

NATIONAL SECURITY STUDIES PROGRAM POLICY PAPER

# THE BATTLE FOR PAKISTAN

## Militancy and Conflict in Balochistan

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### Executive Summary

The United States has continually argued that the Taliban insurgency in Afghanistan is helped by their support network across the border in Pakistan. The Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) of northwest Pakistan have become a de facto operational theater of the Afghan war. The Taliban's leadership in Pakistan is known as the Quetta Shura, named after the capital city of Balochistan in which it is believed to reside.

Just as the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan caused Taliban groups such as the Haqqani network to relocate to the western regions of Pakistan, the Taliban's strategic leadership had also settled in Balochistan. However, unlike the FATA, this province is not a region where the Taliban can establish its camps for operations across the border. Interrelationships between Taliban and other ethnic groups, mainly Pashtuns and Balochis, in Balochistan emphasize different cultural priorities, ideologies, mindsets and aspirations.

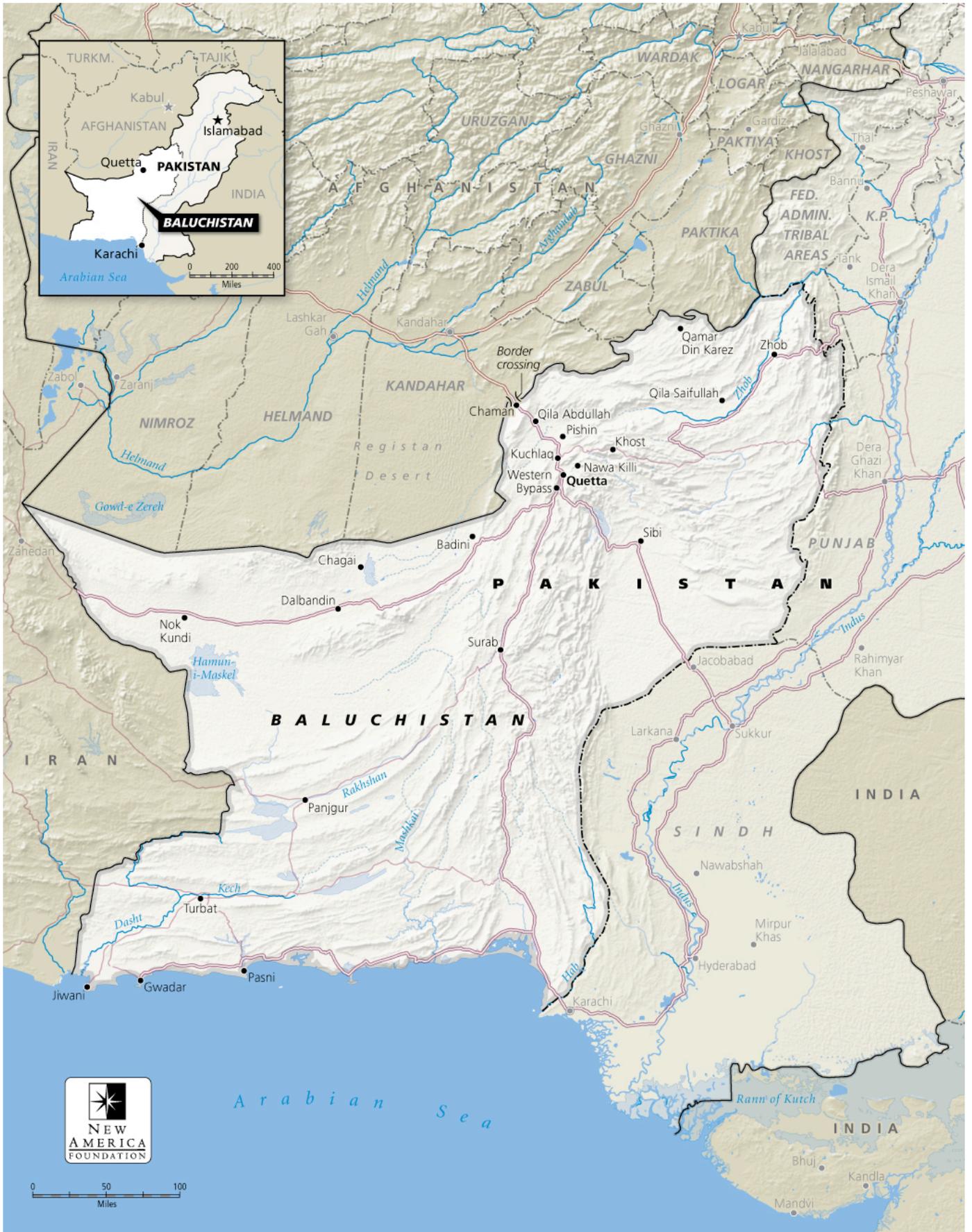
The material and ideological support the Taliban may be looking for is relatively hard to get in Balochistan, where the Pashtun population is deterred by the accounts of U.S.

