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Pakistan: Chronology of Recent Events

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Summary

This report provides a reverse chronology of recent events involving Pakistan and Pakistan-U.S. relations. Sources include, but are not limited to, the U.S. Department of State, *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Dawn* (Karachi), *Daily Times* (Lahore), *News International* (Karachi), and major newswires. For a substantive review, see CRS Issue Brief IB94041, *Pakistan-U.S. Relations*. This report will be updated regularly.

- 04/21/05** — **H.Res. 225**, recognizing the historic steps Pakistan and India have taken toward achieving bilateral peace, was introduced in the House. On the same day, hundreds of Pakistani troops reportedly launched search operations for foreign militants in North Waziristan near the Afghan border. The Pakistan Muslim League faction loyal to former PM Nawaz Sharif announced a suspension of contacts with the PPP.
- 04/20/05** — President Musharraf said he would never allow foreign investigators into the country to examine Pakistan's nuclear facilities.
- 04/19/05** — The Senate Foreign Relations Committee held a hearing on "Combating Terrorism With Education," concentrating on the Middle East and South Asia. On the same day, a senior Pakistan military official warned of military operations in North Waziristan if tribal leaders there did not take action to expel foreign militants from the region. Also, a 400-person mob of angry villagers in the North West Frontier Province reportedly chased and killed a man after reports that he had burned a copy of the Koran.
- 04/18/05** — Following meetings between President Musharraf and Indian PM Singh, **Pakistan and India released a joint statement calling their bilateral peace process "irreversible"** and agreeing to move forward on a broad range of fronts, including increased trade and confidence-building measures related to Kashmir. On the same day, the top U.S. military commander in Afghanistan, Gen. Barno, said that Pakistan was preparing to launch military operations in North Waziristan near the Afghan border.

Acronyms:

CBMs:	Confidence-building measures
LOC:	Line of Control (Kashmir)
MMA:	Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal
PPP:	Pakistan People's Party

A Pakistani general later denied the claim and called Gen. Barno's comments "highly irresponsible." Also, New York-based Human Rights Watch requested that the Pakistani government immediately release thousands of opposition PPP supporters who had been arrested in nationwide sweeps preceding the return to Lahore of Asif Zardari, husband of former PM Benazir Bhutto and leading PPP figure.

- 04/17/05 — India released 156 Pakistani fishermen who had been held for illegal fishing in India's territorial waters.
- 04/16/05 — **President Musharraf arrived in India** bearing a "message of peace" and declaring his visit "very historic." On the same day, Asif Zardari, the husband of former PM Benazir Bhutto, returned to Lahore from overseas and was placed in "protective custody" by authorities. Members of Zardari's PPP said he had been arrested.
- 04/15/05 — In an effort to block a rally planned to welcome the return to Lahore of Asif Zardari, the husband of former PM Benazir Bhutto, **police arrested thousands of activists of the opposition PPP** and some senior party leaders, and blocked travel routes around the city.
- 04/14/05 — President Musharraf called the new trans-LOC bus service in Kashmir "the first step to converting [the LOC] into a soft border" and reiterated that Pakistan "cannot accept the Line of Control to be a final solution." On the same day, police in Quetta announced having arrested four suspected members of the Sunni militant Sipah-e-Sahaba terrorist group for their alleged role in a lethal 3/19 attack on Shia shrine.
- 04/13/05 — **Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld met with President Musharraf in Islamabad** for talks on counterterrorism and other issues.
- 04/12/05 — **H.R. 1553**, to prohibit the provision of military equipment to Pakistan, was introduced in the House. On the same day, the U.S. Consulate in Karachi temporarily was closed due to "heightened security concern."
- 04/09/05 — Police in Quetta arrested three suspected militants and seized their "huge" cache of weapons.
- 04/08/05 — **A U.S. federal indictment against Pakistani businessman Humayan Khan** was unsealed alleging that he violated U.S. laws by clandestinely purchasing U.S.-made high technology components then shipping them through South Africa for use in Pakistan's nuclear weapons program. Khan alleged partner, Asher Karni, an Israeli living in South Africa, has already pleaded guilty for his role. A Pakistani official called the charges baseless. On the same day, Pakistan began construction of its third nuclear power plant.
- 04/07/05 — **A new bus service was launched linking Muzaffarabad in Pakistani Kashmir and Srinagar in Indian Kashmir.** The service is a major confidence-building measure that allows separated Kashmiri families to reunite for the first time since 1947. A State Department spokesman applauded "the courage of the Kashmiri passengers who made this historic journey" and congratulated "the leaders of India and Pakistan for their vision in launching this initiative on behalf of the people of Kashmir." On the same day, Japan announced that it would resume yen loans to Pakistan that had been suspended after May 1998 nuclear tests.
- 04/06/05 — The Agency for International Development announced plans to spend up to \$90 million over the next several years on a Fulbright Program that will

