



During the months of September-October, a major development in Indo-Pakistan relationship took place in the form of Commerce Minister Makhdoom Amin Fahim's visit to India. In most circles in India and Pakistan, it was seen as a new beginning in the trade history of the two countries; nevertheless, many in Pakistan expressed great resentment over granting MFN status to India. Despite numerous concerns from domestic industry, Pakistan continued to work out the details of Most-Favoured Nation status for India. India gave the MFN status to Pakistan years ago but it in fact did not remove the non-tariff barriers, hence the status was unable to boost bilateral trade.

Peace Process

On 27 September, in a speech to the United Nations General Assembly, Pakistan Foreign Minister Hina Rabbani Khar extended out an olive branch to India for the resolution of all disputes, including Jammu and Kashmir, through a "dialogue process", hoping it will be "uninterrupted and uninterrupted". She held: "We certainly intend to make this engagement fruitful and premise it on the promise of a mutually rewarding enterprise that would enable us to optimally avail the complementarities that exist... The reality of a nuclearised South Asia imposes on both Pakistan and India the onerous responsibility to work together for creating mutual confidence, avoiding an arms race, and enhancing strategic stability."⁽¹⁾

Peace Process and the issue of terrorism

On 16 September, Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh cautioned against revived terror camps in Pakistan and told a conference of senior police officials that the security environment in the country remained "uncertain". He said that although New Delhi had initiated a process of broad-based consultations to find a way forward over the disputed state of Jammu and Kashmir, there was no room for complacency by the security forces. He said: "We need to give the processes of dialogue and democracy a chance to secure a just and honourable settlement that meets the aspirations of all sections of the people... Despite these positive developments, there is no room for complacency on the security front in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. There are reports of cross-border camps for terrorists being reactivated, and of attempts to induct fresh batches of militants into the country."⁽²⁾

On 13 September, referring to the 13/7 Mumbai blast and the Pune explosion, Indian Home Minister P Chidambaram said that India could not blame Pakistan any more for terror attacks. He said that India-based modules were behind the two incidents. In an interview with BBC, Chidambaram said: "We can no longer point to the cross-border modules as the source of terror... out of four terror attacks (Pune,

Mumbai and two in Delhi), which took place in recent times, at least the first two were carried out by ‘Indian modules’...We are fairly certain... We do need own counter-terror capacity.”⁽³⁾

On 27 September, Indian External Affairs Minister SM Krishna said that there could not be a “selective approach” in the fight against terrorism. He said: “I am sure they (Pakistan) will realise and they have, by now they should have (realised) that terrorism cannot be fought selectively... It has to be fought across the board... I hope Pakistan gets serious about dismantling all the terror training camps which are existing in the country... We expect that Pakistan will live up to their pronouncements.”⁽⁴⁾

Promoting army-to-army contacts for peace

On 20 September, with a view to forging better ties, two Indian lieutenant-generals favoured army-to-army contacts between India and Pakistan. General Officer Commanding (GOC), 16 Corps, Lt-Gen JP Nehra and the GOC, 10 Infantry Division, Maj Gen Rakesh Sharma favoured such interactions between the two neighbours. Maj Gen Rakesh Sharma said: “Why not have interactions at the military level (between India and Pakistan)? At some level we should meet and talk.”⁽⁵⁾

Indian helicopter violates Pakistani airspace

On 23 October, Pakistan forced an Indian army helicopter to land for having violated its airspace, but later allowed the four officers on board and the helicopter to return after interrogating the officers for a couple of hours. According to the news sources, a “lieutenant colonel, two majors and a junior commissioned officer (JCO) were on board the Lama helicopter belonging to the Aviation Corps” of the Indian army. The helicopter was deep inside Pakistani territory when it was intercepted and forced to land in the Olding-Kargil sector near the Line of Control (LoC). Pakistan military spokesman Maj Gen Athar Abbas said the “Indian DGMO clarified that the chopper lost its way because of bad weather and the GHQ then decided that it should be allowed to return after refuelling.”⁽⁶⁾

Peace Process and international community

Two new studies on counter-terrorism in South Asia by prominent US think tanks, Heritage Foundation and the New America Foundation, stressed the need to resolve the Kashmir dispute to end violence in the region. The Heritage Foundation, in its report, stressed that “the US must encourage India and Pakistan to move forward with their dialogue to resolve the Kashmir dispute and inject ideas into the process to help spur it along... Indo-Pakistani rapprochement can help reduce conflict in Afghanistan, by reducing competition for influence and the associated violence.”⁽⁷⁾

The New America Foundation notes that “India’s desire that no third country intervene as a mediator in Kashmir can be accommodated without precluding American efforts to positively support bilateral confidence-building measures and underwrite more visible progress on longstanding security challenges... there is also a strong case for taking action on Kashmir for Kashmir’s sake — to reduce

recurring clashes and allow Kashmiris to escape the constant menace of violence and geopolitical manoeuvring.”

The think tank recommended that in the face of recently resumed India-Pakistan dialogues, the United States should strengthen its commitment to promoting regional confidence-building measures and progress toward resolution of disputes.”⁽⁸⁾

On 15 September, speaking during a backbench business debate on human rights abuses on the Indian sub-continent, a Labour Party MP, Shabana Mahmood, said that the British Government should act as a “critical friend” to Pakistan and India as it puts pressure on the two countries to resolve their dispute over Kashmir. She stressed that the conflict had turned into one of the “most dangerous” in the world, which needed the government’s urgent attention. She said the suppression of an uprising in Indian-held Kashmir had led to “grave human rights violations,” while there had also been evidence of “disturbing and unacceptable abuse” in the region. She held: “The world, and especially the people of Kashmir, cannot afford for India and Pakistan to be engaged in a perpetual dispute over the region. The human cost is too great... the people of Kashmir continue to suffer and so a resolution of the dispute in Kashmir both deserves and demands our attention. Talks must be pursued with vigour on all sides.”⁽⁹⁾

On 28 September, the European Union (EU) welcomed the outcome of bilateral trade talks between India and Pakistan, saying it was very positive that India had decided to withdraw the objections to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) waiver sought by the EU to grant duty-free access to certain goods from Pakistan to the EU market.⁽¹⁰⁾

Peace Process and Kashmir

On 21 September, speaking at the meeting of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) Contact Group on Kashmir in New York, Foreign Minister Hina Rabbani Khar said the people of Pakistan cannot remain indifferent to the sufferings of their brothers and sisters in Jammu and Kashmir. The foreign minister said: “the right to self-determination is enshrined in the UN Charter and international law. Even after more than six decades, this fundamental right is being denied to the people of Jammu and Kashmir.” She stressed that Pakistan was committed to find “a just and peaceful resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir issue in accordance with the UN Security Council Resolutions and wishes and aspirations of the Kashmiri people.” She emphasized that Pakistan firmly believed that the Kashmiris needed to be associated with the dialogue process because the key to durable peace, security and stability in South Asia was based on resolving the Kashmir dispute.⁽¹¹⁾

On 22 September, addressing the OIC Contact Group’s meeting on Jammu and Kashmir in New York, Hurriyat Conference (M) Chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq lamented that world silence over human rights violations in Kashmir has had “deadly consequences”. He asserted that the participation of “the Kashmiri leadership” was a must for resolving the Jammu and Kashmir issue as past bilateral engagements between India and Pakistan had “failed to produce any results.” Mirwaiz asserted that the United Nations had a moral and legal obligation to help settle the issue in accordance with the wishes and aspirations of

the people. He said: “Past failures to settle the question should not deter the United Nations from present efforts. Now more than ever, the United Nations must renew efforts to bring about the promised settlement.” He added that resolving the Kashmir issue required “the engagement of a multilateral effort with the participation of the leadership of the people of Jammu & Kashmir.”⁽¹²⁾

On the issue of the 4,600 mass graves that have been located by an International Tribunal on Kashmir, headed by an eminent Indian-American scholar, Professor Angana Chatterji, Mirwaiz observed that the situation in Kashmir had become “increasingly deadly with human rights abuses going on unabated. Moreover, the Indian government continuously refuses to allow international human rights organizations to investigate.”⁽¹³⁾

Indo-Pak bilateral trade

India and Pakistan had resumed economic talks in April 2011 and had drawn a roadmap for increasing bilateral trade, which remained as low as \$2.65 billion in 2010-11.