operations in the FATA. These Pashtuns have a lot to lose and not much to gain if they decide to extend their support to this movement. Even if they have any ideological sympathies with the Afghan fighters in Kandahar, and despite a few exceptions of Pashtuns who do join their struggle, the population as a whole sees a very low return in aligning their actions with the Taliban.

NATO supply lines through Balochistan are relatively stable. Although there are some attacks on truck convoys carrying fuel and supplies to NATO troops in Afghanistan, the potential for such disruption is far greater. The general population seems to be frustrated with this foreign presence, but thus far only a limited number of individuals have carried out attacks. Any major operations in Balochistan by the United States would also decrease the popularity of the U.S. in Balochistan. Local desire to guard sources of income prevents many from engaging with the Taliban, but if these livelihoods are threatened by drone strikes, retaliation is more likely.

A lack of information about the Balochistan region has allowed some to view this province as a source of hostility to the U.S. effort in Afghanistan, but in reality, it is a comfort-zone for military planners. Balochistan constitutes 43.6

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MAP BY GENE THORP OF CARTOGRAPHIC CONCEPTS, INC.

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percent of the total area of Pakistan, but its population is less than five percent of the total. Balochistan does not pose any existential threats to NATO forces across the border in Afghanistan, although it could prove a bloody theater of war. Of course, there are militant activities in Balochistan, but the nature of these low-level insurgencies is mostly ethno-nationalist.

## Inside Balochistan

The province of Balochistan is Pakistan's largest by area, but its population<sup>1</sup> of 6.5 million accounts for just 5 percent of Pakistan's total. The province's two major ethnic groups are Baloch and Pashtun, followed by Hazaras, Punjabis, Urdu speakers, and Sindhis.<sup>2</sup> Both religious and nationalist political sentiments find support in Balochistan. While Baloch nationalists have often won seats in the national and provincial parliaments, religious parties have gradually increased their political influence in Pashtun areas. In 2002, an alliance of religious parties<sup>3</sup> won control of the province.

The porous border between Balochistan and Afghanistan has facilitated an influx of Afghan refugees. The southern Afghan city of Kandahar, a stronghold of the Taliban, is just 75 miles from the Pakistani border city of Chaman. In the wake of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, about 3 million Afghans migrated to Balochistan, 800,000 to 900,000 of whom are believed to still be living there.<sup>4</sup> Many Afghans are illegal residents: the Balochistan government had identified 27,000 fraudulent National Identity Cards as of January 2011.<sup>5</sup> Today, the Nawa Killi area of Quetta, the provincial capital, has an estimated population of between 200,000 and 300,000 Afghans.<sup>6</sup>

A generation of Afghan refugees has enrolled in Pakistani educational institutes. In addition, since Afghan refugees provide a cheap alternative for labor, they seized employment opportunities in areas ranging from menial jobs (such as laborers, fruit sellers, and mule cart carriers) to regional commodity trading (currency, flour, rice, fruits,

electronics, and automobiles.) Above all, the Afghans' arrival led to an increased demand for real estate, increasing the prices of both residential and commercial property.

Afghan elites among the refugees eventually came to control key businesses in Quetta, such as currency markets and real estate. Many notable Afghans, such as former Taliban provincial governors, parliamentarians, and businessmen, still have property in Quetta and its surrounding areas.<sup>7</sup> Afghanistan's current president, Hamid Karzai, lived in Quetta when the Taliban ruled Afghanistan in the 1990s; his wife stayed in Quetta for two years after Karzai returned to Afghanistan in 2001.<sup>8</sup>

Afghans who came from lower social and economic strata resided in refugee camps and slums. Living conditions are poor in the camps, which Michael Semple, a former United Nations consultant and expert on Afghanistan, called "a great reserve for the Taliban."<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, local politicians and civil society members say the camps are a breeding ground for criminals. One of Balochistan's prominent Pashtun political parties, Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PKMAP), argues against these camps, and spearheaded a resolution that passed the provincial assembly in 2004 calling for the dismantling of the camps because of concerns about crime.<sup>10</sup>

## Baloch Nationalism

At the outset of the 20th century, Balochistan contained 17 major tribal groups and some 400 sub-groupings. Each of the major groups was headed by a *sardar* (chieftain), who exercised considerable authority over his tribe and was responsible for its key governance issues.

