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GLOBAL TERRORISM:
U.S. Policy after 9/11 and Its Impact On
The Domestic Politics and Foreign Relations of Pakistan

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Prepared for the Inaugural ISAS International Symposium on Pakistan sponsored by the
Institute of South Asian Studies, National University of Singapore, Singapore
23 - 24 May 2007

[1]

Historians assessing the impact of the World Trade Center attack on September 11, 2001, will confront one central question: Did the nature of the U.S. response to the tragedy inadvertently magnify the challenge of terrorism?

The provisional answer to this question is clearly yes. The Bush Administration's concept of a "war on terror" has focused narrowly on developing an operational response to identifiable terrorist groups such as Al Qaeda. No effort has been made to assess the motivations and mind-set of the hijackers and to modify U.S. foreign and defense policies on the basis of this assessment. On the contrary, until recently, to suggest that they were motivated in part by opposition to the U.S. military presence in the Persian Gulf and the Middle East, and to the unconditional U.S. support given to Israel on the issue of a Palestinian state, has been treated as heresy, at best, and treason at worst.

Five years after 9/11, it has at last become intellectually respectable to discuss the conceptual flaws in the "war on terror" concept and the self-defeating impact of U.S. policies, based on this concept, which have strengthened the indigenous forces in many countries sympathetic to Al Qaeda and other Islamic terrorist groups.

The first significant overt challenge to "war on terror" orthodoxy came in a September, 2006, *Foreign Affairs* article declaring that the entire U.S. response to 9/11 has been "overblown," that it was "probably a one-time event that cannot be repeated, and that the threat from terrorist groups within the United States itself is almost non-existent."¹

Soon afterward, a *New York Review of Books* article concluded that "the mental construct that framed the Administration's reaction to September 11 as a 'war' is beginning to fall apart."² This

was followed by a *Wall Street Journal* commentary and a book in which the influential billionaire financier, George Soros, wrote that “the war on terror is a false metaphor that has led to counterproductive and self-defeating policies. Five years after 9/11, a misleading figure of speech applied literally has unleashed a real war fought on several fronts—Iraq, Gaza, Lebanon, Afghanistan, Somalia—a war that has killed thousands of innocent civilians and enraged millions around the world. Yet Al Qaeda has not been subdued.”³ Then on December 11, 2006, the British Foreign Office said that it would no longer use the term “war on terror” because “Islamist extremists find it easier to recruit followers when Western governments speak of a war on terrorists, by suggesting that it is actually a war against Islam.”⁴

That there is a widespread Muslim perception of the “war on terror” as a war on Islam was emphasized by Prime Minister Abdullah Badawi of Malaysia, chairman of the 57-nation Organization of the Islamic Conference, who told the *Financial Times* that Muslims throughout the world have been “radicalized by western policies in the Middle East, including the failure to resolve the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians, and the invasion of Iraq. Trying to resolve terrorism without examining its root causes is like trying to fertilize the fruits and not the roots.”⁵ Similarly, Zbigniew Brzezinski, who served as National Security Advisor to U.S. President Jimmy Carter, has warned that “the war on terror has gravely damaged the U.S. internationally. For Muslims, the similarity between the rough treatment of Iraqi civilians by the U.S. military and of the Palestinians by the Israelis has prompted a widespread sense of hostility toward the United States in general. It’s not the war on terror that angers Muslims watching the news on television. It’s the victimization of Arab civilians.”⁶

An examination of the impact of U.S. policies since 2001 on the domestic politics and foreign relations of Pakistan dramatically illustrates that the United States has indeed inadvertently magnified the challenge of terrorism. By providing unconditional support on a massive scale to

the military regime of Pervez Musharraf, the United States has strengthened the Islamist elements in both the armed forces and the Pakistani civilian polity on whom his regime depends; undermined secular political forces; radicalized the Afghan border areas where Al Qaeda and Taliban forces are concentrated; rekindled Pashtun support on both sides of the border for an independent "Pashtunistan" that could become a terrorist haven, and encouraged Pakistani Islamist groups to employ terrorist tactics in supporting the Kashmiri insurgency in India.

The direct and indirect cost of Musharraf's nominal cooperation with the United States had reached a staggering \$27.5 billion by 2007.

Direct, overt economic and military aid has totaled \$4.5 billion. But the United States also provides disguised subsidies for the armed-forces --\$4.5 billion by 2006 and set to reach \$7.5 billion in 2008—that are papered over in Pentagon statistics and have received little Congressional scrutiny. What Pakistan gets, nominally as reimbursement for the cost of its counter-terrorism operations, is lumped together statistically with other counter-terrorism funding. These payments continue to flow whether or not Pakistani forces come out of their barracks in Afghan border areas in a given month.⁷

In addition to these direct forms of aid, the Bush Administration has given Pakistan various forms of indirect financial support. For example, the United States has authorized the Pakistan Air Force to buy F-16 fighter jets under the U.S. Foreign Military Sales (FMS) program. If the Air Force gets its way in internal Pakistani budgetary battles, these purchases could eventually total \$5 billion. They are nominally commercial purchases from private U.S. manufacturers, but it is much easier to get private financing for them under the government-approved FMS program than it would otherwise be. More important, after 9/11, the United States orchestrated the

postponement of debt repayments to aid donor countries totaling another \$13.5 billion, which prevented what would otherwise have been an economic collapse. This is what makes possible the Musharraf regime's purchasing of F-16's and other military hardware out of "Pakistani" funds.

A lower estimate of the cost in a Center for Strategic and International Studies analysis--\$10 billion—includes the counter-terrorism subsidies to the armed forces but excludes the indirect costs cited in the \$27.5 billion figure: \$13.5 billion in rescheduled debt repayments and up to \$5 billion in FMS-authorized F-16 purchases.⁸

What has the United States received in return for this cornucopia of direct and indirect economic and military aid to the Musharraf regime?