From 26-30, formal trade minister-level talks between India and Pakistan took place wherein the two nations sought to take bilateral trade and strategic economic cooperation to a new level, including working on easing visa restrictions for businessmen from both sides. The meeting was the first between the trade and commerce ministers of the two countries after a three-year gap.

Pakistan’s Commerce Minister Makhdoom Amin Fahim led an 80-member trade delegation to India to discuss various trade issues. Makhdoom held talks with his Indian counterpart Anand Sharma on the removal of trade barriers and pruning down of a negative list of products that the two countries don’t want to trade in.⁽¹⁴⁾

During the meeting, both sides agreed to jointly work towards “doubling the bilateral trade to \$6 billion annually from the current level of \$2.7 billion by 2014.” They also decided to put in place “liberalised visa regime from November 2011 for business communities of both nations.” The joint statement said that “India and Pakistan were entering a new phase of full normalisation of bilateral trade relations which augured well for enhancing mutual trust and understanding.” It was also decided that the Commerce Secretaries of the two nations would meet in November to take forward what had been agreed at the talks.⁽¹⁵⁾

Both countries also inked “a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the India Trade Promotion Organisation and the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan to promote trade and investment. The MoU shall foster better trade promotional activities for the benefit of business communities of both countries.” Furthermore, both sides agreed on cooperating for a high ambition of preferential trade relations under the framework of the South Asia Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA). They agreed that all mutual obligations contracted under SAFTA would be implemented with full sincerity.⁽¹⁶⁾ They affirmed that both countries would cooperate and work in close coordination at multilateral forums such as the WTO and SAARC, to support each other, thereby strengthening their economies.

On 29 September, addressing the India-Pakistan Business Conclave, organised by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), Amin Fahim expressed optimism at the beginning of a new era of trade and investment relations with India as “both countries are now poised to open bank branches, and land routes.” As regards SAFTA, he said that Pakistan wanted to make it “an effective and meaningful” agreement and hoped that the “unnecessary long sensitive lists of products” would be considerably reduced. He observed that “SAFTA would enter into negotiations with ASEAN to create a bigger bloc, thus having Asean as a partner, on the east and Ecota, which has Turkey and Central Asia, on the west.”⁽¹⁷⁾ On this occasion, Sharma from the Indian side said: “India will reciprocate in equal measure. I heard the Commerce Secretary of Pakistan saying that we should aspire for an economic community which links SAARC with ASEAN. It is indeed a bold vision and we must strive towards achieving this objective.”⁽¹⁸⁾

Despite the positive trade talks with India, the trend of trade between the two countries showed that India had successfully increased exports, but Pakistan had not been able to match India’s performance. On 29 September, in data released by the State Bank of Pakistan, Pakistan’s stakes in bilateral trade with India were declining for the last three years, and the balance was heavily in favour of India. “Importers said registered trade with India did not show real volume of bilateral trade since Indian exporters used Singapore, Sri Lanka and Dubai ports to launch their products in Pakistan.” According to official data, “Pakistan’s exports to India were 30 per cent of what India exported to Pakistan in 2009 which fell to 24 per cent in 2010 and further shrank to 20 per cent in 2011.”⁽¹⁹⁾

The MFN status debate

A lot of experts think that the MFN status would benefit a range of Indian products, including textiles, cotton, vegetables, coffee, tea and spices. A study by the Delhi-based Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations estimated that, given reciprocal concessions, “bilateral trade between India and Pakistan could go up to \$14.3 billion, with India exporting about \$11 billion-worth and importing goods worth \$3 billion from Pakistan.”⁽²⁰⁾

On 27 October, Pakistan’s Federal Secretary of Commerce Zafar Mehmood explained to the business community that being a signatory of WTO, Pakistan was required to give the same treatment to all WTO members which also included India. Therefore, Pakistan had to grant MFN status to India. Speaking at the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the federal secretary said: “We have pleaded to our Indian counterparts to dismantle all NTBs first so that both the sides have a level playing field to do business with each other.” Zafar Mehmood, however, made it clear to the businessmen that MFN did not mean any sort of Preferential Arrangement; rather it created a conducive environment for the trading partners so that they could be able to do business.⁽²¹⁾

Water issues

On 24 September, The International Court of Arbitration (CoA) in The Hague accepted Pakistan's application and barred India from constructing any permanent structures on or above the Kishanganga/Neelum River bed at the Gurez site that may inhibit the restoration of the flow of the river to its natural channel. The court also ordered that Pakistan and India arrange for periodic joint inspections of the dam site at Gurez in order to monitor the implementation of the court's order. Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Water Resources and Agriculture, Kamal Majidullah, said: "We had pleaded that India be asked to tell the court about any imminent and actual developments on the dam." He said the Pakistani team had moved a formal application for interim measures under the 1960 Indus Waters Treaty between the two countries. ⁽²²⁾

The plea said: "An order that any steps India has taken or may take in respect of the KHEP are taken at its own risk without prejudice to the possibility that the court may order that the works may not be continued, be modified or dismantled... India be ordered to inform the court and Pakistan of any imminent and actual developments on the Kishanganga Dam that may adversely affect the restoring of the status quo ante or that may jeopardize Pakistan's rights and interests under the treaty." ⁽²³⁾

Earlier, in August, Pakistan's request to grant a stay order against the construction of the controversial 330MW Kishanganga hydropower project was rebuffed by the CoA on the question as to why Pakistan had not asked for the stay in January when the court met for the first time. ⁽²⁴⁾

However, during the same meeting, the CoA took note of serious environmental impact of Kishanganga Project on the Neelum Valley and the under-construction Neelum-Jhelum Project. Referring to abstracts of a report quoted in the international media and prepared by Pakistan's independent think tank, the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), on environmental impacts of Kishanganga Project, the court instructed the legal representatives of India to submit a comprehensive environmental impact assessment (EIA) report on the Kishanganga project in the next hearing. ⁽²⁵⁾

A lot of experts in Pakistan have voiced their concerns that the legal team that has been representing Pakistan's case at The Hague was not technically and legally competent. ⁽²⁶⁾ Immediately after the CoA's (24 September) stay order in favour of Pakistan was announced, New Delhi came up with a forceful contradiction of the interpretation by Pakistan of the interim decision. Quoting the Court of Arbitration, it said that India could "continue with all works" related to the Kishanganga hydro-electric project in Jammu and Kashmir "except any permanent works on the riverbed that may inhibit restoration of the river's full flow." ⁽²⁷⁾ The court's interim ruling said: India "could proceed with the construction of the sub-surface foundations" of the dam, "erect temporary cofferdams and operate the by-pass tunnel it has said to have completed", "temporarily dry out the riverbed of the Kishanganga-Neelum at the Gurez valley" and "excavate the riverbed.... India may utilise the temporary diversion tunnel it is said to have completed at the Gurez site, and may construct and complete temporary cofferdams to permit the operation of the temporary diversion tunnel." ⁽²⁸⁾

MoU to control cross-border drug trafficking

On 12 September, an 11-member Indian Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) delegation led by its Director General O P S Malik held an extensive meeting and signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Pakistan's Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) team led by its Director General Maj Gen Syed Shakeel Hussain, to stop the cross-border narcotics trafficking. The delegation, on the occasion, appreciated Pakistan's efforts in significantly curbing poppy cultivation. During the meeting, NCB DG Malik said: "There must be coordinated efforts from both the sides to check the drug trafficking.

