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E.O. 13526: N/A
 TAGS: OIIP, OPRC, PGOV, PREL, KMDR, PK
 SUBJECT: PAKISTAN MEDIA ANALYSIS: January 06, 2011

PAKISTAN MEDIA ANALYSIS

January 06, 2011

Please note that links to these stories are available for a limited time.

SUMMARY: The political situation emerging in the aftermath of Punjab Governor Taseer's assassination dominated Pakistani newspapers today. Media highlighted statements of PPP leaders labeling the assassination a "political murder," and pointing fingers at the PML-N-led administration in Punjab for a "criminal security lapse." Other articles show that not everyone condemns the assassination; for example there were reports that a group of lawyers in Islamabad showered flower petals on the suspected killer in a show of support. Some religious groups pledged to support the

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suspected killer and several prominent Punjabi clerics refused to lead funeral prayers for the slain Governor, either out of contempt for Mr. Taseer or fear of possible backlash from fanatics. Secretary Clinton's meeting with Pakistani Ambassador Haqqani and her condolence message also received extensive coverage. All major newspapers penned editorials analyzing the root causes and implications of the assassination. However, the Urdu and English dailies are divided in their approaches. Most of the vernacular papers implied that the Governor was to blame for his own murder, as his "careless" remarks on the blasphemy law brought on his violent demise, whereas the English language papers expressed concerns over rising extremism and intolerance in Pakistan. The pro-Taliban Jihadi Urdu daily "Islam" warned that the Governor Taseer's assassination should not be used as a pretext to unleash propaganda against Pakistan's Islamic laws. On the other hand, the prestigious "Dawn," worried that "the war to define Pakistan is not just being fought between the 'liberal' and 'conservative,' but between the ultra-conservatives and everyone else." The "Daily Times," which was owned by Taseer, was adamant that some sections of the media were complicit in inciting hate against him. In other stories, media gave prominent coverage to the "positive and fruitful" talks between the Pakistani Foreign Ministry and the visiting High Council for Peace from Afghanistan that could have a "far reaching impact in strengthening the bilateral relations." The two parties discussed holding direct talks with the Taliban as well as a joint Pakistan-Afghanistan grand jirga. The populist English daily "The News," maintained that Pakistan has agreed to a request from Afghanistan to play a role in the reconciliation process, whereas the right-wing, sensational nationalist English daily "The Nation" reported that Pakistan "seeks" joint efforts for Afghan security. Most dailies also carried the announcement that Acting SRAP Frank Ruggiero will arrive in Islamabad today to reaffirm the U.S. commitment to the people of Pakistan. END SUMMARY.

 News Stories

Top Stories

Taseer Laid To Rest
 <<http://old.thenews.com.pk/06-01-2011/ethenews/t-3137.htm>> Rest With State Honors - "The News" (01/06)
 "Slain Punjab governor Salmaan Taseer was laid to rest on Wednesday with full civil honors at the Cavalry Ground graveyard."
 Taseer's <<http://old.thenews.com.pk/06-01-2011/ethenews/t-3140.htm>> Assassination: It's A Political Murder In Custody, Says Baber - "The News" (01/06)
 "Federal Law Minister Dr Babar Awan on Wednesday declared the murder of Punjab Governor Salmaan Taseer as a custodial killing, with criminal negligence and political motives behind it. He said a

VIP, who is provided official security, is considered in the UNCLASSIFIED custody of his guards."

Security Lapse Cause Of Murder, Says Kaira - "Dawn" (01/06)
"Federal Information Minister Qamar Zaman Kaira said on Wednesday the killing of Governor Salmaan Taseer was a political murder as serious security lapses led to his tragic end." (Link not available)

Roses

<<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/National/06-Jan-2011/Roses-for-assassin>> For Assassin - "The Nation" (01/06)

"Lawyers showered the suspected killer of Taseer with rose petals when he arrived at the court in the federal capital, as a rowdy crowd slapped him on the back and kissed his cheek as he was escorted inside the court. The lawyers who tossed the rose petals

were not involved in the case."