In his memoirs, Musharraf recalled that Secretary of State Colin Powell had telephoned him on September 12, 2001, to warn him bluntly, "you are either with us or against us," and that on the same day, Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage told the ISI Director General, then visiting Washington, that "if we chose the terrorists, then we should be prepared to be bombed back to the Stone Age."⁹ On the next day, Musharraf said, the U.S. Ambassador in Islamabad had presented seven specific demands to him for Pakistani help in writing:

- Stop Al Qaeda operatives at your borders, intercept arms shipments through Pakistan, and end all logistical support for Bin Laden.
- Provide the United States with blanket over flight and landing rights to conduct all necessary military and intelligence operations.
- Provide territorial access to the United States and allied military intelligence as needed and other personnel to conduct all necessary operations against the perpetrators of terrorism and those that harbor them, including the use of Pakistan's naval ports, air bases, and strategic locations on borders.
- Provide the United States immediately with intelligence, immigration information and databases, and internal security, information, to help prevent and respond to terrorist acts perpetrated against the United States, its friends, or its allies.
- Continue to publicly condemn the terrorist acts of September 11 and any other terrorist acts against the United States or its friends and allies, and curb all domestic expressions of support (for terrorism) against the United States, its friends, or its allies.

- Cut off all shipments of field to the Taliban and any other items and recruits, including volunteers en route to Afghanistan, who can be used in a military offensive capacity or to abet a terrorist threat.
- Should the evidence strongly implicate Osama Bin Laden and the al Qaeda network in Afghanistan and should Afghanistan and the Taliban continue to harbor him and his network, Pakistan will break diplomatic relations with the Taliban government, end support for the Taliban, and assist the United States in the aforementioned way to destroy Osama bin Laden and his al Qaeda network.¹⁰

“We just could not support demands two and three,” wrote Musharraf. “How could we allow the United States ‘blanket overflight and landing rights’ without jeopardizing our strategic assets? I offered only a narrow flight corridor that was far from any sensitive area. Neither could we give the United States ‘use of Pakistan’s naval ports or fighter aircraft bases.’ We allowed the United States only two bases—Shamsi in Baluchistan and Jacobabad in Sindh—and only for logistics and aircraft recovery. No attack could be launched from there. We gave no ‘blanket permission’ for anything.”¹¹

General Tommy Franks, in his own memoirs, referred to “basing, staging and overflight support” formalized in “a detailed list of 74 basing and staging activities to be conducted in Pakistan.” But he cited specifically only combat search and rescue, communications relay sites, and medical evacuation points near the Afghan border.¹² Franks was accentuating the positive to stay in tune with Bush Administration policy, just as Musharraf was sensitive to his domestic political audience in Pakistan.

What is clear in both accounts and most important militarily, is that the United States could not use bases in Pakistan for combat missions and that access to the bases at Shamsi and Jacobabad was limited to logistics and aircraft recovery. The combat aircraft used in Afghanistan were based on U.S. aircraft carriers deployed in the Arabian Sea or in bases in Afghanistan itself.

In the subsequent U.S. and NATO operations against insurgent Taliban forces as opposed to the U.S backed Kabul regime of President Hamid Karzai, no U.S. air or ground operations have been permitted on the Pakistan side of the Durand Line, the de facto boundary between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Also , similar restrictions were imposed on the border areas of Pakistan's Baluchistan province, directly administered by Islamabad, or in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) that are nominally part of Pakistan but have in reality been an autonomous No Man's Land since the days of the British Raj.

However, with the intention to root out Al Qaeda and Taliban forces, the Pakistani forces, with the cooperation of U.S. intelligence agencies, have carried out operations of their own in FATA and the border areas of Baluchistan. In U.S. eyes, the Pakistani role has been woefully inadequate, while in Pakistani eyes(opinion), as this essay will elaborate, American pressure has forced the Pakistani forces to conduct politically self-defeating offensives in FATA ,that have radicalized the populace and made it more hospitable to Al Qaeda and the Taliban than it was previously.

Although Pakistan's value to the United States since 9/11 in the military sphere has been limited, it has played a noteworthy role in partnership with the FBI and U.S. intelligence agencies in capturing Al Qaeda operatives. In the most important of such cases, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the third-ranking Al Qaeda leader, was captured on March 1, 2003, after the FBI confronted Pakistani officials with communications intercepts pinpointing his hideout in the Rawalpindi home of a leader of the Islamic extremist Jamaat-e-Islami party. Two other Al Qaeda leaders captured by Pakistan were Ramzi bin al-Sheikh and Abu Zubaydah, both key lieutenants of Osama bin Laden. Except for these and several lesser cases, the Musharraf regime has shown little initiative of its own in finding and breaking up either Al Qaeda networks, as such, or the networks of sympathetic Islamic extremist groups that give sanctuary and help to Al Qaeda.

[II]

Popular support for Islamic extremism has grown steadily in Pakistan as a result of the unpopular U.S. policies in the Middle East and the Persian Gulf cited earlier, especially the unconditional U.S. support for Israel on the issue of Palestinian statehood and the large-scale civilian casualties inflicted by U.S. forces in Iraq and Afghanistan. A leading Pakistani secular political figure, Mushahid Hussain, Secretary General of the pro-Musharraf Muslim League, emphasized the Israel-Palestinian issue in an address during a U.S. visit, declaring that “the failure to push through the road map on Palestine has been disastrous for the U.S. image. There is no legitimacy to the war on terror because it is perceived as a part of an anti-Muslim U.S. posture.”¹³

While making pro forma statements in his memoirs, denouncing terrorism and professing support for a moderate form of Islam, Musharraf explains his decision to back the United States after 9/11 was not in terms of moral solidarity with Washington, but as an unavoidable response to the threats made by Powell and Armitage. Pakistan had no choice but to accede to U.S. pressures, he said, because of its “military weakness as compared with the strength of the United States,” its economic weakness and above all “our social weakness. We lack the homogeneity to galvanize the entire nation into an active confrontation.” The United States “undoubtedly would have taken the opportunity of an invasion” to destroy the Pakistani nuclear arsenal,” he said, “and India, needless to say, would have loved to assist the United States to the hilt”¹⁴

On September 19, 2001, Musharraf made a revealing TV address in the Urdu language, basically to win Pakistani public acceptance of his alignment with Washington and reassure Pakistanis who sympathized with Al Qaeda and the Taliban, not intended for the American ears.

Sprinkling in citations from the Koran, he drew a lengthy analogy between the situations then facing Pakistan and the opportunist alliance that the Prophet Mohammed made with the Jewish tribes of Medina to defeat his enemies. After six years of fighting against non-believers in Mecca who challenged his claim to be the Prophet, Mohammed made a deal with them and ditched the Jews. Mecca became the headquarters of the new religion.