The menace of drugs must come to an end in the Subcontinent and it is possible if India and Pakistan make coordinated efforts to stop the cross-border traffic." Director General ANF Maj Gen Syed Shakeel Hussain was confident that the MoU would help in putting a permanent end to the cross-border drug trafficking between India and Pakistan. (29)

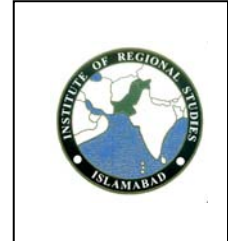
According to the new sources, "under the accord, the two countries will cooperate in preventing suppressing and investigating drug trafficking and exchange literature on laws, rules and best practices for curbing the menace. The two will "provide legal assistance to each other when considered appropriate and necessary." (30)

References

1. Masood Haider, "Hina Khar offers 'uninterrupted' talks to India", *Dawn*, Islamabad, 28 September 2011.
2. "Singh says terror camps revived in Pakistan", *The Hindu*, Delhi, 17 September 2011.
3. "Can't blame Pakistan any more: India", *The News*, Islamabad/Rawalpindi, 14 September 2011.
4. "Fight against terror cannot be selective: Krishna", *The Tribune*, Chandigarh, 28 September 2011.
5. "Indian generals for direct contact with Pak Army", *The Nation*, Islamabad, 21 September 2011.
6. Anita Joshua, "Indian Army copter forced to land in Pakistan, released", 24 October 2011.
7. Anwar Iqbal, "US think-tanks urge Kashmir dispute settlement to end violence", *Dawn*, 3 September 2011.
8. Ibid.
9. "Kashmir debate in UK parliament irks India", *The News*, 16 September 2011.
10. "EU welcomes outcome of Pak-India trade talks", *The News*, 29 September 2011.
11. "Khar equates Kashmir with Palestine", *The Tribune*, 1 October 2011.
12. "India, Pak can't resolve K-issue bilaterally: Mirwaiz", *The Kashmir Times*, Jammu, 23 September 2011.
13. Ibid.
14. "India, Pak to double trade to \$6 billion", *The Tribune*, 29 September 2011.
15. "India, Pakistan to double trade to \$6 billion", *The Hindu*, 29 September 2011.
16. Ibid.
17. "Pakistan, India to open banks", *The Nation*, 30 September 2011.
18. "Pakistan keen to grant MFN status to India", *The Hindu*, 30 September 2011.
19. Shahid Iqbal, "Pakistan's exports to India declining", *Dawn*, 30 September 2011.
20. "Pakistan commerce minister in India September-end, MFN likely", *The Sentinel*, Guwahati, 6 September 2011.
21. "MFN status to India under WTO guidelines: Commerce Secy", *The Nation*, 28 October 2011.
22. "Hague Court asks India to stop Kishanganga project", *The Hindu*, 25 September 2011.
23. Syed Irfan Raza, "India told to stop work on Kishanganga dam", *Dawn*, 25 September 2011.
24. Khalid Mustafa, "Pakistan denied stay against Kishanganga project", *The News*, 3 September 2011
25. Peer Muhammad, "Dam controversy: Marvi urges court action on Kishenganga failings", *The Express Tribune*, Islamabad, 3 September 2011.
26. Ibid.
27. "India can continue all but permanent works on Kishanganga: ICA," *The Hindu*, 25 September 2011.
28. Khalid Mustafa, "Nation misled on Kishanganga 'victory'", *The News*, 26 September 2011.
29. "Pakistan, India ink MoU to check drug trafficking", *Dawn*, 13 September 2011.
30. "Accord with India to curb drugs", *Dawn*, 14 September 2011.



Afghanistan
September-October 2011
 Compiled by Humera Iqbal



After months of criticizing Pakistan's intelligence agency ISI, the US realized the significant role it can play in helping organize and start reconciliation talks between Washington and the Haqqani network. The Obama administration aiming to end the prolonged war in Afghanistan, has opened up to the prospect of having talks with the Haqqani network. The US is withdrawing its troops gradually and partly from Afghanistan according to its withdrawal plan. On Pakistan-Afghanistan bilateral relations, despite the bitterness over the Rabbani assassination and cross-border raids the two sides remained engaged. As part of attempts to stabilize Afghanistan and the region post-US withdrawal, a regional structure is planned to be set up as other crucial regional developments take place.

US strategy and fight against insurgents

9/11 anniversary: Obama calls for a future with hope

US President Barack Obama spoke at a memorial concert at the Kennedy Centre in Washington, closing a day of official commemorations of the 10th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks. Obama told Americans they should honour those who died in the attacks, but look to the future with "hearts full of hope." He said the decade since the attacks showed Americans' resolve to defend their way of life. The ideal that "men and women should govern themselves ... has only been strengthened," he said. ⁽¹⁾

10,000 troops pullout this year: Plan presented to White House

US Defence Secretary Leon Panetta presented the drawdown plan for the 10,000 surge troops to the White House that he ordered out of Afghanistan by year's end. Panetta met President Obama in a weekly meeting where they discussed the drawdown, including the first batch of surge troops, by the end of this year. Most of the troops to be out by December will be from units that were scheduled to rotate out by that date and are not being replaced, a Defence Department official, said. Gen Allen is following a plan to hold onto the troops for as long as he can until the December deadline. It is a similar strategy that he will undertake for the 23,000 troops coming out next year. ⁽²⁾

US troops to begin leaving Kandahar

According to US and Afghan military officials, the US military is planning to start withdrawing troops from the volatile southern city of Kandahar. It plans shifting troops to neighbouring rural areas even as the Taliban show they are capable of penetrating and the city attacking. The move is risky, because reclaiming Kandahar, homeland of many Taliban leaders, still motivates the insurgents. Assassins have carried out a ruthless campaign against government officials in the city over the past year. Kandahar's vulnerabilities were on display when lately Taliban fighters launched multi-pronged attacks on two US bases. The attacks killed three Afghans and wounded six Americans. ⁽³⁾

Pentagon to drastically cut spending on Afghan forces

The Pentagon is planning to slash US assistance to Afghanistan's army and police by more than half over the next three years, settling for a no-frills Afghan security force to battle the Taliban-led insurgency after American forces pull out. Training and equipping Afghans to take over security has been key to the Obama administration strategy to withdraw all US combat troops by the end of 2014. However, the White House increasingly views high spending on the beleaguered Afghan military as unsustainable and has pressured the Pentagon for steeper cuts than previously planned.⁽⁴⁾

Clinton says US close to decision on Haqqanis

The United States is close to deciding on whether to label the Pakistan-based Haqqani network as a foreign terrorist group, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said amid calls for a tougher stance on militants accused of series of high-profile attacks. "We are in the final, formal review that has to be undertaken to make a government-wide decision to designate the network as a foreign terrorist organization," Clinton said. To name the Haqqanis as a terrorist group would bar US citizens from providing support to the group and freeze any assets it might have in the United States.⁽⁵⁾

US slaps sanctions on Haqqani commander, but *not* group

The US Treasury Department announced sanctions on individuals it said were linked to militant groups in Afghanistan and Pakistan, but stopped short of declaring the Haqqani network, blamed for recent attacks on American targets, a terrorist group. "These financiers and facilitators provide the fuel for the Taliban, Haqqani Network and al-Qaeda to realize their violent aspirations," Treasury Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence David Cohen said in a statement. US companies and individuals are generally prohibited from engaging in transactions with the targeted individuals and any assets they hold under US jurisdiction are frozen, he said.⁽⁶⁾

Afghanistan must bolster forces on border: US

Lt Gen Curtis Scaparrotti, deputy commander of US forces in Afghanistan, said the presence of safe havens for Afghan insurgents in neighbouring Pakistan posed possibly the biggest threat to the war effort. He said that the NATO-led campaign in Afghanistan could still succeed even if insurgents continued to enjoy sanctuary in Pakistan but that would require more Afghan forces at the border. "here are several threats to our campaign. That's the one that I'm perhaps the most concerned about," he told reporters by video link from Afghanistan. The general said even if Pakistan failed to crack down on the militant outposts inside its borders the NATO forces would withdraw 2014 as planned. A build-up of Afghan forces in the eastern border area, backed up by drone surveillance aircraft, could contain the danger from insurgents operating out of Pakistan, according to Scaparrotti.⁽⁷⁾

US to remain in Afghanistan a "long time"

In an interview for "60 Minutes," CBS Evening News anchor Scott Pelley asked the new US commander in Afghanistan, Marine Gen. John Allen, about the plan. "Well, the plan is to win. The plan

is to be successful. And so, while some folks might hear that we're departing in 2014 as a result of the Lisbon Conference and the process of transition, we're actually going to be here for a long time," Allen said. The number of troops that will remain is yet to be determined, Allen said, adding that any remaining troops will have to come as part of an agreement with the Afghans.⁽⁸⁾

