

RELEASE IN FULL

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**From:** McHale, Judith A <McHaleJA@state.gov>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 26, 2010 7:43 AM  
**To:** H  
**Cc:** Sullivan, Jacob J  
**Subject:** FW: Afghanistan & Pakistan Morning News Highlights March 26

FYI, early read out of Pakistan media reaction to strategic dialogue. Not bad overall at this point.

***Pakistan Media:***

Coverage of the final round of the U.S.-Pak Strategic Dialogue dominated the front pages of all newspapers and hourly bulletins of TV networks on Friday morning. Media highlighted reports that the U.S. and Pakistan sought “wide-ranging, long term and substantive partnership,” and “established a policy steering group for further talks on strategic issues.” The signing of a letter of intent between the U.S. and Pakistan to help reconstruction of priority roads in Malakand division also received prominent display. Secretary of Defense Gates’ meeting with his Pakistani counterpart, and his comments that the “U.S. wants to increase the military funding of Pakistan” received coverage. Pak Army Chief General Kayani’s remarks that the “military is willing to forgo its requests for hardware to ensure that Pakistan’s energy and economic needs are met” were also reported. Reports that GOP and the opposition are not on same page regarding talks with the U.S. received front-page display. The civilian nuclear deal issue made news as “The News,” reported that the “FO seeks to hide unease over nuclear snub” and “The Nation,” reported on front-page that “U.S. affirms durable partnership but no civilian N-deal.” However Foreign Office spokesman’s remarks, that the “government is optimistic about a positive outcome” was also reported. Terming the U.S. commitment of \$125 million for the power sector, as “crucial,” “The News,” noted in its editorial that “it needs to be translated into action urgently.” Its sister mass-circulated Urdu daily, “Jang,” however noted with a word of caution, that “we think that the present U.S. overtures to woo Pakistan are not completely altruistic. It remains to be seen what Washington wants from Islamabad.” A prominent columnist, Ayesha Siddiqa noted in “Dawn,” that “the U.S. might have realized that it will have to listen to Pakistan and feel concerned about its inherent insecurity vis-à-vis India’s role in Afghanistan.”