Although veiled, Musharraf's message, as widely interpreted in the Urdu media, was unmistakable: The alliance with the Americans is only temporary. He directed special words of reassurance to Taliban sympathizers, reminding them, "I have done everything for Afghanistan and the Taliban when the whole world was against them. We are trying our best to come out of this critical situation without any damage to (them)."¹⁵

Pakistan had supported the Taliban while it was in power, he writes, "for geostrategic reasons. If we had broken with them, that would have created a new enemy on our western border, or a vacuum of power there into which might have stepped the Northern Alliance, comprising anti-Pakistan elements. The Northern Alliance was supported by Russia, India and Iran."¹⁶

For the same geostrategic reasons, the Musharraf regime has done its best since 9/11 not only to "come out of this critical situation without any damage" to the Taliban, but also to give direct and indirect support to its operations in Afghanistan. Another reason, not stated by Musharraf is the Pakistani fear that the Pashtun ethnic majority in Afghanistan will join with the Pashtuns in adjacent areas of Pakistan to revive the movement for an independent "Pashtunistan", which Afghanistan had earlier sponsored with Indian and Soviet support in earlier decades. Although, the Taliban is Pashtun-based, Pakistan hopes that its Islamic ideological fervor will dilute the appeal of Pashtun nationalism and make it a reliable Afghan surrogate. But the possibility of a revival of the "Pashtunistan" movement is taken seriously by Pakistan against the background of

the British imposition of an Afghan-Pakistan boundary, the Durand Line, which Afghanistan has never accepted. When the Taliban was in power in Kabul, it refused to recognize the Durand Line. It also declined to give up the long-standing Afghan claim to the Pashtun areas of Pakistan's Northwest Frontier Province, that were annexed by the British Raj in 1893 and handed over to Pakistan when it was created in 1947.

How much direct support is given by Pakistan government agencies to the Taliban remains unclear. A *New York Times* correspondent Carlotta Gall, visiting the border towns of Quetta and Chaman, found "signs that Pakistani authorities are encouraging the insurgents, if not sponsoring them."¹⁷ In any case, U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates after a Kabul visit in February, 2007, said that "there are more Taliban attacks coming across the border," and it is clear that the Musharraf regime looks the other way when Islamic extremist groups allied with "rogue" ISI elements help the Taliban. Zahid Hussain, a respected Pakistani journalist, cites evidence that two former ISI directors, General Hamid Gul and General Javad Nasir, have "remained actively involved" with Islamic radical movements linked to Al Qaeda and the Taliban.¹⁸ Hussain reported that Chaman is "the main base" for the Taliban, and that several *madrassas*, or religious seminaries in the Pashtunabad slum area of Quetta "not only provide the Taliban with ideological training but with extended material help." The rise to power of Islamic groups in the province of Baluchistan, where Quetta and Chaman are located, "gave a tremendous boost to the Taliban's efforts to regroup," Hussain wrote, and "many of the provincial ministers and members of Parliament belonging to the ruling MMA (Muttahida Majlis-e—Amal) alliance became actively involved with the Afghan rebels, using the region as their base. Many Pakistanis belonging to the ruling group also joined the Taliban."¹⁹

Musharraf contributed directly to the MMA election victory in the two key Afghan border provinces in the 2002 elections. Apart from the covert ISI role in undermining its rivals,

Musharraf openly supported the MMA by rewriting a key provision of the electoral law relating to educational qualifications. To be a candidate for the provincial assembly, his government ruled, it was necessary to have a college degree, with one important exception: a certificate of graduation from a *madrasa* or religious seminary would also suffice. The requirement for a college degree barred many candidates from the secular parties, just as the less demanding *madrasa* provision helped the MMA. Musharraf backed the MMA at the provincial level because he needed its support to win a National Assembly majority for the Legal Framework Order that sanctioned his military overthrow of the elected Nawaz Sharif government. The MMA helped to secure the approval of the Assembly for his military coup, in exchange for his promise to step down as Army Chief of Staff, a promise he has yet to honor.

[III]

In helping the MMA to win power in the two border provinces, Musharraf was accommodating to the political reality that the Islamic parties have been steadily strengthened by unpopular U.S. policies, not only U.S. policies in the Gulf and the Middle East but also the reckless use of U.S. airpower closer to home in Afghanistan, which has led to large-scale civilian casualties. According to one authoritative study, civilian casualties in Afghanistan had reached 4,643 by October, 2006, primarily in the Pashtun tribal areas adjacent to Pakistan.²⁰

Faced with an anti-U.S. political climate, the popularity of the Islamic parties and his own lack of a significant political base, Musharraf has been reluctant, and in many cases unable, to move forcefully against the Islamic extremist groups allied with Al Qaeda and the Taliban, as the Bush Administration has repeatedly demanded, and to shut down the *madrasas* used by these groups to incubate *jihadis*.

When Musharraf took over, Islamic extremist activities were already well organized in Pakistan, centered primarily in three groups , Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jaish-e-Mohammed and Harkat-ul-Mujahidin .These had been nurtured by the ISI for missions in Afghanistan during the Soviet occupation and in the Indian-held sector of Kashmir. These groups, together with the anti-Shia Sepahe Sahaba, became increasingly active, and increasingly radicalized, after Musharraf joined with the United States. The Jaish-e-Mohammed had “a substantial following among soldiers and lower-ranking military officials,” Zahid Hussain found. Despite Musharraf’s orders to shut down its main training camp at Kotli in Pakistan’s Azad Kashmir, the Jaish-e-Mohammed expanded the camp, and was so entrenched in the Air Force that it was able to organize a clandestine cell of two dozen Air Force officers at the Chaklala air base in Rawalpindi. It was this Chaklala cell, meeting regularly, undetected, with *jihadist* leaders, that planned the December 14, 2003 attempt to kill Musharraf by blowing up a bridge over which his presidential cavalcade passed. A high-tech jamming device in the President’s car delayed the destruction of the bridge just long enough to allow him to cross the bridge safely. One of those who planted the explosives, Mushtaq Ahmed, was captured, imprisoned at the Chaklala base and sentenced to death, but *jihadist* penetration of the base was so extensive that he mysteriously escaped.²¹ Musharraf’s narrow escape from death has led to tightened security protection for him and an escalation of his anti-Islamist rhetoric, but not to a meaningful crackdown on Islamist groups, whose leaders have been periodically put under house arrest in response to U.S. demands for action against them and then released quietly several months later, usually after the names of their organizations have been changed.