The desire for autonomy has at times led Balochis to resist efforts by the Pakistani government to integrate them into the national mainstream. The origin of this problem can be traced back to 1947, when Balochistan was annexed to Pakistan, which prompted some nationalists to respond

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with force, leading to their persecution by the state. In 1973, then-President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto removed the first elected provincial government, and subsequent Pakistani military operations in the province further complicated Balochistan's relationship with the Pakistani state. During the last decade, the national government announced plans for mega-projects such as the Mirani Dam at Turbat, Gwadar port and the Makran Coastal Highway, but the representation of locals in the decision-making process and job allocation was minimal. Nationalists' fears of being converted into a minority, i.e. being outnumbered by other ethnicities in terms of demographics, were not allayed. The government formed a high-powered committee in 2004 comprising 16 senators and 12 members of the National Assembly (lower house) from the province, but its recommendations were seldom implemented. One frustrated senior committee member, former Sen. Mushahid Hussain, said:

“The sense of engagement, involvement and inclusions is missing. We see it as a far-off territory meant to be controlled. I think there was criminal negligence when it came to its implementation by both civil and military bureaucracy. We have never learnt any lessons from the mistakes we made in the 1973 insurgency. We have always repeated those mistakes. I made a presentation to the National Security Council in November 2004 pleading to change the mindset and have a political solution. But nothing changed. The Pak army is well-trained and equipped to fight a conventional war with the traditional enemy, but it is not trained as a counterinsurgency force.”<sup>11</sup>

Another reform package meant to address Balochi grievances, known as Aghaz-e-Haqooq-e-Balochistan,<sup>12</sup> was announced by the current government in 2009. Additionally, the military abolished the idea of building a military cantonment, deciding instead to establish a military college with reserved seats for Balochis. A recent amendment to Pakistan's constitution gave more autonomy

to the provinces by transferring 18 new ministries to provincial control, allowing local governments to pursue their own development projects.

Despite this, the primary local grievances that drive the demands for a separate state center on disputes over the limit of provincial autonomy, detentions of political workers, and resource exploitation. The implementation of the recommendations of the parliamentary committee that aimed to resolve these grievances and known remedies are a primary concern. Some recommendations focus on halting the ongoing military operation and introducing economic incentives for the people. The government's efforts to placate the Balochis by taking steps to usher in socioeconomic development of the province have been rejected by nationalists.<sup>13</sup>

There have been multiple Baloch nationalist guerrilla uprisings -- in 1948, 1958-60, 1962-69, 1973-77, and from 2004 to the present. During 2006-10, there were more than 1,600 casualties in a total of 1,850 incidents -- nearly 50 percent civilians, 23 percent militants and 22 percent security forces.<sup>14</sup>

The ethno-nationalist nature of these insurgencies has little in common with the Islamist militancy that wracks much of the rest of Pakistan. The Baloch ethnic insurgencies have been focused in Baloch areas, which are not coterminous with the Pashtun areas; as discussed, the Pashtuns are in the north of the province. Hence, the fact that these insurgencies have been confined to the Baloch areas makes collusion with the Taliban highly implausible -- in terms of ethnicity the Taliban are mostly Pashtun.

In fact, Sanaullah Baloch, a former senator from the Baloch National Party, a Baloch nationalist party, expressed concern over the alleged “covert support of the ‘establishment’ in order to undermine the Baloch nationalist movement and promote Talibanisation in Balochistan.”<sup>15</sup>

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## The Taliban in Balochistan

Members of the Pashtun ethnic group, from which the Taliban draws the bulk of its fighters and support, live on both sides of the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, in southern and eastern Afghanistan as well as in Balochistan. The Pashtun belt on the whole is neither supportive nor welcoming of terrorist organizations; the Pashtuns of Balochistan prefer security to devastation. When people have objected to the Taliban's tactics, they have been forced to remain silent. When one such political leader, Maulana Sherani, disapproved of the tactics employed by the Taliban he was twice attacked, and narrowly escaped both times. Further, even if ideological sympathy<sup>16</sup> exists between some Pashtuns and the Taliban movement, the connection between sympathy and active support for militancy is poorly understood.

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## There has been little incentive for Balochis to take up arms against NATO forces in Afghanistan.

