strikes

ISLAMABAD: United States Central Command chief General David Petraeus did not guarantee an end to US drone attacks in Pakistani in a meeting with Pakistan's top leaders on Monday. Pakistan's most high profile protest yet came as Gen Petraeus met with top civil and military leaders in his first visit here since he took over his new position last week, amid claims that it could signal a shift in strategy in Afghanistan

News, 4 November 2008

US working with Pakistan in war on terror: White House

WASHINGTON: The White House on Monday said it is working in 'cooperative spirit' with Pakistan in the fight against terrorism and reaffirmed Washington's commitment to support the country in its economic development but declined to comment on the question of unilateral strikes into its territory. 'We have had many officials go to Pakistan, and we are working in a cooperative spirit with them to try to rid them of the terrorists, a threat that threatens the innocent Pakistanis, the region and certainly us here in America, so we continue to work with them,' White House Press Secretary Dana Perino said. She was asked to comment on Centcom's chief Gen David Petraeus' current visit to Islamabad and the Pakistan government's emphatic call for halting unilateral actions into its territory. 'It's appropriate that Gen Petraeus went since he has now taken over Centcom and he will be able to look at this from a

broader view rather than just having been in Iraq,' she said

News, 4 November 2008

Opinion: Need for review of US anti-terror policy in Pakistan By Khalid Aziz

Since September there have been 19 missile attacks on suspected terrorists by the US, most of them in Waziristan. They have led to the deaths of some foreign fighters; at the same time they have killed numerous innocent persons. As a result there is a widening wave of revulsion against US policies and Pakistan's support for them. We are living in a world where truth, rationality and logic are swept aside for the sake of expediency and temporary advantage. Michael Chertoff the powerful czar of US Homeland Security made a significant recommendation in London the other day. He pleaded for the sanctification of a new principle of international law involving the acceptance of the right to attack another country if it was "harbouring a potential terrorist threat." US defence secretary Robert Gates had commented a few days ago that the US would hold countries that permit sanctuary to terrorists fully accountable for actions. These two statements taken together mean that the US is formulating a doctrine that permits the launching of pre-emptive strike against non-state fighters living within the jurisdiction of another state. In the case of Pakistan this doctrine is already under implementation in FATA. Such a policy needs revision. It is counterproductive for both the US and Pakistan since it plays into the hands of the militants

News, 6 November 2008

Opinion: Three elections By Chris Cork

Kabul, November 2000, and the election of GW Bush to the American presidency. I watched on an ancient television in my office, our dish hidden from the Taliban who always suspected us of illegal activities but never went into the huge kennel occupied by our kochi dog wherein the dish was concealed. I thought Kerry would win by a whisker. He lost by one instead and was in all probability cheated of a victory that would have given us a world very different to the one we live in today. I watched the Florida recount, the triumphalism of the Bush dynasty and Big Oil, and was back in Peshawar a couple of days later chatting it over with chums in the Khyber Club and blithely unaware that a gentleman called Osama bin Laden was going to put a crimp in the world eleven months later. Four years later, lying on my roof in Bahawalpur and listening to the BBC World Service coverage on the radio, there was a sense of growing despondency as the American people voted for Dubya again and we spiralled downwards into a reeking darkness that clings about us now. Four miserable years of cack-handed American foreign policy that seemed to be made up on the back of an envelope by a bunch of poker players killing time between hands.

Hindu, 6 November 2008

Opinion: Obama presidency to pose challenges for Indian diplomacy By Siddharth Varadarajan

Though the prospect of an Obama victory has been internalised by India's foreign policy mavens for some time now, there is no denying the fact that the Democratic re-conquest of the White House has filled the strategic establishment with a certain sense of foreboding and dread. Some fear the 're-hyphenation' of India and Pakistan in American foreign policy and renewed activism on the question of Kashmir. Others worry about protectionism and curbs on outsourcing. The third set of concerns revolves around arms control issues. With Barack Obama reiterating his commitment to the early U.S. ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the early conclusion of a verifiable Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT), there is a feeling that India will soon find itself under pressure to forswear nuclear testing and

the production of weapons-grade nuclear material forever

Hindu, 6 November 2008

India cautiously optimistic

NEW DELHI: India on Wednesday gave a cautious but enthusiastic endorsement of Barack Obama's election as the next U.S. President. While the government led by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh sent formal congratulatory messages, political parties suggested that though Mr. Obama's win was historic, his views on Kashmir, outsourcing and China would need to be examined in some detail. 'Your extraordinary journey to the White House will inspire people not only in your country but also around the world,' Dr. Singh said

Times of India, 6 November 2008

What India wants from the new president

NEW DELHI: Barack Obama enters the White House riding the crest of history. The sense of promise -of restoring America's primacy in the world - will by and large be welcomed in India. Certainly, in large parts of the world, Obama will be a welcome change after eight years of George Bush, whose efforts to change the world as he found it had some disastrous consequences. Obama will be a breath of fresh air in almost every part of the world. And to the extent, there is a growing convergence between the two democracies. India can only hope to benefit from a rejuvenated US leadership. Why, then, is India keeping her fingers crossed?