The unchecked growth of *madrasas* directly linked to *jihadi* groups is striking evidence that the U.S. embrace of Musharraf has increased and not diminished Islamist influence in Pakistan. To be sure, many *madrasas* have no *jihadi* links, but some of the most important ones make no secret of their orientation.

In Karachi, the Jamia Binoria, with some 10,000 students enrolled in eight affiliated *madrasas*, displays a banner at its main gate urging Muslims to join the Taliban. Some of the other *madrasas* in the city have been used as safe havens by international terrorist networks. When police raided the Jamia Abu Bakr Islamia Madrasa, after an FBI tip that it harbored Al Qaeda sleeper cells, they found that a student enrolled under the name of Ahmed Madi was actually Gun Rusaman Gunawaji, a leading activist of Indonesia's Jemmah Islamiya, which staged the 2002 bombing of a Bali resort, and was a brother of its leader, Mambali. Lashkar-e-Taiba runs another Karachi *madrasa*, Jamia Darasitul Islamia, where several Southeast Asian students were arrested on suspicion of Al Qaeda links. One of the suicide bombers involved in the July, 2005, terror attacks in London, Shehzad Tanweer, spent a week at the Manzoor ul Islamia *madrasa* in Lahore, run by Jaish-e-Mohammed, during a 2004 visit to Pakistan.²²

The most detailed, authoritative study of Pakistan *madrasas*, published by the International Crisis Group in March, 2007, notes the absence of any rigorous or systematic system of *madrasa* registration, and the resulting difficulty in making a firm estimate of how many there are. The report notes the official countrywide registration figure of 12,006 and makes its own "well founded" nationwide estimate of "up to" 20,000, with more than 1,000 in Karachi. No attempt is made to estimate the number of those most directly linked to *jihadi* activity, but many are named. The central Jamia Binoria *madrasa*, known as the Binoria Town *madrasa*, is the "fountainhead" of *jihadi* militancy nationwide, said the report, and a generation of its former students have "spread a web of similar *jihadi madrasas* across Karachi and beyond-that pay allegiance to the Binori Town *madrasa*" and seek guidance and support from its leader, Nizamuddin Shanzai. The report specifically pointed to Binori Town graduates and leaders as the organizers of Jaish-e-Mohammed, Harkat-ul-Mujahidin and Sepahe Sahaba. *Madrasa* officials quoted in the report insist that the seminaries do not permit weapons to be stored on their premises, and that students cannot take part in *jihadi* activities while they are studying, but

“can do so after completing their studies.” Even those *madrasas* “without direct links to violence,” the Crisis Group study declared, “promote an ideology that provides religious justification for such attacks.”²³

The Pakistan government has yet to take any of the “overdue and necessary steps to control religious extremism in Karachi and the rest of the country,” the Crisis Group concluded, and “Musharraf’s periodic declarations of tough action, given in response to international events and pressure, are invariably followed by retreat.” His failure to confront extremist forces is attributed primarily to his dependency on the religious right. The report emphasized particularly his coalition partner in the Baluchistan government, MMA, dominated as it is by the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam, which has the largest network of *madrasas*. The report urges 21 specific steps, specifically the establishment of a national *Madrassa* Regulatory Authority, headed by the Interior Minister, operating under parliamentary oversight, with enough power to “bar *jihadi* and violent sectarian teaching from *madrasa* syllabi and establish controls over foreign and domestic financing from both foreign and domestic sources. Indirectly criticizing Musharraf’s 2002 electoral decree, which barred candidates who did not have a college degree but permitted the candidacy of *madrasa* graduates, the report recommended that *madrasa* certificates “should not be treated as the equivalent of degrees issued by recognized boards of education and universities.”²⁴

[IV]

In addition to strengthening the very forces of Islamic extremism that sponsor terrorism, the unconditional U.S. embrace of Musharraf runs counter to the professed long-term U.S. commitment to promote a democratic Pakistan. Sensitive to international public opinion, Musharraf has attempted to project a moderate image, permitting high-profile journalists with an international reputation and English-language publications read by foreigners to report with

relative freedom on many issues, so long as they do not expose corruption in his regime or delve into sensitive religious and ethnic issues, especially issues relating to the Afghan border areas. Behind this façade of moderation, however, the Musharraf regime has become increasingly repressive in the face of growing opposition. The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan has estimated that at least 400 critics of the government have been abducted and detained in secret by the ISI and other intelligence agencies, with no charges filed against them, and their whereabouts undisclosed to their families. The largest number of these “disappearances” has occurred in two disaffected ethnic minority provinces, Baluchistan and Sindh.

The central political problem facing Pakistan, largely shielded from international attention by the “War on terror,” is how to deal with the deep ethnic tensions between the Punjabi majority, which controls the armed forces, and Baluch, Sindhi and Pashtun minorities that have been denied a fair share of economic and political power. For Musharraf, satisfying U.S. concerns about Al Qaeda and the Taliban is much less important than dealing with ethnic unrests in the short run, suppressing a Baluch insurgency allied with a nascent, less unified Sindhi insurgency; and in the longer term, preventing the rebirth of the movement for an independent “Pashtunistan” that would unite the Pashtuns on both sides of the Afghan-Pakistan border.

If history is a reliable guide, the prospects for the survival of the Pakistani state in its present form, with its existing configuration of constituent ethno-linguistic groups, cannot be taken for granted. There is no precedent in the history of South Asia for a state consisting of the five ethno-linguistic regions that made up Pakistan as originally constituted in 1947, or even for the truncated Pakistan, consisting of the four regions that remained after Bangladesh seceded in 1971. The ideologians of Pakistani nationalism exalt the historical memory of Akbar and Aurangzeb as the symbols of a lost Islamic grandeur in South Asia. By contrast, for the Baluch,

Sindhis and Pashtuns, the Moghuls are remembered primarily as the symbols of past oppression.

Given its ethnic divisions, democratization in Pakistan would have to include a return to the 1973 Constitution, which recognizes the identity of the minorities and guarantees their autonomy in specified spheres. But the nullification of the 1973 charter has been one of the Army's central objectives.