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There has been little incentive for Balochis to take up arms against NATO forces in Afghanistan. On the contrary, some Balochis fear the demographic changes in the province resulting from the influx of Afghan refugees and this may encourage anti-Pashtun sentiments in the region. For them, the presence of the Taliban is clearly a threat. Baloch nationalists are therefore ideological adversaries of the Taliban, which stems from the fear of being outnumbered by Pashtun. In fact, even the influx of Pashtuns from across the border during the Afghan jihad in the 1980s and the subsequent rise of religious parties in Balochistan are a consequence of the Pakistani state's policy of containing ethnic nationalism, which the state, faced with the presence of numerous ethnic groups in Pakistan, saw as divisive. For the Baloch, this represents a deliberate act of containing them. Pakistan's more militant tribal areas have been a more significant safe haven for the Taliban than

Balochistan, partly because that region has long been semi-autonomous from the central government while Balochistan has been considered part and parcel of the Pakistani state.

Given the importance of religion in Pakistan, Islam provides one area of common ground shared by Balochis and the Taliban; the support which the Taliban may seek in Balochistan is, therefore, likely to be found in their common religious ideology. The Taliban derive their ideology from the Deobandi sect, a sub-sect of Sunni Islam that espouses a literal interpretation of Islam and through which the group has found justification for resistance against the U.S. presence in Afghanistan.

Taliban fighters wounded in Afghanistan have received medical care by crossing the border, where the Red Cross has a meeting point to take the injured to Quetta hospitals.<sup>17</sup> Identifying an injured person as a Taliban fighter is difficult because they can scarcely be distinguished from local Pashtuns. Even if hospital authorities know that a patient is a Taliban member, there is little to suggest that hospitals would turn against them, as they are doing a good business by treating the wounded from Afghanistan.

In the three decades since the Soviet invasion, many Afghan refugees have become embedded in Pakistani society through intermarriage. But even if people associated with the Taliban movement have ties through intermarriage or ethnic bonds, it doesn't necessarily mean that the locals support the Taliban ideology.

## Quetta Shura

The term Quetta Shura is used to designate the strategic leadership of the Afghan Taliban based in Pakistan. There have been a number of conflicting reports about the arrests of Taliban leaders in Pakistan, reflecting conflict among the media over the nature of their presence.

## Conflicting reports of Quetta Shura arrests

Name	Description	Reported Arrests
Mullah Abdul Salam	One of the Taliban's commanders in northern Afghanistan, and considered a shadow Governor of Kunduz.	Arrested in Faisalabad, second week of January 2010 <sup>18</sup> Arrested in Balochistan, second week of January 2010 <sup>19</sup> Arrested in Akora Khattak, Khyber-Paktunkwa, 1 <sup>st</sup> week of February <sup>20</sup>
Mullah Mir Muhammad	Considered a shadow Governor of Baghlan	Arrested in Balochistan second week of January 2010 <sup>21</sup> Arrested in Akora Khattak, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, 1 <sup>st</sup> week of February <sup>22</sup>
Mullah Abdul Kabir	Governor of eastern Nangarhar Province during the Taliban government	Arrested in Nowshera 3rd week of February 2010 <sup>23</sup> No arrest according to local police <sup>24</sup>

The capabilities of the Taliban's Quetta Shura have been severely limited through surveillance by intelligence agencies, mainly the CIA. However, Pakistani and

American interests diverge here: The United States seeks to keep militants in Balochistan and the rest of Pakistan from providing support for their comrades in Afghanistan, and Pakistan allegedly maintains ties with some militant groups in Afghanistan to hedge against Indian influence there.<sup>25</sup>

Intentions aside, the Taliban in Balochistan are lacking in capabilities. For one thing, most of the Taliban present in the province are political leaders,<sup>26</sup> which means they lack the armed following that Taliban field commanders inside Afghanistan have.

A case in point is one such political leader who was fired by the Taliban's leader, Mullah Omar, after he spoke to Voice of America without Omar's permission;<sup>27</sup> analysts say that Omar cannot be that harsh with his military commanders, because they are the support mechanism and strength of the Taliban leadership. If the military commanders were to rebel, the movement would splinter. Military commanders do depend on the guidance of political leadership, although decision making for tactical operations has been delegated away from the political leadership.<sup>28</sup> Not all operations receive a signoff from the Taliban's leadership; the bombing of the U.N. guesthouse in Kabul in 2008 reportedly did not have Omar's blessing.<sup>29</sup> Some analysts suggest that Omar might have slipped into the role of a figurehead for the Taliban movement.<sup>30</sup> However, all militants in the tribal areas take their inspiration from Omar, whether or not he has an operational role in their groups.

