

## **'Blacklisted' American spy enters Pakistan, gets arrested in Islamabad**

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Pakistan authorities swung into action as soon as they came to know that a blacklisted American national has entered the country.

### **Matthew Barrett**

Taking an immediate action, Pakistan's Federal Investigation Agency officials arrested Mathew Barrett, who was deported from Pakistan in 2011 for espionage.

Mathew arrived at Islamabad's Benazir Bhutto International airport today morning and was granted entry by the immigration officials.

When it came to the notice of interior minister Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan, he ordered arrest of the American and suspended immigration officials at the airport for negligence, according to a statement by his office.

"He (Barret) was arrested in a raid at a guest house in Islamabad and FIR lodged against him for violation of immigration laws," according to the statement.

The US has so far not responded to the arrest which may further strain the ties between the two countries.

In May 2011, the 33-year old Alabama native was arrested after being found in the area of a sensitive installation, Interior Ministry spokesman said.

He had lived in Pakistan for four years, married a Pakistani woman and had two children. In media reports and a letter smuggled from jail in 2011 to the Guardian newspaper, Barret strongly denied local suspicions that he was a spy and claimed he was a victim of simmering tensions at the time between the U.S. and Pakistani governments. He was eventually deported and banned from the country.

Hussain said Barrett obtained a visa from the Pakistani consulate in Houston and managed to clear the airport immigration counter. An FIA official said a court has allowed the agency to hold him for three days for investigation. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to media. He said Barrett mentioned a "family visit" and a one-month intended stay in Islamabad in his travel documents.

U.S. embassy spokesman Christopher Snipes said in a text message that the privacy act "prohibits us from releasing information about American citizens without their consent."

Hussain said the interior minister has ordered a thorough inquiry into how Barrett managed to enter Pakistan again and suspended the airport immigration staff.