The Baluch have spearheaded resistance by the minorities, rebelling against the existing Pakistani power structure with armed insurgencies four times since the creation of Pakistan, most notably in a protracted struggle that lasted from 1973 to 1977. The latest armed Baluch uprising started in January, 2005, and still persisted in 2007 ,despite efforts to quell it by formidable Pakistani forces consisting of six army brigades, plus paramilitary forces totaling some 25,000 men and air power that included twenty U.S.-supplied Cobra helicopter gunships and four squadrons of U.S.-supplied fighter planes. The U.S.--supplied forces involved were provided to Pakistan for use on the Afghan border.

The ethnic arithmetic of Pakistan is also a subject of bitter controversy. In the most recent census, in 1998, speakers of Punjabi constituted 44.15 percent of the population (73.2 million); Seraiki, 10.53 percent (17.5 million); Sindhi, 14.1 percent (23.4 million); Pashtu, 15.42 percent (25.6 million), and Baluchi, 3.57 percent (5.9 million).²⁵ In political terms, the distinction between Punjabi and its Seraiki variant is not a meaningful one, especially in the eyes of the Baluch, Pashtuns, and Sindhis, who view Punjabi and Seraiki speakers as a single bloc. More important, with the notable exception of the Sind region, the minorities emphasize the alliance between the Punjabis and elite elements of the Urdu-speaking refugees (Muhajirs), numbering 7.6 percent (12.6 million) people, who migrated to Pakistan from India after partition. Baluch, Sindhi and

Pashtun leaders all accuse the government of manipulating the statistics for political reasons. It is noteworthy that although the Baluch, Sindhis, and Pashtuns comprise less than 30 percent of the population, they identify themselves historically with ethnic homelands that constitute 72 percent of Pakistan's territory. To proponents of Pakistani nationalism, it is galling that the minorities should advance proprietary claims over such large areas of the country despite their numerical inferiority, and Islamabad deliberately seeks to stamp out regional and ethnic identities in order to push modernization programs addressed to what is viewed as the greatest good for the greatest number of Pakistanis. But to most members of the minorities, the disparity between their population and their territorial claims is irrelevant, since they equate "Pakistan" with the Punjabs and Muhajirs, who are perceived as having occupied and annexed their territories forcibly as an imperial power.

[V]

The Baluch and Sindhis feel much more alienated from the Punjabi-Muhajir establishment than the Pashtuns. The Baluch perception is that the Punjabis view them with condescension and contempt as "primitive," in contrast to a more favorable Punjabi attitude toward the Pashtuns, especially toward the Pashtun aristocracy. More important, the Baluch have been almost completely shut out of the economic and political power structure in Pakistan, whereas the Pashtuns, albeit bitter over Punjabi-Muhajir dominance, do not feel a comparable sense of complete exclusion. During British rule, Pashtuns from the more aristocratic, urbanized families were given powerful posts in the army and bureaucracy. Pashtun officers constituted a significant bloc in the upper ranks of the army following partition, until many of them were pushed out in the late 1950s, when the Punjabis increased their power. Even today, however, there is still a significant number of Pashtuns in high places in Pakistan, and the expansion of Punjabi influence in the military and the bureaucracy has for the most part not been at the expense of Pashtun members of the establishment.

Geographically, the Pashtun areas are not as cut off from other parts of Pakistan as the Baluch areas, which partly explains why the Pashtun areas are better integrated with the overall Pakistani economy than the Baluch areas are. In Pashtun eyes, this integration has its disadvantages, in that it brings what is seen as excessive dependence on Punjab province and makes the Pashtun areas vulnerable to exploitation by big-business interests centered in Karachi and Lahore. Pashtun antagonism toward Punjabi domination focuses, in large part, on alleged economic discrimination against the North-West Frontier Province in allocations of development expenditures both in industry and agriculture.

Among the standard charges leveled by Pashtun leaders is that Islamabad deliberately holds back on electrification of the Pashtun areas because it does not want them to become industrialized—that even the electricity produced there goes primarily to Punjab province, and that most of the tobacco and cotton grown in the North-West Frontier province is used to supply cigarette and textile factories located in other provinces. Islamabad even discriminates against the Pashtuns in agricultural development, Pashtun spokesmen argue, channeling funds for the expansion of irrigation primarily to Punjab or to areas in other provinces where Punjabi settlers will benefit most.

Pashtun dissatisfaction also focuses on the role of Punjabi civil servants in provincial administration and Islamabad's resistance to the use of the Pashtu language as the medium of instruction in education. At present, Urdu is the medium in public schools, with Pashtu taught as an optional subject up to the eighth grade. Pashtun children not only must attend classes conducted in Urdu but must also use textbooks written in Urdu, though English is permitted in civil service examinations and in university and graduate school entrance examinations. The language issue is important in Baluchistan, Sind, and the North-West Frontier province alike, but

it is more important in the Sindhi and Pashtun areas than in Baluchistan, because Sindhi and Pashtu are more standardized and better developed as literary languages than Baluchi and thus more readily adaptable for educational purposes.

Political scientist Hamida Khuhro, a Sindhi, once told me that “basically, the Pashtuns want a bigger share of the cake,” while “the Baluch and the Sindhis want something more—identity, self-respect, real autonomy.” This distinction is valid, but it does not necessarily follow that the possibility of a resurgent Pashtun separatism can be dismissed, especially against the background of the turmoil in the Pashtun areas on both sides of the Durand line since 9/11. On the Pakistan side, Islamabad, pressed by Washington for action against Al Qaeda and Taliban forces, has run roughshod over the traditional autonomy of the FATA tribes, both politically and militarily, arousing deep resentment. On the Afghan side, the large-scale civilian casualties resulting from the reckless use of U.S. airpower against suspected Taliban hideouts has intensified Pashtun alienation from the U.S.-backed Kabul government. In the eyes of many Pashtuns, the U.S. alliance in 2001 with the Tajik leaders of the Northern Alliance to oust the Taliban regime has led to disproportionate Tajik influence in the Afghan intelligence, police and military apparatus at the expense of Pashtun interests.

Pakistan has worked single-mindedly to stifle Pashtun impulses for an independent Pashtunistan both during and after the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. During the occupation, the ISI channeled U.S. aid to the Islamist resistance groups under its tutelage, denying significant aid and weaponry to resistance groups oriented to former King Zahir Shah, who had supported the Pashtunistan movement during the monarchy. When Soviet forces left, the ISI initially sought to install Afghan surrogates regarded as compliant on the Pashtunistan issue. When these groups proved unable to consolidate power, Islamabad turned to the Taliban, which had a Pashtun base but was dominated by clerical leaders with a pan-Islamic ideology who had

no previous identification with the Pashtunistan movement. Significantly, however, as noted earlier, when the Taliban came to power, it did not recognize the Durand Line despite Pakistani pressures to do so.