Religious

<<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Politics/06-Jan-2011/Religious-parties-pledge-support-to-assassin>> Parties Pledge Support To Assassin - "The Nation" (01/06)

"The religious parties Wednesday were all praise for Mumtaz Hussain Qadri, the assassin of Punjab Governor Salmaan Taseer, and warned the govt. that any attempt to repeal or amend the blasphemy law would be resisted."

Clerics

<<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/National/06-Jan-2011/Clerics-refused-to-lead-funeral>> Refused To Lead Funeral - "The Nation" (01/06)

"The prayer leaders of Governor's House, Badshahi and Data Darbar mosques in the metropolis refused to lead the final prayers of slain Punjab Governor Salmaan Taseer."

Clinton Terms

<<http://old.thenews.com.pk/06-01-2011/ethenews/e-24213.htm>> Taseer's Killing A 'Great Loss' - "The News" (01/06)

"US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, in a meeting with Pakistan's Ambassador to the US Husain Haqqani, offered condolences over the assassination of Governor Punjab Salmaan Taseer."

Pakistan To Help Kabul In Restoration Of Peace - "The News" (01/06)

"Accepting a formal request made by high level afghan delegation, Pakistan on Wednesday agreed to play its role in reconciliation process in the neighboring war-ravaged Afghanistan."

Pakistan

<<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/National/06-Jan-2011/Pakistan-seeks-joint-efforts-for-Afghan-security>> Seeks Joint Efforts For Afghan Security - "The Nation" (01/06)

"Pakistan and Afghanistan on Wednesday held positive and fruitful talks that would have far reaching impact in strengthening bilateral relations between the two brotherly neighboring

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countries."

Frank Ruggiero

<<http://old.thenews.com.pk/06-01-2011/ethenews/t-3144.htm>> Due

Today - "The News" (01/06)

"Acting US Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan Frank Ruggiero will arrive here on Thursday (today) on a two-day visit to meet with government officials."

Punjab Governor Salman Taseer's Assassination
Governor Killed

<<http://old.thenews.com.pk/06-01-2011/ethenews/t-3134.htm>> . To

Terrorize Democratic Powers: Zardari - "The News" (01/06)

"President Asif Ali Zardari has said the assassination of Punjab Governor Salmaan Taseer was an attempt to terrorize the democratic powers and vowed to continue the war on terror."

Taseer Himself

<<http://old.thenews.com.pk/06-01-2011/ethenews/e-24218.htm>>

Responsible For Killing: JI - "The News" (01/06)

"Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Syed Munawwar Hasan has said the murder of Punjab Governor Salmaan Taseer is the outcome of obstructing the process of law in which an accused of blasphemy was being tried, adding that he (Taseer) himself was responsible for his death."
(Seventh story in the link)

Taseer's

<http://epaper.dawn.com/ArticleText.aspx?article=06_01_2011_012_007

> Assassin Idolized By Lawyers, Clerics - "Dawn" (01/06)

"As PPP leaders and workers and admirers of the slain Punjab Governor Salman Taseer mourned his death and converged on the Governor's House in Lahore for funeral prayers, his self-confessed assassin was warmly welcomed by a group of lawyers at the district and sessions court here [Islamabad] on Wednesday."

US

<<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/International/06-Jan-2011/US-media-showers-praise-on-Taseer>>

Media Showers Praise On Taseer - "The Nation" (01/06)

"US print and electronic media Wednesday showered praise on the assassinated Punjab governor Salmaan Taseer for his courage in seeking the repeal of the blasphemy law, with a leading newspaper posing pertinent questions about the role of Malik Mumtaz Hussain Qadri, the assassin, and the circumstances in which he acted."