US and Nato 'far from goals' in Afghanistan

Speaking at the Council on Foreign Relations, Gen McChrystal, who commanded coalition forces in 2009-10 before being forced to resign after a magazine interview, said the US and Nato allies were "a little better than" half way to achieving their military goals. The most difficult task would be to create a legitimate government that ordinary Afghans could believe in and that would balance the influence of the Taliban, he said. After 10 years of fighting in Afghanistan, US and Nato allies remain far from reaching their goals. US began the war with a "frighteningly simplistic" view of the situation and history and still lacked the knowledge to achieve a successful end. He added that the US was trying to defend its decision of engaging in Afghanistan after 9/11, then invading Iraq two years later that changed the Muslim world's view of America's effort.⁽⁹⁾

Obama, Uzbek leader discuss Afghan supply route

President Obama and Uzbekistan's President Islam Karimov discussed expanding US use of the central Asian country as a route to supply troops in Afghanistan amid growing concern about the viability of Pakistan as a transit route. Obama called Karimov to congratulate the country on its 20th anniversary of independence and the leaders talked about shared interests in a "secure and prosperous" Afghanistan.⁽¹⁰⁾

International community efforts

British forces attack Taliban stronghold in central Helmand

British forces launched a dawn attack on one of the last remaining Taliban strongholds in central Helmand. The "planned aviation assault" on top of enemy positions signalled the start of Operation Tor Pishaw (Courageous Cat) that is hoped to drive the insurgents permanently out of the area. British soldiers from the 1st Bn Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment descended on the final pocket of insurgency in the Nad-e-Ali district. The troops are fighting in the Gulbuddin Strip. The Gulbuddin Strip's Taliban are described as a "particularly potent insurgent group" led by uncompromising midlevel commanders who find ready recruits among "bored fighting age males."⁽¹¹⁾

200 rebels killed/captured in Afghanistan

The NATO said that about 200 Taliban-linked militants had been killed or captured in major military operations along Afghanistan's troubled eastern border with Pakistan. Hundreds of Afghan troops backed by the US-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) had been involved in a major offensive announced by US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton during her visit to Islamabad in October. Brig Gen Carsten Jacobson said that these Afghan-led operations supported by ISAF had been designed to

hit the insurgency hard ahead of the winter, when rebels retreat to hideouts along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border and prepare for the new fighting season the following spring. ⁽¹²⁾

Afghanistan opium production set to rise 61%: UN

Opium production in Afghanistan, which fuels the Taliban insurgency, is set to rise by nearly two-thirds as prices soar after last year's harvest was blighted by disease, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes (UNODC) said. Afghanistan produces 90 per cent of the world's illegal opium, funding much of the militia's insurgency despite an expensive Western eradication programme. The UNODC in its annual opium survey said the cultivation of the poppy crop reached 131,000 hectares in 2011, seven per cent higher than in 2010 "due to insecurity and high prices." With the crop yield per hectare up markedly from last year, overall production would potentially rise by 61 per cent on last year, the report said. ⁽¹³⁾

Afghanistan: Insurgency and state of affairs

Afghan guard in murder plot was not close to Karzai

Afghanistan's intelligence agency, the National Directorate of Security (NDS), said it had foiled a plot to kill Karzai, after detaining a bodyguard and five other people officials said were linked to the Haqqani network, an insurgent outfit, and al-Qaeda. NDS described the group as "dangerous" and added that the bodyguard, Mohebullah Ahmadi, was from Karzai's home village of Karz in southern Afghanistan and had infiltrated the presidential protection system. ⁽¹⁴⁾

Haqqani network denies killing Rabbani

A key leader of the Afghan militant group, the Haqqani network, said that they were not responsible for killing Burhanuddin Rabbani, the man overseeing Taliban peace talks. Afghan officials blamed the Taliban-affiliated network for the suicide attack on Rabbani. Siraj Haqqani also told BBC Pashto his network was not linked to Pakistan's spy agency, the ISI. Burhanuddin Rabbani was killed at his home in Kabul on 20 September when meeting a man who said he was carrying an important peace message from the Taliban. The man detonated a bomb hidden in his turban. ⁽¹⁵⁾

Taliban 'offered bin Laden trial before 9/11'

According to a senior aide to the Taliban leader, Mullah Omar, the Taliban government in Afghanistan offered to present Osama bin Laden for a trial long before the attacks of 11 September 2001, but the US government showed no interest. Wakil Ahmad Muttawakil, Taliban's last foreign minister, told Al Jazeera Television in an exclusive interview that his government had made several proposals to the US to present the al-Qaeda leader. Muttawakil said that "even before the (9/11) attacks, our Islamic Emirate had tried through various proposals to resolve the Osama issue. One such proposal was to set up a three-nation court, or something under the supervision of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference [OIC], ... But the US showed no interest in it. They kept demanding we hand him over, but we had no relations with the US, no agreement of any sort. They did not recognise our government." ⁽¹⁶⁾

Insurgents attack US base

Insurgents with rifles and rocket-propelled grenades launched a sustained attack against a US base in Kandahar. Although no coalition casualties were reported, the hours-long confrontation demonstrated the Taliban's continuing ability to strike in the heart of Afghanistan's main southern city. The attack, which began in midafternoon and stretched into the evening, targeted a joint civilian-military installation housing what is known as a provincial reconstruction team (PRT) mainly devoted to development projects.⁽¹⁷⁾

Blast hits NATO outpost

A cargo truck packed with explosives struck a NATO outpost south of Kabul, killing at least five people and wounding dozens more, including 77 members of coalition troops. The injury toll was one of the worst for foreign forces in a single episode in the decade-long war, and the attack came in the same district of Wardak Province where in August insurgents shot down an American Chinook helicopter, killing all 30 Americans and eight Afghans on board.⁽¹⁸⁾

Afghans, NATO launch 'new push against Haqqanis'

Senior Defence officials said that Afghan security forces and their NATO allies had launched a new push against the al-Qaeda-linked Haqqani network along the troubled Pakistani border. The US recently accused the Haqqanis of orchestrating a 19-hour siege of the US embassy in Kabul, a September truck bombing on a NATO outpost that wounded 77 Americans and a June attack on Kabul's InterContinental hotel. US commanders say the network is their most potent enemy in eastern Afghanistan and increasingly capable of launching high-profile attacks in Kabul.⁽¹⁹⁾

NATO says it caught a Haqqani clan leader

NATO forces captured a high-ranking member of the Haqqani network, Haji Mali Khan, the Haqqanis' top figure inside Afghanistan, a "revered elder" among the clan and an uncle of two of its top leaders. In a statement, the coalition called his capture a "significant milestone" in its escalating efforts to damage the militant group. Mr. Khan was arrested by Afghan and Western forces in the Jani Khel district of Paktia Province, in eastern Afghanistan. NATO said that he was heavily armed but surrendered without resistance.⁽²⁰⁾

Taliban chief linked to Chinook crash killed

Nato killed the Taliban commander targeted in an operation last month in which 38 US and Afghan troops died in a helicopter crash. Qari Tahir was killed in an air strike in Wardak province, central Afghanistan. Thirty US soldiers, mostly from the special forces, were among those who died when the Chinook was shot down in Wardak. "A precision air strike killed Taliban leader Qari Tahir after the security forces located Tahir and an associate in a dry riverbed in Sayd Abad district," the Nato-led International Security Assistance Force (Isaf) said. "Tahir was the Taliban's top leader in Tangi Valley

and was the target of a previous combined operation on 5 August that resulted in the loss of the CH-47 Chinook." ⁽²¹⁾

Key Afghan group warms up to prospect for US talks

A senior leader of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's Hizb-e-Islami militant group expressed willingness to have peace talks with the US. "We are willing to have a direct or indirect political dialogue with Washington," Dr Ghairat Baheer said. Dr. Baheer added that such a dialogue must take place in a country other than the US and Afghanistan. He also said that Hizb-e-Islami would accept Islamabad's role as an intermediary in any future talks. These developments came after US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton openly sought Pakistan's help for reaching out to all insurgent groups for a political settlement of the decade-long war in Afghanistan. ⁽²²⁾