The Pashtun refugees who poured into the Northwest Frontier Province from Afghanistan after the departure of Soviet forces, uprooted from their tribal moorings, have provided a fertile recruiting ground for the Jamaat-i-Islami, Jamiat-e-Ulema Islam and other Islamist groups. Strengthened by its alliance with Musharraf, the Islamist MMA coalition has eclipsed secular Pashtun political forces in the N.W.F.P., centered in the National Awami Party, founded by the late Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, which does not subordinate ethnic Pashtun identity to Islamic identity. Nevertheless, Islamist and secular Pashtuns alike share a common desire to escape from the domination of Islamabad. Both share Pashtun traditions and historical memories with the Pashtuns in Afghanistan. The Pashtunistan movement is dormant, but not dead, and its re-emergence cannot be ruled out in the context of the growing instability and disintegrative tendencies in both Pakistan and Afghanistan.

[VI]

Just as the Baluch blame their absorption by the British Raj for their failure to achieve national identity, the Pashtuns too, feel that colonialism robbed them of their birthright. Until the Raj, the Pashtuns were politically united for nearly a century under the banner of an Afghan empire that stretched eastward as far as the Indus River. It was traumatic for Pashtuns when the British seized 40,000 square miles of ancestral Pashtun territory between the Indus and the Khyber Pass, embracing half of the Pashtun population, and then imposed the Durand Line, formalizing their conquest. When they subsequently handed over this territory to the new Punjabi-dominated government of Pakistan in 1947, the British bequeathed an explosive, irredentist issue that has perennially dominated the rhetoric of Pashtun-dominated Afghan regimes and

has poisoned the relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan. At various times, Zahir Shah's monarchy, Muhammad Daoud's republic, and post -1978 Communist governments in Kabul have all challenged Pakistan's right to rule over its Pashtun areas, alternatively espousing the goal of an autonomous Pashtun state to be created within Pakistan, an independent Pashtunistan to be carved out of Pakistan, or a "Greater Afghanistan" directly annexing the lost territories.

The Pashtuns today gloss over the internecine strife within the newly established Afghan monarchy which opened the way for the intervention of the British and their allies in the early nineteenth century. Surveying the broad picture, however, there is more than enough evidence in the historical record to account for the emotive power of Pashtun nationalism. Long before the British arrived on the scene, the Pashtuns were struggling to preserve their identity against the onslaughts of advancing Moghul emperors, who ruled tenuously over the areas west of the Indus from their capital in Delhi.

Pashtuns on both sides of the Durand Line share an ancient social and cultural identity dating back at least to the Pakti kingdom mentioned in the writings of Herodotus and possibly earlier. When a Punjabi critic asked him in 1975 whether he was "a Muslim, a Pakistani, or a Pashtun first," Wali Khan, The National Awami Party leader, gave a much-quoted reply that he was "a six-thousand-year-old Pashtun, a thousand-year-old Muslim, and a 27 years old Pakistani."²⁶ Eighth-century A.D. inscriptions have been found in a precursor of the Pashtu language. By the eleventh and twelfth centuries, Rahman Baba and other poets were writing Pashtu folk ballads that are still popular today, and by the mid-seventeenth century, Khushal Khan Khattak had begun to develop what is now treasured as the classic style of Pashtun poetry.

The size of the Pashtun population in Afghanistan is disputed and no definitive census data exists in Afghanistan. The CIA World Factbook estimates that the Afghanistan population was 31.05 million in 2006, of which 13 million were Pashtuns. In Pakistan, census data cited earlier indicated 25.6 million Pashtu speakers. To this must be added some 2.5 million Pashtun refugees in Pakistan. These figures suggest a total Pashtun population in both countries of 41 million.

There are from two to three dozen Pushtun tribes, depending on how one classifies them, generally divided into four major groupings: the Durranis and Ghilzais, concentrated in Afghanistan; the so-called independent tribes, straddling the Durand Line, and several tribes, such as the Khattaks and Bannuchis, centered in the North-West Frontier Province of Pakistan.

As Richard Tapper wrote:

In spite of the endemic conflict among different Pashtun groups, the notion of the ethnic and cultural unity of all Pashtuns has long been familiar to them as a symbolic complex of great potential for political unity. Of all tribal groups in Iran or Afghanistan, the Pashtuns have had perhaps the most pervasive and explicit 'segmentary lineage' ideology on the classic pattern expressed not only in written genealogies but in territorial distribution.²⁷

However, in contrast to Baluch society, with its hierarchical structures and its all-powerful *sardars*, Pashtun culture has an egalitarian mystique epitomized by the role of the *jirgah* (assembly). Moreover, as Akbar Ahmed has observed, although the tribal *malik* (village headman) is the most powerful single figure in tribal affairs per se, the *malik* shares local power with the *mullah* in a complex, symbiotic relationship.

The Afghan state that Ahmad Shah Durrani forged in 1747 was frankly Pashtun in character. It was a Pashtun tribal confederacy, established for the purpose of uniting the Pashtuns and shielding their interests and integrity against non-Pashtun rivals. To be sure, even at its inception, the new state was not entirely homogenous ethnically, but Afghanistan had an overwhelming Pashtun majority in the early nineteenth century. By contrast, the loss of the trans-Durand territories in 1823 and the consequent division of the Pashtuns left a truncated Afghanistan, with a more tenuous ethnic balance. As the “great game” between Britain and Russia developed during the nineteenth century, the British egged on successive Afghan rulers, who gradually pushed the border of Afghanistan northward to the Oxus River. The British goal was to make Afghanistan a buffer state, and the Pashtun rulers in Kabul had imperialist ambitions of their own. Extensive areas populated by Hazaras, Tajiks, Uzbeks, and other non-Pashtun ethnic groups were annexed by Kabul after long and costly struggles that left a legacy of built-in ethnic conflict.