enable up to 600 Pakistanis the opportunity to pursue graduate studies in the United States.

- 04/05/05 — **Chinese PM Wen Jiabao visited Islamabad**, where Pakistan and China signed 22 pacts meant to bolster bilateral cooperation in numerous areas, including nuclear power, trade, and defense.
- 04/04/05 — The Defense Ministry announced that **Pakistan had signed an agreement to purchase new four naval frigates from China**.
- 04/03/05 — Police in the eastern city of Gujranwala clashed with Islamist protestors who opposed women’s participation in a 10km road race there. Some 900 MMA supporters, reportedly bussed into the area from the North West Frontier Province, had attacked race participants.
- 04/02/05 — Police in Karachi arrested five suspected Shia militants who appeared to be planning a major sectarian attack. On the same day, President Musharraf told an audience in Quetta that “the Army is in the barracks and have [sic] no role in politics.” An opposition party parliamentarian later disputed the claim, saying that 831 military officers are employed by federal and provincial government departments.
- 04/01/05 — A nationwide strike organized by the Islamist MMA coalition resulted in **police arresting up to 2,000 protestors in both Lahore and Karachi**. On the same day, a prominent Shia scholar was shot and killed in Lahore in a suspected sectarian attack. Also, Pakistan denied a request that eight Indian politicians be allowed to travel on the maiden voyage of the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus line across the Kashmiri LOC.
- 03/29/05 — Foreign Minister Kasuri said that **Pakistan was sending “old and useless parts of outdated centrifuges” to international investigators** looking into Iran’s nuclear program.
- 03/28/05 — A State Department report on *Supporting Human Rights and Democracy* noted that, “[Pakistan’s] political parties are generally weak, undemocratic institutions centered on personalities instead of politics. The judiciary is corrupt, inefficient, and malleable to political pressure.”
- 03/25/05 — **The United States announced that it would resume sales of F-16 fighters to Pakistan**. An unnamed senior State Department official articulated “the Administration’s new strategy for South Asia” that includes a goal of “a fully democratic, economically promising Pakistan that feels secure and is at peace with its neighbors, with the relatively high tide of anti-Americanism and extremism gradually receding.”
- 03/24/05 — PM Aziz’s cabinet called for **a restoration of a religious column on Pakistani passports**, thus reversing an earlier decision to remove the column. Critics called the decision incompatible with a policy of “enlightened moderation.”
- 03/23/05 — **Twenty Members of the House wrote a letter to President Bush** urging him to block the sale of F-16 aircraft to Pakistan as such a sale would “undermine our long-term strategic interests in South Asia” and “squander an opportunity” to continue building positive relations with India. On the same day, in a Lahore rally organized by the Islamist MMA, **thousands of Pakistanis took to the streets in protest against the government of President Musharraf**.
- 03/22/05 — Suspected Baloch nationalists blew up a gas pipeline in the southwestern Baluchistan province.