Haqqanis will not talk Afghan peace alone: Commander

A senior Haqqani group commander said that the Afghan Haqqani militant group will not take part individually in any peace talks with the United States and negotiations must be led by the Taliban. He added that the Americans would not be able to find a possible solution to the Afghan conflict until and unless they held talks with the Taliban Shura, referring to the Taliban leadership council. Responding to the US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's urging of conducting peace talks with the Haqqanis, the commander said, "This is not the first time the U.S. has approached us for peace talks. The Americans had made several such attempts for talks which we rejected as we are an integral part of the Taliban led by Mullah Mohammad Omar... We are united and our goal is to liberate our homeland Afghanistan from the clutches of occupying forces." ⁽²³⁾

US not sincere about Afghan peace: Haqqanis

The US was not sincere about peace in Afghanistan when it signalled it would remain open to exploring a settlement that includes the Haqqani network, one of the group's senior commanders said. US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton suggested that Washington would not shut the door to the Haqqanis in any peace arrangement. The Haqqanis saw the remarks as an attempt to divide Afghan insurgent groups and believed only the top leaders of the Taliban should negotiate. Inclusion of the Haqqani network in a hoped-for peace deal, now a chief objective in the Obama administration's Afghanistan policy after a decade of war, is a controversial idea in Washington. ⁽²⁴⁾

Afghans rally in Kabul, demand NATO troops leave

Hundreds of people marched through the streets of the Afghan capital, demanding the immediate withdrawal of international military forces ahead of the 10th anniversary of the U.S. invasion. The peaceful demonstration in downtown Kabul was meant to mark the 7 October invasion of Afghanistan 10 years ago, following the 9/11 terrorist attacks against the United States. ⁽²⁵⁾

New 'Silk Road' eyed for Afghanistan

Afghanistan, its neighbours and supporters plan to launch a drive to boost prosperity and peace by linking the country with markets across South and Central Asia, US officials said. US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Afghan Foreign Minister Zalmay Rassoul and German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle host talks in New York on what amounts to plans for a "New Silk Road". Afghanistan would be at the heart of lucrative trade routes between Asia and the West, with modern highways, rail links and energy pipelines, senior US administration officials said. (26)

Afghanistan appeals for aid as drought looms

Afghanistan appealed for \$142m to feed 2.6 million people this winter as it faces the worst drought for a decade. The agriculture minister described the situation as extremely serious, with 14 provinces, about half the country, in the north and east hit by drought. Many farmers have sold their livestock and will now depend on food aid to keep alive during the winter. The World Food Programme also issued an urgent appeal for assistance. (27)

US-Pakistan relations

Terror safe havens in Pakistan greatest threat to success in Afghanistan: Pentagon

The Pentagon's "Report on Progress Towards Security and Stability in Afghanistan," a congressionally mandated evaluation of the war's progress that is provided twice a year, reported that insurgents' ability to hide across the border in Pakistan is the greatest threat to success in Afghanistan. "The insurgency's safe havens in Pakistan, as well as the limited capacity of the Afghan government, remain the biggest risks to the process of turning security gains into a durable, stable Afghanistan," the report said. (28)

Pakistan will be forced to retaliate

During a trip to Washington Inter-Services Intelligence agency (ISI) chief Lt General Ahmed Shuja Pasha informed his counterpart, Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) chief General David Petraeus, that the Pakistani people would not tolerate any US misadventure and in that case the government would be left with no other option but to retaliate. Gen. Pasha told Petraeus that if it came down to it, Pakistan would be forced to retaliate if American forces attempt to launch a unilateral strike on the country's tribal belt. (29)

US seeks aid from Pakistan in peace effort

After months of accusing Pakistan's spy agency, ISI, of secretly supporting the Haqqani terrorist network and attacking Americans, the Obama administration has now decided to rely on ISI's service. The administration wants intelligence to help organize and start reconciliation talks aimed at ending the war in Afghanistan. The revamped approach, which Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton called "Fight, Talk, Build" during a high-level United States delegation's visit to Kabul and Islamabad in October 2011,

combines continued American air and ground strikes against the Haqqani network and the Taliban with an insistence that ISI get them to the negotiating table.⁽³⁰⁾

Before lashing out, US and Pakistani Intel reached out to insurgent group

The US secretly met with a member of Haqqani network, as part of efforts to find a political end to the war in Afghanistan, and the Directorate of Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) helped set up the meeting. The meetings were held in the months before the 13 September attack on the US embassy and NATO's military headquarters, which US officials have blamed on the Haqqani network. In his congressional testimony 22 September top US official Admiral Mike Mullen called the Haqqanis a "veritable arm" of the ISI, but failed to mention that the ISI facilitated the meeting between the US and Ibrahim Haqqani, a son of founder Jalaluddin Haqqani and a major player in the group, according to a senior US official.⁽³¹⁾

Obama warns Pakistanis on militants

At a news conference in Washington mainly on American economy President Obama thanked Pakistan for cooperation in allowing US use of drones strike at Qaeda cells ensconced along the Pakistan-Afghanistan frontier. However, Obama cast doubt on the long-term relationship between the two countries by criticizing Pakistan that it supported insurgent groups, including the Taliban and their allies in the Haqqani network. Obama expressed his administration's concern about the Pakistani government's commitment to American interests because of ties between anti-American militants in Afghanistan and Pakistan's own intelligence service.⁽³²⁾

Military aid linked with 'cooperation', says US embassy

The United States has linked the resumption of military aid to Pakistan with the latter's 'cooperation' in the war on terror. A spokesman for the US Embassy, Mark Stroh, said that military assistance to Pakistan had not been cut off, but suspended. The military assistance to Pakistan includes the Coalition Support Fund (CSF) and the Pakistan Capacity Building Fund (PCBF). Stroh said the US assistance for civilian side, including in energy and other sectors, would continue. Inter-Services Public Relations director-general Maj-Gen Athar Abbas also confirmed that the US had suspended military assistance to Pakistan, and also suspended the \$7 billion Kerry-Lugar package under which only \$300 million had been released against a commitment of \$1.5 billion per year for the five-year package.⁽³³⁾

Govt to lift ban on exporting jet fuel to Afghanistan

The Pakistan government decided to lift the ban on export of locally-produced jet fuel to Afghanistan, to meet the demand for Nato's aircraft engaged in operations against the Taliban, despite threats to oil marketing companies by terrorist groups that want to halt fuel supply to Nato forces. The government, however, turned down marketing companies' demand to resume supply of other locally-produced fuels, such as petrol and high-speed diesel, on the pretext of prospective shortages that it may cause in Pakistan.⁽³⁴⁾

Pakistan ready to arrange talks with Taliban

A senior security official said that Pakistan told the US it was ready to facilitate its talks with the Taliban, but could not become a guarantor to the negotiating process. The official remarked that “Pakistan must not be blamed in case of failure of attempts (by US) for reconciliation with the Taliban as it does not spoon-feed them.” The official said the Taliban would themselves determine the propriety or otherwise of sitting at the negotiating table with the United States. Pakistan had also spelt out its reservations to the US that it must not be forced into a strategy that the US itself was not going to follow on the other side of the border. The unambiguous message given to Washington was, an action against the Haqqani network in North Waziristan was not advisable as Pakistan could not afford to open a new front at this stage. (35)

US asked to address concerns in Afghanistan

Pakistan’s top civil and military leadership held separate meetings with visiting US special envoy Marc Grossman to convey to the US that it could only enter meaningful dialogue on the Afghan reconciliation process and effectively deal with the Haqqani network once its ‘legitimate concerns’ were addressed. In meetings with Grossman, the country’s top leadership voiced a host of concerns, which included growing Indian influence in Afghanistan and deliberate attempts by certain international and regional players to undermine Pakistan’s role in the reconciliation process. A statement issued by the Inter-Service Public Relations (ISPR) said the two sides discussed measures for a “Pak-US cooperative framework for peace in the region.” Pakistan clearly told the envoy that the strategic pact signed between Afghanistan and India should not be allowed to have negative implications for the region else Pakistan playing the kind of role the US would want would be difficult. (36)

US reassures Pakistan amid anti-American protests

The US moved to ease tensions with Islamabad by reassuring Pakistan that it would not send ground troops to attack militant positions in North Waziristan even as anti-American protests flared around the country. The demonstrations by religious parties broke out in several Pakistani cities just a day after political leaders joined in rejecting US accusations that Islamabad was supporting militants. A senior US official said that "there will be no boots on the ground" in Pakistan, a message he said "has been communicated to them (the Pakistanis)." (37)