Daily Times, 7 November 2008

Editorial: After America has spoken for Obama

Pakistanis have been discussing Obama these past months with a lot of hope and some misgiving. This is in line with the general Muslim sentiment in the world, as expressed by some debates televised from the Middle East where America is judged every living moment. The vote was for Obama, barring some Arabs who thought the Democrats would lean more heavily in favour of Israel and not do much to stave off the danger of Iran in the region

News, 8 November 2008

13 killed in US missile strike

PESHAWAR: Thirteen people were killed and eight others injured in yet another attack by the US drones on Sham village of the North Waziristan Agency (NWA) on Friday. In the first attack by the Central Intelligence Agency-operated unmanned aerial vehicles following the election of Barack Obama as the new US president on November 4, five Hellfire missiles were fired on the house of local tribesman Ghani Gul Wazir in Bachi Kellay, a hamlet near Sham village

Hindu, 9 November 2008

Kashmir is a bilateral issue: Pranab

Kolkata: External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee has said that Kashmir was a bilateral issue and India was trying to resolve matters through series of discussions. Responding to media queries on tax breaks promised by U.S. President-elect Barack Obama or the stand likely to be taken by him on Kashmir, he said : 'While I cannot comment on the tax issues relating to Mr. Obama, as and where in respect of Kashmir, I can say that this is a bilateral issue between India and Pakistan and we are trying to resolve this under the Shimla Accord and the Lahore agreement, through a series of discussions.'

Daily Times, 10 November 2008

NATO jets kill 8 banned outfit members in Khyber

KHAR/SWAT: NATO jets today bombed Tirah Valley in Khyber Agency, killing eight members of a banned outfit ' Amar Bil Maroof ' and injuring three, Dawn News reported. The channel said the NATO jets targeted hideouts of the banned outfit in the Moga area near Torkham. Amar Bil Maroof spokesman Munsif Afridi confirmed that those who had died were members of his group. He said that 10 Afghan soldiers had been killed in a gunbattle with his group at the Torkham border earlier in the day

News, 11 November 2008

Opinion: US, FATA and Afghanistan By Khalid Aziz

After Barack Obama's victory in the US presidential elections many people wonder whether there will be a reduction of tension in the region. The policies of great powers are grounded in these countries' particular geo-strategic compulsions. Such geo-strategic determinants remain permanent and do not shift. Mr Obama may have won an election, but he will have limited choices as far as Pakistan and Afghanistan are concerned. This election has not given Mr Obama a big mandate. He obtained 52 percent of the popular vote. The US remains a divided country and it will be difficult for the new president to usher in a radically new policy in Afghanistan

Dawn, 13 November 2008

Afghanistan asks West for more 'fighter troops'

LONDON, Nov 12: More international troops are needed in the south of Afghanistan, the country's foreign minister said on Wednesday, and they must be ready to engage in active fighting against insurgents. Foreign Minister Rangeen Dadfar Spanta, who is visiting Britain this week with Afghan President Hamid Karzai, said international efforts to train the Afghan military to handle security by itself remained vital for the long term, but in the meantime more foreign fighting troops were needed

Dawn, 13 November 2008

Zardari seeks US help to stabilise Pakistan

NEW YORK, Nov 12: President Asif Ali Zardari told US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice on Wednesday that only a stable Pakistan could ensure stability in the South and Central Asian regions. 'Pakistan is seeking cooperation of the international community to help stabilise the region,' he said. 'We hope that the US will offer full cooperation in achieving this target.' According to a Pakistan Embassy spokesman, the president told Ms Rice that his government was working for stabilising democracy in Pakistan and for the welfare of the people and was seeking US assistance for this purpose

Hindu, 13 November 2008

Obama calls up Manmohan

NEW DELHI: U.S. President-elect Barack Obama on Wednesday called up Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and described the India-U.S. strategic relationship as 'very important.' Expressing his desire to visit India as soon as possible, Mr. Obama, according to official sources here, assured Dr. Singh that the new set-up in Washington would work together with New Delhi on all important issues