- 03/21/05** — The director of Pakistan’s Anti-Narcotics Force estimated that 70% of narcotics produced in Afghanistan are trafficked through Pakistan.
- 03/20/05** — In a Karachi rally organized by the Islamist MMA, **tens of thousands of Pakistanis took to the streets in protest against the government of President Musharraf.** On the same day, Pakistan freed 529 Indian fishermen who had been held for illegal fishing in Pakistan’s territorial waters. Also, rebellious tribesmen surrounded some 300 Pakistani soldiers in the Dera Bugti region of the southwestern Baluchistan province.
- 03/19/05** — **At least 40 people were killed and scores injured when a bomb exploded at a religious shrine** in remote part of the southwestern Baluchistan province. On the same day, **Pakistan test-fired a nuclear-capable Shaheen II medium-range ballistic missile.** Also, thousands people began evacuating the Dera Bugti region of the southwestern Baluchistan province in anticipation of more fighting between rebellious tribesmen and government forces there.
- 03/18/05** — Bombs exploded on passenger trains in the southwestern Baluchistan province, killing two people and injuring another ten.
- 03/17/05** — Defense Intelligence Director Jacoby told a Senate Armed Services Committee panel that, “Pakistan must maintain and expand [military] operations [in its tribal areas] in order to permanently disrupt insurgent and terrorist activity,” adding that “international and indigenous terrorists pose a high threat to senior Pakistani government officials, military officers, and U.S. interests,” and, “If Musharraf were assassinated or otherwise replaced, Pakistan’s leader would be less pro-U.S.” On the same day, Pakistani soldiers used helicopter gunships and other heavy weapons to battle rebellious tribesmen in the southwestern Baluchistan province.
- 03/16/05** — **Secretary of State Rice arrived in Islamabad** where she met with PM Aziz and President Musharraf and told the Pakistani people that “the United States will be a friend for life.”
- 03/14/05** — A foreign ministry spokesman said that Pakistan was cooperating with the International Atomic Energy Agency investigation of Iran, but would not provide sample centrifuges to that agency. On the same day, U.S. Navy personnel reportedly arrested nine Pakistani nationals and seized nearly three tons of hashish from a ship intercepted off the Pakistani coast. Also, two Pakistani doctors were each sentenced to seven years in prison for providing financial and medical aid to Al Qaeda-linked Islamic militants. Finally, thousands of people lined up in Pakistani Kashmir to purchase tickets for the inaugural voyage of a new trans-LOC bus service.
- 03/13/05** — Abdullah Mehsud, a former prisoner at the U.S. facility at Guantanamo Bay wanted in connection with the October 2004 kidnaping of two Chinese engineers in Waziristan, was reported to have died of a bullet wound sustained in a 3/5 gunbattle. On the same day, Pakistani security forces reportedly arrested ten Al Qaeda suspects in North Waziristan near the Afghan border.
- 03/11/05** — **H.R. 1268**, for emergency supplemental appropriations, was introduced in the House. The bill would allow that up to \$1.22 billion in Pentagon funds be used to reimburse Pakistan and other key cooperating nations for their support of U.S. military operations. On the same day, a senior

Pakistani military commander warned tribal elders in North Waziristan that the continued presence there of foreign militants could lead to military operations.

- 03/10/05 — In the first such admission by a top government official, **Pakistan’s information minister said that A.Q. Khan “has given centrifuges to Iran, but the government was in no way involved in this.”** On the same day, the Indian government invited Pakistani President Musharraf to visit India to watch a cricket match between the Indian and Pakistan national teams. Also, **H.R. 1230**, to extend trade benefits to certain tents imported into the United States from certain Middle Eastern countries including Pakistan, was introduced in the House.
- 03/08/05 — President Bush said the United States is more secure “because Pakistani forces captured more than 100 extremists across the country last year, including operatives who were plotting attacks against the United States.”
- 03/07/05 — A statement from the Pakistani navy said that joint naval exercises would be held with Iran. On the same day, the *New York Times* reported that Pakistan had begun military operations in North Waziristan near the Afghan border.
- 03/06/05 — While on a visit to Tashkent, President Musharraf signed an agreement to bolster Pakistan-Uzbekistan counterterrorism cooperation.
- 03/05/05 — Pakistani soldiers reportedly killed two Al Qaeda suspects and arrested 11 others in North Waziristan near the Afghan border. On the same day, Pakistan television reported that Indian soldiers had killed six Kashmiri youths in a “fake encounter.”
- 03/04/05 — BBC News reported that Islamabad has offered to buy anti-aircraft guns, missiles, rocket launchers, mortars, and automatic weapons from tribesmen in Waziristan at market prices.
- 03/01/05 — Ruling party parliamentarians allied with Islamists to reject legislation which sought to strengthen national laws against “honor killings.” Secular opposition figures said the development contradicted President Musharraf’s calls for “enlightened moderation.”
- 02/28/05 — The U.S. State Department annual *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* for 2004 found that the Pakistan government’s human rights record in 2004 “remained poor.” On the same day, the third meeting of Pakistan’s National Security Council, created in 2004, took place, again without the participation of Islamist opposition leaders.
- 02/27/05 — A *Los Angeles Times* report suggested that the proliferation network of A.Q. Khan was allowed to continue operating for at least 18 months after U.S. and British intelligence agencies concluded that Khan was overseeing an international nuclear smuggling ring. On the same day, police outside Quetta arrested 20 suspected tribal militants and seized their weapons.
- 02/23/05 — A Foreign Ministry spokesman said that any U.S. sale to India of anti-ballistic missile systems “would send the entire region into crisis mode.”
- 02/22/05 — **Top Pakistani and Indian officials opened two-day economic cooperation talks** in New Delhi that the Indian commerce minister described as a “historic step” in bilateral relations.
- 02/19/05 — Police raided homes in Baluchistan and arrested 15 suspected Islamic militants just hours after two members of the anti-Shia Lashkar-e-Jhangvi terrorist group killed themselves when cornered in a police raid in Quetta.