US and Pakistan agree to limit troops

According to the new compromise pact between US and Pakistani officials the number of US forces allowed in Pakistan will be between 100 and 150, nearly half of what it has been in the past. The number of special operations trainers would fall from 140 to fewer than 10. And there could be changes to the totals over time. (38)

Pakistan-Afghanistan relations

Spy agency role in Afghan negotiator's slaying denied

Pakistan's foreign ministry strongly rejected claims from Kabul that Pakistan's premier spy agency was involved in the assassination of Afghanistan's chief negotiator with the Taliban. Afghan officials claimed that the ISI played a role in the 20 September assassination of former Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani, who was tabbed by Afghan president Karzai to lead negotiation efforts with the Afghan Taliban to end the country's 10-year conflict. ⁽³⁹⁾

Afghans drop three-way peace bid

Afghanistan suspended an effort to work with Pakistan and the US to bring the Taliban to the negotiating table, Afghan officials said, taking a tougher line with Pakistan in reaction to assassination of Rabbani. Senior US, Pakistani and Afghan officials had been set to meet in Kabul on 8 October to discuss ways to get insurgents into peace talks and end the 10-year-old conflict. Afghanistan decided to cancel the meeting. Afghanistan also dropped plans for Pakistani Prime Minister Yusuf Raza Gilani to attend a meeting in Kabul at the end of October of the Afghanistan-Pakistan Joint Commission for Reconciliation and Peace in Afghanistan, a three-month-old bilateral initiative intended to galvanize the peace process. ⁽⁴⁰⁾

No sanctuaries in Pakistan: Haqqani network shifts base to Afghanistan

The Haqqani network leader Sirajuddin Haqqani, said that it no longer had sanctuaries in Pakistan, and instead felt secure inside Afghanistan. Sirajuddin Haqqani said from undisclosed location, "Gone are the days when we were hiding in the mountains along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. Now we consider ourselves more secure in Afghanistan besides the Afghan people. Senior military and police officials are with us." He added that, "there are sincere people in the Afghan government who are loyal to the Taliban as they know our goal is the liberation of our homeland from the clutches of occupying forces." ⁽⁴¹⁾

30 Afghan militants killed after cross-border raid

Pakistani soldiers killed 30 Afghan militants who had crossed the border to attack the army, military officials said. "The attack happened in the Barawal area of Upper Dir. Pakistani forces retaliated and the intruders slipped back," said one of the officials. The raid, by a group of more than 200 Afghans could further damage an already difficult relationship between Afghanistan and Pakistan, who often accuse each other of failing to halt cross-border operations by militants. One Pakistani soldier was killed and four were wounded in the latest frontier incident, which lasted close to an hour, officials said. ⁽⁴²⁾

Borders with Afghanistan sealed off

Pakistan has sealed off all borders with Afghanistan in order to curb the massive influx of Afghans into Pakistan, said Federal Minister for Interior Rehman Malik. Addressing a news conference at the CM Secretariat, the minister said that the government had imposed a complete ban on the movement of Afghan refugees and other foreign nationals by restricting their movement to the locality where they resided. ⁽⁴³⁾

Pakistan says will revive biometrics on Afghan border

Pakistan will next month reactivate a biometric computerised system to screen all travellers crossing a key Afghan border terminal, Interior Minister Rehman Malik said. “We have decided to reactivate the biometric system. I will inaugurate it on 30 November Malik told reporters in Chaman. Pakistan had installed the system on a trial basis in January 2007 to try and control illegal cross-border traffic at Chaman, 100 km from Quetta, the main town in insurgency-wracked Balochistan province. However, the very next day thousands of Afghan tribesmen attacked the border gates, forcing authorities to close the crossing. The protest was against the biometric system, and a Pakistani plan to fence and mine parts of the border. The protests pressurized Pakistan to defer the system. (44)

Afghan government seeks Pakistan’s help in stalled peace process

With peace talks at a new low, the Afghan government is attempting to resuscitate negotiations with a seemingly contradictory approach: publicly bashing the Pakistanis for supporting the Taliban while at the same time asking for their help. In a series of recent speeches and interviews, President Karzai has sought to balance inflammatory remarks that Pakistan is fighting a proxy war in Afghanistan with conciliatory appeals for greater cooperation among neighbours. Karzai signed a strategic partnership agreement with India, Pakistan’s arch-rival, but on the same trip he called Pakistan a “twin brother” and the key to long-term peace. After years of failed efforts to talk directly with the Taliban, Karzai has decided he must talk through Pakistan to make progress. (45)

Pakistan: Fighting extremism

Top al-Qaeda leader arrested in Pakistan

The Pakistani intelligence service arrested a senior al-Qaeda leader, Younis al-Mauretani, and two al-Qaeda associates in the suburbs of Quetta, Pakistan, who sought to attack targets in the United States, Europe and Australia, the Pakistani military said. Al-Mauretani was also involved in planning multiple attacks on European countries similar to those in Mumbai, India, in 2008, European intelligence officials said. The man at the centre of the alleged al-Qaeda plot, Afghan-German Ahmed Sidiqi, was detained in July 2010 and told interrogators that al-Mauretani helped with planning and coordination. (46)

Suspected militants arrested from South Waziristan

Security forces arrested 15 suspected militants, including Afghans, and confiscated two trucks packed with explosives in the South Waziristan tribal region on the Afghan border, local military officials said. The explosives were destined for Pakistan’s biggest city and commercial hub Karachi, the officials said. Earlier, a car-borne Taliban suicide bomber flattened the house of a senior counter-terrorism police official in Karachi killing eight people including six policemen. (47)

Former SSG commando behind Parliament attack arrested

The plot to attack the Pakistan Parliament was foiled by the law enforcement agencies. The mastermind behind the terrorist plot to attack was arrested in Okara by law-enforcement agencies. The

arrested suspect, Saadullah was a former Special Services Group (SSG) commando, which is the elite wing of the armed forces of Pakistan. The police arrested four suspects and seized explosive material from them. The intelligence was provided by the suspects arrested earlier. ⁽⁴⁸⁾

Orakzai clashes: Security forces claim killing 24 militants

At least 24 militants were killed and 90 others injured in clashes with security forces in Orakzai Agency. Security sources said the clash took place in Aranga area of Upper Orakzai, when Taliban militants attacked a security checkpoint. The attack left security personnel Hidayatullah dead, while nine other security men were injured. ⁽⁴⁹⁾

Army claims 80 per cent of Mohmand cleared

Speaking to media representatives, Corps Commander, Peshawar, Lt Gen Asif Yasin Malik said that the army had reclaimed 80 to 85 per cent area of the Mohmand Agency from militants and the operation being conducted in the region would be completed soon. He said that the army was clearing the region of landmines so that internally displaced people (IDPs) belonging to Mohmand could return to the area and remain safe. Malik informed journalists that 72 soldiers, including three officers, had embraced martyrdom during the operation. ⁽⁵⁰⁾

Suspected US drone kills 13 Pakistani Taliban

Security officials and tribal sources said that 13 Taliban militants were killed in a suspected US drone attack in Pakistan's South Waziristan region. There was a strong evidence that Taj Gul Mehsud, a senior Taliban commander and close aide to Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) leader Hakimullah Mehsud, was among the victims in the attack. Tribal elders from the Mehsud tribe in Mir Ali in neighbouring North Waziristan said two missiles struck a militant compound. They put the death toll much higher, up to 22 people and said all were members of the TTP, or Pakistani Taliban. ⁽⁵¹⁾

US drone “kills five Taliban commanders” in Pakistan

A US drone strike killed five commanders of a powerful Pakistani Taliban faction that attacks Western forces in Afghanistan. The commanders killed in the strike belonged to the Maulvi Nazir faction of Pakistan's Taliban, which carries out cross-border attacks from its strongholds in South Waziristan. Four of the commanders killed were identified as Hazrat Omar, Nazir's younger brother, Khan Mohammad, Miraj Wazir and Ashfaq Wazir, while fifth one was not named. Local intelligence officials said three Nazir commanders were among six people killed in the strike. ⁽⁵²⁾