Non-Pashtuns constituted at least 35 percent—possibly as much as 45 percent—of the population of Afghanistan during the decades preceding the Soviet occupation, and their relative strength has grown in the wake of the large-scale Pashtun refugee movement to Pakistan. As the ethnic balance has changed, the Pashtuns in Afghanistan have intermittently attempted to forge some form of political unity with the Pashtuns in Pakistan that would make possible a restoration of unchallenged Pashtun dominance in Kabul. By the same token, given the responsibility of the British for the division of the Pashtuns, it is not surprising that anti-British sentiment during the 1920s and 1930s sparked the emergence of a Pashtun nationalist movement on what was to become the Pakistan side of the Durand Line, Ghaffar Khan’s “Red Shirts,” which called explicitly on the eve of partition for an independent Pashtunistan. In Ghaffar Khan’s Bannu Declaration of June 22, 1947, he demanded that the Pashtuns be given a choice

between joining Pakistan and establishing an independent Pashtunistan, rather than a choice limited to Pakistan or India.

The Red Shirts boycotted the referendum that was used by the departing British as their legal rationale for handing over the North-West Frontier Province and the adjacent tribal areas to the new Pakistani state. As a consequence, when it fits their purposes, Ghaffar Khan and Wali Khan were able to cast doubt on the legitimacy of the incorporation of these Pashtun-majority areas into Pakistan. For their part, Pakistani leaders, questioning protestations of loyalty to Pakistan by Ghaffar Khan and Wali Khan, have frequently cited the Bannu Declaration.

Even though the National Awami Party has reformulated the Pushtunistan demand since 1947 as a demand for provincial autonomy within Pakistan, Islamabad has continued to doubt its allegiance to Pakistan. This distrust is rooted not only in suspicions of collusion with Afghanistan but also in the fact that Ghaffar Khan was openly opposed to the very idea of Pakistan and was actively identified with the Indian National Congress in its struggle against the British. Driven by its fear of Pashtun demands for provincial autonomy or, worse still, for Pashtunistan, the Punjabi-dominated regime in Islamabad has been seeking to resettle as many Afghan refugees and other Pashtuns as possible in Baluchistan, hoping to vitiate the strength of Baluch and Pashtun separatism at one stroke.

[VII]

With Pashtuns outnumbering Baluch in parts of northern Baluchistan, a U.S. Institute of Peace study noted, Pashtun nationalists now propose restructuring the Pakistani state to unite all Pashtun regions in FATA, the NWFP and northern Baluchistan in a new province of Pakhtoonkhwa that would seek greater autonomy than Pakistani provinces now have.²⁸

The inclusion of FATA in the Pashtun nationalist vision is a significant development that conflicts directly with U.S.-backed Pakistani development plans designed to bring the vast, hitherto-autonomous tribal tract under central government control. Until recently, there was little popular political consciousness in FATA. But the use of the areas as a sanctuary and staging area by Al Qaeda and Taliban forces since 9/11, leading to Pakistani military incursions in response to U.S. pressure, has led to unprecedented inter-tribal contacts and to a polarization of increasingly well-organized Pashtun nationalist and Islamist forces.

In July, 2002, the Pakistan army sent a division of troops into FATA, focusing on areas believed to be transit points for Al Qaeda and Taliban forces in and out of Afghanistan. Pressed by Washington for action, Pakistani forces using helicopter gunships and heavy artillery, launched operations in October, 2003 and the first three months of 2004, displaced some 50,000 people, according to the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, inflicting heavy civilian casualties. "The use of indiscriminate, excessive force undermined the military's local standing and alienated the locals," reported the International Crisis Group. A Pushtun former Federal Law Minister reported "seething anger" throughout FATA.²⁹ Musharraf concluded that further military pressure would make FATA ungovernable and authorized peace agreements with tribal leaders in Waziristan, bitterly criticized by the United States, in which Pakistani forces suspended military operations in return for efforts by tribal leaders to prevent the use of FATA by the Taliban as a staging area for Afghanistan. But the damage was already done, and the FATA populace is now politicized and radicalized as never before.

The architect of the peace deal was a retired Pashtun Army Lieutenant General, Jan Orakzai, Governor of the NWFP. In October, 2006, Gen. Orakzai was quietly negotiating a similar deal in the Bajaur area of FATA, but many Pakistanis suspect that U.S. intelligence got wind of it. Precisely what happened next has not been clearly established, but on October 30, 2006, 83

students at a *madrasa* in the Bajaur village of Chenagai were killed in a missile attack. *The News* of Karachi reported eyewitnesses as saying that the missiles were fired from a pilotless U.S. Predator drone aircraft that had circled overhead for hours³⁰. However, the Pakistan Army claimed credit for the attack, and U.S. and Pakistani spokesmen said that the seminary was an Al Qaeda training facility. Whatever the truth, the raid led to massive protests, especially in FATA, and retaliatory suicide bombings in the Malakand tribal district.

The radicalization of the Pashtun areas straddling the Pakistan-Afghanistan border has intensified both Islamist zealotry and Pashtun nationalism. In the conventional wisdom, one or the other, either Islamist or Pashtun identity, will eventually triumph, but an equally plausible possibility is that the result could be what Hussain Haqqani has called an “Islamic Pashtunistan.”³¹ At a Washington seminar on March 1, 2007, at the Pakistan embassy, the Pakistani Ambassador, Major General (Ret) Mahmud Ali Durrani, a Pashtun, commented that “I hope the Taliban and Pashtun nationalism don’t merge. If that happens, we’ve had it, and we’re on the verge of that.”

[VIII]

The destabilizing impact of post-9/11 U.S. policy on Pakistan’s domestic politics, spelled out here, has been largely obscured by the focus of the international media on the Pakistani posture toward Al Qaeda and the Taliban. By contrast, the deterioration in Pakistan’s relations with its immediate neighbors, Afghanistan, India and Iran, is better known and requires less elaboration. The tensions between Musharraf and the U.S.-backed Hamid Karzai regime in Kabul were dramatically displayed in public during the joint meeting of the two leaders arranged by President Bush at the White House on September 27, 2006. Karzai has repeatedly accused Pakistan of complicity with the Taliban. During one of their meetings, he handed Musharraf a list of Taliban bases and safe houses in Pakistan, complete with addresses and telephone numbers.

Musharraf, in turn, flatly denying Karzai's repeated accusations, consistently charged that Karzai's own failures of leadership explain the continuing growth of Taliban strength.