Asian Age, 14 November 2008

Opinion: Obama's good for India By Sanjaya Baru

US President-elect Barack Obama's most detailed comment on relations with India are contained in the personal letter he addressed to the Prime Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh, when the latter visited Washington DC in September 2008. "I

would like to see US-India relations grow across the board to reflect our shared interests, shared values, shared sense of threats, and ever burgeoning ties between our two economies and societies," he said. He went on to add that "the recent bombings (in New Delhi) remind us that we are both victims of terrorist attacks on our soil, and we share a common goal of defeating these forces of extremism"

Dawn, 15 November 2008

Every major terror threat involves Pakistan: CIA

WASHINGTON, Nov 14: CIA director Michael Hayden has warned that every major terrorist threat confronting the world has ties to Pakistan. In a speech to the Atlantic Council on Thursday, Mr Hayden also claimed that Al Qaeda chief Osama bin Laden was hiding in Fata. 'Let me be very clear. Today, virtually every major terrorist threat that my agency is aware of has threads back to the tribal areas,' Mr Hayden told the Washington-based think-tank

Dawn, 16 November 2008

Key Afghan militant leader captured

KABUL, Nov 15: Afghan and coalition forces captured a militant leader in eastern Afghanistan, while 10 guerillas were killed in a separate clash, the US military said on Saturday. US forces said the captured man was a 'key insurgent leader' responsible for the deaths of Afghan troops, bomb attacks on coalition forces and the kidnapping of aid workers. He was seized on Friday in a joint raid with Afghan police in a village in eastern Ghazni province, the military said in a statement. No shots were fired in the raid, it said

Asian Age, 19 November 2008

Opinion: Much to learn from US presidential elections By P.C. Alexander

India and the United States are frequently referred to as "natural allies". It is true that certain principles of democracy - like plurality of choice, fundamental rights of citizens, supremacy of the Constitution, and the role of the judiciary in interpreting the Constitution - are basic features of the democratic systems in the two countries, but there are also great differences in the practice of some of these principles in these two countries. The differences have been the greatest in the electoral practices of the two, particularly in the selection of candidates for election. The steady deterioration in the credibility of India's electoral system in recent years is well known, but the recent presidential election in the US has served to highlight the deficiencies in the procedures of selection of candidates in India compared with those in America

Dawn, 19 November 2008

US seeks alternative supply routes to Afghanistan

WASHINGTON, Nov 19: The United States is seeking alternative supply routes for Nato troops in Afghanistan, including a tortuous overland journey from Europe, The Washington Post reported on Wednesday. The United States currently uses the Karachi-Khyber Pass route for supplying 67,000 foreign troops stationed in Afghanistan, including 32,000 Americans. Nearly half of US forces operate under Nato command. About 75 per cent of Nato and US supplies bound for Afghanistan - including petrol, food and military equipment - are transported overland through Pakistan

Daily Times, 19 November 2008

Editorial: Joint strategy against terrorism

The news from across the Durand Line is good after a long time. The NATO forces

and the Pakistan army are thinking of launching a joint strategy in order to control the cross-border raids that trouble Kabul, which then leads to bad blood with Islamabad. NATO now says Pakistan's operations in Bajaur and other Tribal Area territories have had a salutary effect in Afghanistan. The Taliban have suffered a curtailment in their capacity to terrorise Afghanistan. On the Pakistani side, military operations have strengthened the resolve of the tribes to face up to the Taliban instead of surrendering to them

Hindu, 20 November 2008

Opinion: Enough with the diffidence By Harsh V. Pant

Barack Obama apparently takes his time in picking up the phone and calling Manmohan Singh after his victory. Indian strategic elites read in it the beginning of the end of the US-India strategic partnership. Headlines read 'Obama snubs India' and a slight was perceived where none was intended. Meanwhile, the first thing the Indian Government did after signing the security declaration with Japan last month was to underline that the agreement was not aimed at China. A regular feature of Indian diplomacy: even as China continues to weave circles around India, India continues to walk on shells for fear of annoying the Chinese

Dawn, 20 November 2008

US adds settled area to hit list: Al Qaeda's Arab operative killed in Bannu attack

BANNU, Nov 19: A suspected US drone fired two missiles on a residential compound in Janikhel area of Bannu district on Tuesday night, killing four people and injuring four others, officials said. This was the first time that a drone intruded 70kms deep inside Pakistani territory and hit a target in the settled area of the NWFP. Local people reported having seen spy planes flying over the area

Dawn, 20 November 2008

No military solution in Afghanistan, Nato agrees with Kayani

BRUSSELS, Nov 19: Nato and Pakistan agree on the need for a 'comprehensive approach' to tackle the insurgency in Afghanistan and in Pakistan's tribal areas, Nato officials said following a first-ever meeting between Army Chief General Ashfaq Kayani and the alliance's influential defence committee. Nato defence chiefs agreed with General Kayani that there was 'no military solution in Afghanistan', said Admiral Giampaolo Di Paola. The head of the Nato defence committee said the 26-nation alliance also backed General Kayani's assertion that 'Pakistan is part of the solution' to dealing with the problems facing Afghanistan