Pakistanis bury militant killed by US

A militant was killed alongside a Haqqani network commander, Janbaz Zadran, in a US missile strike. They were buried in northwest Pakistan and the funeral was attended by 2,000 locals and supporters, including Arab militants and a lawmaker from the country's largest opposition party. The size of the funeral indicated significant support in this region for fighters battling the American presence just across the border in Afghanistan. ⁽⁵³⁾

18,000 flee from Khyber Agency, fearing fighting

At least 18,000 people have fled their homes in the tribal district of Khyber, fearing a fresh onslaught of fighting between the army and militants. The army ordered them to leave because of military action going on in the area. Adnan Khan, spokesman for the Disaster Management Authority (DMA) of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, said that around 3,200 families, up to 18,000 people, arrived in the Jalozai refugee camp and they had made arrangements to facilitate them. Food for 15 days initially and also non-food items, including tents and utensils had been provided as well. ⁽⁵⁴⁾

Taliban hint at accepting Saudis as peace brokers

The banned conglomerate of militant groups, Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), will seek mediation by countries like Saudi Arabia, if the government offers them peace talks, a top militant leader of the banned outfit said in a 'cautious' response to Pakistan's earlier decision to open negotiations with the group. At the All Parties Conference (APC) in September, the country's top political and military leaders decided to initiate peace negotiations with the militant groups active in the country's lawless tribal badlands, including the TTP. ⁽⁵⁵⁾

Taliban welcome govt peace overtures

The Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) welcomed government's offer for peace talks with all insurgent groups. Prime Minister Yusuf Raza Gilani said that his administration was ready to hold negotiations with all militant groups, including the Haqqani network. "The TTP welcomes the prime minister's offer," Maulvi Faqir Muhammad, TTP's deputy commander and commander-in-chief in Bajaur Agency, said by the phone from an undisclosed location. But he set two preconditions for dialogue: The government should reconsider its relationship with the United States and enforce Islamic sharia in the country. ⁽⁵⁶⁾

Regional developments

Afghanistan and India sign 'strategic partnership' deal

Afghanistan and India signed a strategic partnership agreement during a visit by President Hamid Karzai to Delhi. Karzai met Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, who said India would "stand by Afghanistan" when foreign troops withdrew from the country in 2014. The pact includes an Indian commitment to increase its training of Afghan security forces, including the police, although Singh made no reference to that in his press conference remarks. The prime minister said that the two countries had also signed two agreements relating to Afghanistan's energy requirements which represented "a new dimension in economic relations" to enable Kabul to integrate more effectively with the Indian economy and other economies in South Asia. ⁽⁵⁷⁾

Iran's hosting of Taliban reflects desire for greater role

Iran quietly hosted a delegation of Taliban members in Tehran in an ambitious way. Iranian officials hoped to facilitate a meeting between the delegation and Burhanuddin Rabbani, a former Afghan

president and leader of the country's reconciliation efforts, who was attending the same conference in Tehran. Although that did not happen, the presence of the Taliban members suggests Iran has cultivated deeper ties with the insurgent group than was previously known and is stepping up efforts to influence its eastern neighbour as the US role recedes. (58)

References

1. "9/11 anniversary: Obama calls for a future with hope", *BBC News*, 12 Sept 2011, <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-14876950>>.
2. "Plan for 10,000 Troops Out of Afghanistan This Year Presented to White House", *ABC News*, 12 Oct 2011, <<http://abcnews.go.com/blogs/politics/2011/10/plan-for-10000-troops-out-of-afghanistan-this-year-presented-to-white-house/>>.
3. Joshua Partlow, "U.S. troops to begin leaving Kandahar", *The Washington Post*, 28 Oct 2011, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/us-troops-to-begin-leaving-kandahar/2011/10/27/glQAJkjPM_story.html>.
4. David S. Cloud, "Pentagon to drastically cut spending on Afghan forces", *Los Angeles Times*, 12 Sept 2011, <<http://articles.latimes.com/2011/sep/12/world/la-fg-us-afghan-police-20110913>>.
5. "Clinton says US close to decision on Haqqanis", *Dawn News*, 29 Sept 2011, <<http://www.dawn.com/2011/09/29/clinton-says-us-close-to-decision-on-haqqanis.html>>.
6. "US Slaps Sanctions on Haqqani Commander, but Not Group", *The New York Times*, 29 Sept 2011, <<http://www.nytimes.com/reuters/2011/09/29/world/asia/international-us-pakistan-usa-haqqani-sanctions.html>>.
7. "Afghanistan must bolster forces on border: US", *Google News*, 27 Oct 2011, <<http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5jaL2iCY3ofoYdTsrcSo6qY3bsEWA?docId=CNG.59801b3e1b4adb9f74cc436cd831357c.631>>.
8. Scott Pelley, "Gen.: US to remain in Afghanistan a "long time"", *CBS News*, 3 Oct 2011, <<http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2011/10/03/eveningnews/main20115051.shtml>>.
9. "US and Nato 'far from goals' in Afghanistan", *BBC News*, 7 Oct 2011, <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-15209793>>.
10. Matt Spetalnick and Susan Cornwell, "Obama, Uzbek leader discuss Afghan supply route", *Reuters*, 29 Sept 2011, <<http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/09/29/us-uzbekistan-usa-pakistan-idUSTRE78S4GI20110929>>.
11. Thomas Harding, "British forces attack Taliban stronghold in central Helmand", *The Telegraph*, 31 Oct 2011, <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/afghanistan/8858264/British-forces-attack-Taliban-stronghold-in-central-Helmand.html>>.
12. "200 rebels killed or captured in Afghanistan: NATO", *Yahoo News*, 24 Oct 2011, <<http://news.yahoo.com/200-militants-killed-captured-afghanistan-091918246.html>>.
13. Aymeric Vincenot, "Afghanistan opium production set to rise 61%: UN", *Google News*, 11 Oct 2011, <<http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5h4uAZhJlhjd8TaSILrfzpQrrEQVg?docId=CNG.f17fd4750d6bfedcc76487af91dbb134.651>>.
14. "Afghan guard in murder plot was not close to Karzai: statement", *Reuters*, 8 Oct 2011, <<http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/10/08/us-afghanistan-bodyguard-idUSTRE7970MH20111008>>.
15. "Haqqani network denies killing Afghan envoy Rabbani", *BBC News*, 3 Oct 2011, <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-15143513>>.
16. "Taliban 'offered bin Laden trial before 9/11'", *Al-Jazeera News*, 11 Sept 2011, <<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia/2011/09/20119115334167663.html>>.
17. Laura King, "Insurgents mount attack against U.S. base in Afghanistan", *Los Angeles Times*, 27 Oct 2011, <<http://articles.latimes.com/2011/oct/27/world/la-fg-afghan-attack-20111028>>.
18. Ray Rivera and Sangar Rahimi, "Blast Hits NATO Outpost in Afghanistan", *The New York Times*, 11 Sept 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/09/12/world/asia/12afghan.html?_r=1&ref=world>.
19. "Afghans, NATO launch 'new push against Haqqanis'", *Canada.com*, 18 Oct 2011, <<http://www.canada.com/news/canada-in-afghanistan/Afghans+NATO+launch+push+against+Haqqanis/5566984/story.html?id=5566984>>.
20. Jack Healy, "NATO Says It Caught a Haqqani Clan Leader", *The New York Times*, 1 Oct 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/02/world/asia/nato-says-key-haqqani-leader-captured-in-afghanistan.html?_r=2&ref=world>.
21. "Taliban chief linked to Chinook crash killed, says Nato", *BBC News*, 22 Sept 2011, <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-15015081>>.
22. Qaiser Butt, "Key Afghan group warms up to prospect for US talks", *The Express Tribune*, 26 Oct 2011, <<http://tribune.com.pk/story/282238/key-afghan-group-warms-up-to-prospect-for-us-talks/>>.
23. "Haqqanis will not talk Afghan peace alone: Commander", *The Express Tribune*, 25 Oct 2011, <<http://tribune.com.pk/story/281595/haqqanis-will-not-talk-afghan-peace-alone-commander/>>.
24. "U.S. Not Sincere about Afghan Peace-Haqqanis", *The New York Times*, 13 Oct 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/reuters/2011/10/13/world/asia/international-us-pakistan-usa.html?_r=1>.