- 02/16/05** — In a major confidence-building development, **Pakistan and India agreed to allow bus travel across the Kashmiri LOC between Muzaffarabad and Srinagar**. On the same day, rockets were fired at power lines in Baluchistan, cutting power to large areas of the province.
- 02/15/05** — **Foreign Affairs Minister Khurshid Kasuri hosted his Indian counterpart in Islamabad** for the first such bilateral visit since 1989. On the same day, police in Baluchistan said they had arrested six members of the Sunni militant Lashkar-e-Jhangvi terrorist group suspected of involvement in major and lethal attacks on Shiites in 2003 and 2004.
- 02/11/05** — A meeting of 53 British Commonwealth ministers voiced “serious concern and regret” over Musharraf’s dual office decision, calling it “incompatible with the basic principles of democracy.”
- 02/10/05** — **Former prime ministers Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto met in Saudi Arabia**, where the two political exiles and longtime rivals vowed to work together to restore democracy in Pakistan.
- 02/09/05** — Abdullah Mehsud, a former prisoner at the U.S. facility at Guantanamo Bay who is wanted in connection with the October 2004 kidnaping of two Chinese engineers in Waziristan, said he will continue his “jihad” despite the recent “peace deal” between the Pakistan government and several of his former allies.
- 02/08/05** — During a visit to Islamabad, World Bank President James Wolfensohn praised Pakistan’s “terrific” economic progress, but emphasized that Pakistan “has a long way to go in terms of achieving its human development goals.” He also said that a “neutral expert” would soon be appointed to arbitrate an India-Pakistan dispute under the 1960 Indus Waters Treaty. On the same day, suspected tribal militants fired rockets that disrupted rail and telephone links in Baluchistan.
- 02/07/05** — A *Time* magazine report suggested the proliferation network of A.Q. Khan sold nuclear technology to Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries. Pakistan called the suggestion “baseless.” On the same day, South Waziristan Pashtun militant leader Baitullah Mehsud and about 100 of his supporters were granted amnesty by the regional administration after vowing to remain peaceful. A Pakistani army spokesman later confirmed that the “peace deal” included giving Mehsud and three other tribal leaders about \$540,000 to repay loans they had taken from Al Qaeda. Also, unidentified gunmen shot and killed two journalists in South Waziristan. The act was later called terrorism by Pakistan’s interior minister. Finally, four bombs destroyed a key transportation line in Baluchistan.
- 02/06/05** — U.S.-funded radio and television advertisements began running in the North West Frontier Province to promote a rewards program for wanted Al Qaeda suspects.
- 02/03/05** — Under Secretary of Defense Donald Feith led a U.S. delegation to Islamabad for a **meeting of the U.S.-Pakistan Defense Consultative Group**, the first since September 2003.
- 02/01/05** — Bomb attacks on power lines cut electricity to most of the Baluchistan province.