Political Issues

JI Advises Zardari Not To Attend Holbrooke's Rites - "The News" (01/06)

"Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) has advised President Asif Ali Zardari to review his decision to attend last rituals of Ex-U.S. Special Envoy

to Pakistan and Afghanistan Richard Holbrooke." (Link not available)

Malik

<http://epaper.dawn.com/ArticleText.aspx?article=06_01_2011_003_006

> Rules Out Changes To Blasphemy Laws - "Dawn" (01/06)

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"Federal Interior Minister Rehman Malik says there will be no change in blasphemy laws." UNCLASSIFIED

JUI-F

<<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/National/06-Jan-2011/JUIF-asks-Sherry-to-withdraw-bill>> Asks Sherry To Withdraw Bill - "The Nation" (01/06)

"JUI-F Wednesday asked the PPP leader and former Information Minister Sherry Rehman to withdraw her proposed bill submitted in the National Assembly (NA) that seeks amendment in blasphemy laws." Republicans

<<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/International/06-Jan-2011/Republicans-take-over-US-House>> Take Over US House - "The Nation" (01/06)

"Republicans scaled back plans for deep cuts in US government spending as they took power in the House of Representatives on Wednesday, diluting a key promise that helped them to victory in November's election."

Terrorism/ Military Issues
Rabbani Satisfied

<<http://old.thenews.com.pk/06-01-2011/ethenews/t-3150.htm>> With Peace Talks In Islamabad - "The News" (01/06)

"The 25-member delegation of the High Council for Peace in Afghanistan, led by its chairman Prof Burhanuddin Rabbani, which started its meetings on Wednesday, has indicated that they are open to include all Afghan opponents of President Karzai in their future negotiations for a peaceful settlement, a policy which is fully endorsed by Pakistan."

Frustrated

<http://epaper.dawn.com/ArticleText.aspx?article=06_01_2011_005_004> Family Seeks CIA Detainee's Remains - "Dawn" (01/06)

"The family of Gul Rahman is still trying to recover his remains for burial, months after learning that he was stripped naked, doused in cold water and then left to die in a CIA-run Afghan prison known as the Salt Pit."

Grand

<http://epaper.dawn.com/ArticleText.aspx?article=06_01_2011_012_003> Jirga To Be Held For Afghan Peace - "Dawn" (01/06)

"The Foreign Office and a visiting Afghan delegation reiterated here on Wednesday that the two countries would hold a joint grand Jirga to bolster Kabul's peace process."

Environment/Economy

Gilani May

<<http://old.thenews.com.pk/06-01-2011/ethenews/t-3143.htm>> Decide To Reduce POL Prices Today - "The News" (01/06)

"Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani will hold a meeting with parliamentary leaders today (Thursday) with regard to the recent increase in the prices of petroleum products."

Economic

<http://epaper.dawn.com/ArticleText.aspx?article=06_01_2011_001_007> Reforms In Serious Trouble - "Dawn" (01/06)

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"With the government facing a battle for survival, the federal budget and economic reforms are in serious trouble. Although officials of the finance ministry insist there is no stepping back from economic reforms given the international commitments and rapidly growing fiscal deficit and inflation, independent analysts believe the reform agenda may already have been shelved."

 Editorials/Op-eds

Punjab Governor Salman Taseer's Assassination

Editorial: O Prophet, It Is Time To Pray!, an editorial in the liberal Urdu daily "Express" (circ. 25,000) (01/6)

"Talking about Governor Taseer's killing, U.S. Ambassador Munter said that he was a champion of tolerance and his killing is a great loss for the Pakistani nation. Setting aside international opinion, the country's situation is heart-rending. National stability demands that we strengthen the ideological foundations of this country and turn the people into a strong barrier against all forms of extremism and terrorism. Islam was never under threat in Pakistan; and no Muslim can ever think of living their life without honoring the Holy Prophet." (English version not available online)

Editorial: Governor Taseer's Murder: Causes And Implications, an editorial in the Karachi-based, pro-Taliban Jihadi Urdu daily

"Islam" (cir. 15,000) (01/06)

"The religious minorities enjoy all rights and privileges conferred on them under the Constitution of Pakistan. But at no cost these minorities can be given the 'right' to hurt the religious feelings of the 98 percent Muslim majority of the country. Nowhere in the world freedom of expression is being exercised without the observance of certain conditions. The insult of other people's beliefs is an offense, not a 'right'. A particular lobby should not be given full latitude to indulge in blasphemous activities in the garb of religious minorities' rights. Moreover, the assassination of Governor Salman Taseer should also be not used to unleash a venomous propaganda against the Islamic laws and the Islamic outlook of Pakistan." (English version not available online)

Editorial: At

<http://epaper.dawn.com/ArticleText.aspx?article=06_01_2011_007_001
 > War With Ourselves, an editorial in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (01/06)

"The country appears to have lurched to the conservative right even further and more abruptly than ever before in recent years.... What truly makes the societal war so frightening is the fertile ground the extremists have to plant their millenarian ideology.... Truly, we are at war with ourselves. And at the moment, it looks like the extremists are winning."