Given its long-standing desire for a client regime in Kabul, to offset the perceived threat of India to the East, Pakistan might well have had uneasy relations with Afghanistan even if there had been no 9/11 and the Taliban had remained in power with Al Qaeda financial support. Its refusal to recognize the Durand Line, noted earlier, was only one of the indications that it did not intend to be a subservient client. "After the Taliban came to power," Musharraf said in his memoirs, "we lost much of the leverage we had had with them."³² Still, the advent of a U.S.-backed Kabul regime with close links to the anti-Pakistan Tajik ethnic minority in Afghanistan clearly strengthened Pakistan's dependence on the Taliban as its sole vehicle for influencing future internal power struggles in Afghanistan. The overall impact of 9/11 on Pakistan-Afghanistan relations has been to intensify built-in tensions. The strong support given by India to Karzai, accompanied by the reopening of Indian consulates in Jalalabad and Kandahar, close to the Pakistan border, has added to these tensions.

India had offered unlimited support to the United States in countering terrorism after 9/11, including military bases, but the Bush Administration gave only perfunctory recognition to these offers. The U.S. response to 9/11 nominally condemned all terrorist acts but focused in operational policy terms on terrorism against the United States and its allies. Thus, the Bush Administration addressed its response to 9/11 in South Asia narrowly to Pakistan, making no effort to condition its economic and military aid to Musharraf on verifiable Pakistani measures to rein in anti-Indian terrorist activity, especially in Indian-held areas of Kashmir.

Less than a month after 9/11, the Lashkar-e-Taiba staged an attack on the Kashmir Assembly, killing 36. This was followed on December 13, 2001, by an attack on the Indian Parliament,

blamed by New Delhi on Islamic activists linked to both Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed. The attack on the Parliament prompted India to launch “Operation Parakaram (Valor),” the biggest Indian troop mobilization since the 1971 Bangladesh war, which led Pakistan to counter with its own buildup. With nearly one-million troops facing each other, the United States pushed Musharraf to take action against Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed. But his ban on the two groups and a tough speech on January 12, 2002, proved to be “insufficient” to stop anti-Indian *jihadi* activities, as Zahid Hussain has observed. “The ban was not applied to Pakistan-controlled Kashmir,” he has noted, “or to the semi-autonomous tribal areas bordering Afghanistan, which enabled militant organizations to shift their infrastructure and cadres to these regions.”³³ On May 14, 2002, Islamic militants staged a string of suicide attacks on a bus in the residential quarters of an Indian Army camp in Kashmir. Despite continuing tensions, however, India and Pakistan pulled their forces back from the border, partly in response to international pressure and partly because the specter of a full-scale war had scared off the foreign business investment, that both countries now actively seek.

In the Indian eyes, the most important aspect of U.S. policy in South Asia since 9/11 has been an influx of large-scale military aid to Pakistan that has affected the India-Pakistan military balance. India understandably asks what value will more nuclear-capable F-16s for the Pakistan Air Force will have for countering Al Qaeda and the Taliban. Like the past, U.S. military aid given to Islamabad during the cold war and in the campaign to oust Soviet forces from Afghanistan, the military aid provided since 9/11 as the price for its cooperation has been aid frankly intended by Islamabad to strengthen its military position against India. This is the reason that 9/11 and its aftermath have “changed the entire regional security scenario and triggered a rapid downslide in India-Pakistan relations.”³⁴

Although Pakistan, with its large Shia population, has attempted to keep relations with Iran on an even keel, tensions have boiled beneath the surface. Teheran has repeatedly charged that Musharraf permits U.S. Special Forces units and CIA agents to use Pakistani Baluchistan, which borders Iranian Baluchistan, as a staging area for covert actions designed to spy on the Iranian nuclear program and to smuggle military aid to rebellious Baluch, Azeri, Khuzestani Arab and Kurdish ethnic minorities seeking to destabilize the Ahmadi-Nejad regime in Teheran. These allegations are denied by Islamabad, but reports by Seymour Hersh³⁵ and my own contacts with Baluch sources make these allegations credible.

On the surface, it might seem that close Pakistani relations with the United States will offset the damage to Pakistan's security resulting from its estranged relations with its neighbors, and that continued U.S. support will assure the economic and political survival of Pakistan for the indefinite future. However, as domestic opposition to military rule grows; as ethnic conflicts intensify; as 9/11 recedes in memory; as U.S. staying power in Afghanistan ebbs, and as political alignments change in Washington and Islamabad alike, the nature of U.S. relations with Pakistan could well undergo dramatic changes and the very existence of the Pakistani state in its present form could become increasingly uncertain.

NOTES

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⁶ Zbigniew Brzezinski, "Terrorized by the War on Terror," *The Washington Post*, March 25, 2007, Outlook, p. B1

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- ¹⁸ Zahid Mussain, *Frontline Pakistan: The Struggle With Militant Islam*, (New York, Columbia University Press, 2007), p. 21.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 87
- ²⁰ Marc W. Herold, Professor of economic Development, University of New Hampshire, in "A Dossier of Civilian Victims of United States Bombing in Afghanistan: A Comprehensive Accounting," December, 2001, cites 3,742. Subsequently, in "The Daily Casualty Count of Afghan Civilians Killed by U.S. Bombing" at <http://pubpages.unh.edu/~mwherold/AfghanDailyCount.xls>, Herold has updates his count, which had reached 4,643 on October 1, 2006.
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- ²² *Ibid.*, p. 83
- ²³ *Pakistan: Karachi's Madrasas and Violent Extremism*, Asia Report No. 130, International Crisis Group, Islamabad/Brussels, March 29, 2007, pp. 5-8.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.* See also Appendix B. p. i and 24.
- ²⁵ Population Census Organization, Statistical Division, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Statistics, Government of Pakistan, *Demographic Indicators in 1998*. For 1961 data, covering the areas then constituting West Pakistan, see *Census of Pakistan: Population 1961* (Karachi: Ministry of Home and Kashmir Affairs, 1961), Statement 7-B, p IV-46. See also, *Main Finding of 1981 Population Census* (Islamabad: Population Census Organization, Statistics Division, Government of Pakistan, December 6, 1983), p. 13, table 4(c).
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- ³⁵ Seymour Hersh, in "Annals of National Security: The Iran Plans," *The New Yorker*, April 17, 2006, p. 33, quotes a Pentagon consultant involved as saying that since late 2005, Special Forces units had been "studying the terrain, giving away walking around money to ethnic tribes, and recruiting scouts for local tribes and shepherds. The goal, said the consultant, is to "encourage ethnic tensions" and undermine the Teheran regime.