25. Amir Shah, "Afghans rally in Kabul, demand NATO troops leave", *Yahoo News*, 6 Oct 2011, <<http://news.yahoo.com/afghans-rally-kabul-demand-nato-troops-leave-070618493.html>>.
26. "New 'Silk Road' eyed for Afghanistan", *Dawn News*, 22 Sept 2011, <<http://www.dawn.com/2011/09/22/new-silk-road-eyed-for-afghanistan.html>>.
27. "Afghanistan appeals for aid as drought looms", *BBC News*, 6 Oct 2011, <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-15193573>>.
28. "Terror safe havens in Pakistan greatest threat to success in Afghanistan: Pentagon report", *Yahoo News*, 29 Oct 2011, <<http://in.news.yahoo.com/terror-safe-havens-pakistan-greatest-threat-success-afghanistan-053338629.html>>.
29. Kamran Yousaf, "Pakistan will be forced to retaliate, CIA chief told", *The Express Tribune*, 28 Sept 2011, <<http://tribune.com.pk/story/262216/estranged-allies-pakistan-will-be-forced-to-retaliate-cia-chief-told/>>.
30. Eric Schmitt and David E. Sanger, "US Seeks Aid from Pakistan in Peace Effort", *The New York Times*, 30 Oct 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/31/world/asia/united-states-seeks-pakistan-spy-agencys-help-for-afghan-talks.html?_r=3&pagewanted=all&smid=fb-share>.
31. Nick Schiffrin, "Before Lashing Out, US and Pakistani Intel Reached Out to Insurgent Group", *ABC News*, 3 Oct 2011, <<http://abcnews.go.com/Blotter/us-pakistan-struggle-haqqani-insurgents/story?id=14656079#.TsCRdVZk2Fo>>.
32. Rick Gladstone, "Obama Warns Pakistanis on Militants", *The New York Times*, 6 Oct 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/07/world/asia/obama-obliquely-warns-pakistan-about-long-term-relations.html?_r=1>.
33. Syed Irfan Raza, "Military aid linked with 'cooperation', says US embassy", *Dawn News*, 5 Oct 2011, <<http://www.dawn.com/2011/10/05/military-aid-linked-with-cooperation-says-us-embassy.html>>.
34. Zafar Bhutta, "Fuelling Nato aircraft: Govt to lift ban on exporting jet fuel to Afghanistan", *The Express Tribune*, 28 Oct 2011, <<http://tribune.com.pk/story/283829/fuelling-nato-aircraft-govt-to-lift-ban-on-exporting-jet-fuel-to-afghanistan/>>.
35. Iftikhar A. Khan, "Pakistan ready to arrange talks with Taliban, US told", *Dawn News*, 23 October 2011, <<http://www.dawn.com/2011/10/23/pakistan-ready-to-arrange-talks-with-taliban-us-told.html>>.
36. Kamran Yousaf, "Rebuilding: US asked to address concerns in Afghanistan", *The Express Tribune*, 14 Oct 2011, <<http://tribune.com.pk/story/273739/rebuilding-us-asked-to-address-concerns-in-afghanistan/>>.
37. Chris Allbritton and Missy Ryan, "US reassures Pakistan amid anti-American protests", *Reuters*, 30 Sept 2011, <<http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/09/30/us-pakistan-usa-idUSTRE78T57X20110930>>.
38. "US and Pakistan agree to limit troops", *The Telegraph*, 21 Sept 2011, <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/pakistan/8778033/US-and-Pakistan-agree-to-limit-troops.html>>.
39. "Pakistan: Spy agency role in Afghan negotiator's slaying denied", *Los Angeles Times*, 02 Oct 2011, <http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/world_now/2011/10/pakistan-denies-role-in-afghan-negotiators-murder.html>.
40. Dion Nissenbaum and Maria Abi-Habib, "Afghans Drop Three-Way Peace Bid", *The Wall Street Journal*, 30 Sept 2011, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970203405504576600912635445684.html?mod=WSJ_World_LEFTSecondNews>.
41. "No sanctuaries in Pakistan: Haqqani network shifts base to Afghanistan", *The Express Tribune*, 18 Sept 2011, <<http://tribune.com.pk/story/254368/no-haqqani-network-sanctuaries-in-pakistan-sirajuddin/>>.
42. "30 Afghan militants killed after cross-border raid", *Reuters*, 10 Oct 2011, <<http://tribune.com.pk/story/270831/30-afghan-militants-after-border-raid/>>.
43. "Borders with Afghanistan sealed off: Rehman Malik", *The Daily Times*, 11 Sept 2011, <http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2011\09\11\story_11-9-2011_pg7_1>.
44. "Pakistan says will revive biometrics on Afghan border", *Dawn News*, 19 Oct 2011, <<http://www.dawn.com/2011/10/19/pakistan-says-will-revive-biometrics-on-afghan-border.html>>.
45. Joshua Partlow and Karin Brulliard, "Afghan government seeks Pakistan's help in stalled peace process", *The Washington Post*, 09 Oct 2011, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/afghan-government-seeks-pakistans-help-in-stalled-peace-process/2011/10/08/gIQAxLo0VL_story.html>.
46. "Top al-Qaeda leader arrested in Pakistan", *CNN News*, 5 Sept 2011, <http://edition.cnn.com/2011/WORLD/asiapcf/09/05/pakistan.al.qaeda.arrest/index.html?hpt=hp_t2>.
47. "Suspected militants arrested from South Waziristan", *Dawn News*, 20 Sept 2011, <<http://www.dawn.com/2011/09/20/suspected-militants-arrested-from-s-waziristan.html>>.
48. Syed Ali, "Former SSG commando behind Parliament attack plot arrested", *The Express Tribune*, 31 Oct 2011, <<http://tribune.com.pk/story/285051/former-ssg-commando-behind-parliament-attack-arrested/>>.
49. "Orakzai clashes: Security forces claim killing 24 militants", *The Express Tribune*, 21 Sept 2011, <<http://tribune.com.pk/story/256282/20-militants-soldier-killed-in-orakzai-clash/>>.
50. "Army claims 80 per cent of Mohmand cleared", *Dawn News*, 1 Sept 2011, <<http://www.dawn.com/2011/09/01/army-claims-80-per-cent-of-mohmand-cleared.html>>.
51. Jibrán Ahmad, "Suspected U.S. drone kills 13 Pakistani Taliban", *Reuters*, 28 Oct, 2011 <<http://ca.reuters.com/article/topNews/idCATRE79R2AU20111028>>.
52. "U.S. drone kills five Taliban commanders in Pakistan", *Reuters*, 27 Oct 2011, <<http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/10/27/us-pakistan-drone-idUSTRE79Q1HQ20111027>>.
53. Ishtiaq Mahsud, "Pakistanis bury militant killed by US", *The Seattle Times*, 13 Oct 2011, <http://seattletimes.nwsource.com/html/nationworld/2016488025_apaspakistan.html?syndication=rss>.
54. "18,000 flee from Khyber Agency, feared battles", *The Express Tribune*, 25 Oct 2011, <<http://tribune.com.pk/story/281560/18000-flee-from-khyber-agency-feared-battles/>>.

55. Zia Khan, "Guarded response: Taliban hint at accepting Saudis as peace brokers", *The Express Tribune*, 10 Oct 2011, <<http://tribune.com.pk/story/270696/guarded-response-taliban-hint-at-accepting-saudis-as-peace-brokers/>>.
56. Islamuddin Sajid and Jamshed Bagwan, "Olive branch: Taliban welcome govt peace overtures", *The Express Tribune*, 3 Oct 2011, <<http://tribune.com.pk/story/266054/ttp-ready-for-talks-with-pakistan-maulvi-faqir/>>.
57. "Afghanistan and India sign 'strategic partnership'", *BBC News*, 4 Oct 2011, <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-15161776>>.
58. Ernesto Londoño, "Iran's hosting of Taliban reflects desire for greater role", *The Washington Post*, 29 Sept 2011, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia-pacific/irans-hosting-of-taliban-reflects-desire-for-greater-role/2011/09/28/gIQAkW07K_story.html>.