Editorial: After The

<<http://old.thenews.com.pk/06-01-2011/ethenews/e-24197.htm>>

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Funeral, an editorial in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (01/06)

"All this makes us question what our future is to be and whether our own battle for hearts and minds has actually been lost."

Editorial: Taseer's

<<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Opinions/Editorial/06-Jan-2011/Taseers-murder>> Murder, an editorial in the right-wing, sensational national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (01/06)

"In the case of the blasphemy law, he went too far, and even took up the cudgels on behalf of Aasia Bibi, who had been sentenced to death by a lower court under this law."

Editorial: The

<http://dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2011\01\06\story_6-1-2011_pg3_1> Courage Of Taseer, an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English language daily "Daily Times" (cir. 10,000) (01/06)

"Some sections of the media too were complicit in inciting hate against Governor Taseer. They virtually asked for some sort of reprisal against him, which is the height of irresponsibility. Even after Mr. Taseer's death, some television channels and print media tried to justify his assassination.... When our media and right-wing parties stoop to such levels and most people just sit idly and watch silently, it points to our collective failure as a society.... We must all condemn the killer and the barbarians who are out to mute the liberal, progressive voices of Pakistan."

Editorial: Governor Taseer's Assassination: Points To Ponder Upon, an editorial in the leading mass circulation populist, often sensational Urdu daily "Jang" (cir. 300,000) (01/06)

"The killing of Punjab Governor Salman Taseer, at the hands of a member of his personal security team, demonstrates that other people would have to remain very cautious and careful while speaking on controversial religious issues. No doubt the man-made laws may have several flaws, but the best way to prevent their misuse, or make such regulations harmonious with changed circumstances, is to consult the religious scholars. However, no religious law should be implemented in individual capacity, rather the court verdicts should be the only justification to do so."

(English version not available online)

Editorial: Killing Of Punjab Governor, an editorial in the Peshawar-based Urdu-language daily "Mashriq" (cir. 55,000) (01/06)

"It would be foolish to expect any sense of sanity, tolerance, and freedom of expression in a society where suicide attacks and terrorist activities have become the order of the day. The statement by Governor Salman Taseer, on a law unanimously approved by the Parliament and on an under-trial case, had no justification and was a clear demonstration of a careless thinking. Particularly, an issue which relates to the religious sentiments of the masses leaves no room for individual interference... We think that if the government sees any flaw in the Blasphemy Law, then it should set up a committee comprising religious scholars, senior

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parliamentarians, and legal experts, and remove any inconsistencies in the said regulation in the light of the recommendations of that

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body." (English version not available online)

Editorial: Hold A Judicial Inquiry Into The Governor's Killing, an editorial in the second-largest, nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 150,000) (01/06)

"It is encouraging that the PPP's senior leadership has not said anything controversial about the Punjab government with regards to Governor Taseer's killing.... CM Sharif has demanded an investigation from the Islamabad High Court to get to the root of this killing, including security lapse, motives and other issues. The CM is right - instead of trading allegations, Chief Justice Islamabad High Court should be contacted for a judicial inquiry." (English version not available online)

Editorial: National And International Reaction [To Salman Taseer's Killing], an editorial in the independent Urdu daily "Din" (circ. 5000) (01/06)

"The U.S., UK and UN have expressed grief at Governor Taseer's killing and termed it an irreparable loss for Pakistan. In his condolence message, U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Cameron Munter said that "Salman Taseer was a courageous human being, his death is an irreparable loss for Pakistan," and added that the "U.S. shares the family's grief." Answering questions from Saudi Arabia, JUI-F leader Maulana Fazlur Rehman has said "calling Blasphemy Law and Black law and expressing sympathy with a blasphemy-accused woman was not an expression of moderation and was not correct. He added that such incidents occur when both sides express extremist views."

MUNTER

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