Hindu, 22 November 2008

U.S. asks China to halt plan for reactors to Pakistan

Washington: The U.S. has asked China to halt its plan to construct two more nuclear reactors in Pakistan and indicated that any new Sino-Pakistan cooperation in the atomic field would require consensus approval from the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), which was difficult to achieve. Although Pakistan's energy needs are real and increasing, we believe Pakistan's proliferation record would make NSG consensus difficult were China to request an exception, State Department Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs Matthew Reynolds said in a letter to Democrat Congressman from Massachusetts, Edward J. Markey

Hindu, 22 November 2008

U.S. asks China to halt plan for reactors to Pakistan

Washington: The U.S. has asked China to halt its plan to construct two more nuclear

reactors in Pakistan and indicated that any new Sino-Pakistan cooperation in the atomic field would require 'consensus' approval from the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), which was 'difficult' to achieve. 'Although Pakistan's energy needs are real and increasing, we believe Pakistan's proliferation record would make NSG consensus difficult were China to request an exception,' State Department Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs Matthew Reynolds said in a letter to Democrat Congressman from Massachusetts, Edward J. Markey

News, 22 November 2008

Opinion: Obama & Pakistani-Americans

President-elect Barack Obama took the stage in Grant Park, Chicago, just before midnight on November 4, scanned the sea of people assembled to listen to him, and greeted them: 'Hello, Chicago!' The crowd roared back with joy. Obama flashed a shy smile, waited for the roar to subside, and then continued: 'If there is anyone out there who still doubts that America is a place where all things are possible; who still wonders if the dream of our founders is alive in our time; who still questions the power of our democracy, tonight is your answer.'

Daily Times, 23 November 2008

Kayani should command joint Pak-US-NATO force: Haroon

WASHINGTON: Pakistan's UN ambassador Abdullah Hussain Haroon has proposed that a joint Pakistani, NATO and US military force under the command of Gen Ashfaq Kayani should be set up to increase co-ordination and 'curb terrorists across the Pak-Afghan border'. Haroon said in a speech at the US Army War College last week that he was making the proposal to 'end complaints of mistrust among coalition partners and provide much needed local experience, essential for success in Afghanistan'. He also said that there was a better understanding between the leadership of Afghanistan and Pakistan today than in the past, and called on the incoming Obama administration to increase economic assistance to Afghanistan and Pakistan so that economic activity can be generated and the basic needs of the people are addressed, adding that this 'will not cost much'

Dawn, 24 November 2008

US planning to deploy more troops near Pakistan border

KABUL, Nov 23: A brigade of 3,500-4,000 extra US troops due in Afghanistan in January would be deployed in the east amid efforts to stop infiltration of militants from Pakistan, the US military said on Sunday. The brigade has been approved as part of requested US troop reinforcements for Afghanistan's fight against extremists, US military spokesman Col Greg Julian told reporters in Kabul. 'The first brigade that is coming will go into the (Nato-led) RC-East (Regional Command East) and they are going to move into areas that are currently not covered,' Col Julian said

News, 24 November 2008

Opinion: Is Obama fake? By Dr Muzaffar Iqbal

Change will mean different things for different people: for a vast majority of Afro-Americans, President-elect Obama's promise of change would mean a way out of their perpetual misery in the land of opportunities a country where they have lived like slaves for over three centuries and where they continue to suffer from racism built into the system. For the few of their race who have been able to break the chains that bind the majority, it would mean greater share in the American pie. Will Obama be able to satisfy both groups of this racial polity? Almost impossible

News, 25 November 2008

Opinion: Will Obama be good for us? By Tasneem Noorani

Barack Obama is bound to be significantly different from any of his predecessors, Not because he is the son of an immigrant or because he is black, but because of a childhood spent in Third World countries. His years in Indonesia and Kenya during his tender and formative years, as well as his reported visits to Pakistan, where his mother worked, must have enabled him to see firsthand what poverty in Third World countries means, and how America is not the most popular country amongst the poor of the world. Celebrations seen at his electoral victory in African, Asian and Middle Eastern cities is indicative of how the Third World feels about him. They can naturally relate more to him than to a white, Anglo-Saxon president of the US

News, 30 November 2008

Rice call prompted hasty decision to send DG ISI

Rice call prompted hasty decision to send DG ISI ISLAMABAD: US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's not much publicised telephone call to President Asif Ali Zardari on Thursday evening is understood to have led to the government's hasty announcement on Friday to send the head of the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) to New Delhi to help in the probe into the Mumbai terrorist attacks for which the Indian government pointedly blamed Pakistan