The Quetta Shura, according to many sources,<sup>31</sup> may actually have relocated to Karachi, Pakistan's largest city, in neighboring Sindh province. Many high-profile arrests of Taliban figures have been made in Karachi.<sup>32</sup> However, given Karachi's roiling ethnic and sectarian tensions, the mantra<sup>33</sup> that the Taliban have overtaken Karachi could stem more from the desires of local politicians to score political points. The Muttahida Quami Movement (MQM), a leading party in Karachi that represents many Urdu-speakers, has vociferously condemned the "Talibanization

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of Karachi.” Dr. Farooq Sattar, a MQM member of Parliament, said in a press conference that “Taliban are coming to metropolitan city of Karachi.”<sup>34</sup> The MQM’s rival, the secular, Pashtun Awami National Party (ANP), discard the cry as a “victimization” of Pashtuns. The ANP president in Sindh, Shahi Syed, remarked, “Linking ANP’s name with Taliban is a ridiculous accusation” and asked MQM sarcastically which leader they had lost in the fight against the Taliban, a reference no doubt to the number of ANP officials and activists killed as a result of the group’s anti-Taliban stance.<sup>35</sup>

## The Dispute over Safe Havens

There have been reported sightings<sup>36</sup> of militants traveling to Kandahar, the Taliban’s Afghan base, from Balochistan. These militants usually cross the border at Badini or Qamar Din Karez on motorcycles, a trip that takes between two and six hours depending upon their starting points from Quetta or Pishin.<sup>37</sup> Such sightings suggest the ease with which the Taliban’s strategic leadership can enjoy safe havens in Balochistan, but Pakistani officials from the province dispute that assertion. The Inspector General of the paramilitary Frontier Corps in Balochistan, Maj. Gen. Ubaidullah Khan, said that “there might be a communication gap, but no extremist elements are present in this region. [Pashtuns] living in Balochistan are different from those in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and are business oriented. They have nothing to do with extremists.”<sup>38</sup>

Moreover, the debate about the existence and mobility on the part of Taliban is complicated by additional factors. For example, Balochistan does not have the same strategic importance to the Taliban’s Haqqani network as do the tribal areas.<sup>39</sup> Also, the sophisticated tracking techniques of U.S. intelligence agencies are believed to have forced the Taliban’s leadership to limit their communications to non-digital means of exchange, limiting the impact the leadership can have on the Afghan battlefield.<sup>40</sup>

## Logistical Support

There is no evidence of active training camps, either run by the Taliban or through the tacit approval of the state, in Balochistan at this time.<sup>41</sup> Although the possibility of hidden camps cannot be ruled out, the presence of any such camp in any case is a risky venture for the Taliban because of NATO’s surveillance capabilities.<sup>42</sup>

## Funding

Weapons procurement is a lucrative business on the part of Taliban, as there are not very effective control mechanisms from the state.<sup>43</sup> Further, some locals also provide donations to the Taliban – the exact scale is unknown, but expatriates in the Persian Gulf region are reported<sup>44</sup> to be sending money to them.

### Links with other Militant Groups

Although some NATO trucks have been attacked in the Baloch areas, where the Taliban have a limited presence, a nexus between Baloch insurgents and sectarian elements is not plausible because of their differing ideologies and operational disconnect. Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) is also active in the area, as evidenced by an attack on the chief minister of Balochistan on December 7, 2010 claimed by the group. But the spokesman for LeJ, a mainly anti-Shi’a Muslim group, gave a sectarian justification for the attack, suggesting the minister was protecting Shi’a Muslims.<sup>45</sup>

## Responses to the Taliban in Balochistan

### Pashtun Nationalists

In Balochistan, the Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PKMAP) and the ANP are the primary Pashtun nationalist parties. Both are opposed to the presence of the Taliban in the area. The PKMAP’s leader, Mahmood Khan Achakzai, has frequently spoken against the Taliban.<sup>46</sup> Even Mullah Salam Zaeef, the Taliban’s former ambassador to Pakistan,

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mentioned that PKMAP was “the only party ... which fought against the *ulema*,”<sup>47</sup> in this case meaning the Taliban and sympathetic Islamic scholars.

The ANP is a secular Pashtun nationalist party, and is therefore naturally antagonistic toward the Taliban’s religious nature. The ANP has its strongholds in the neighboring province of Khyber-Pukhtunkhwa and faces resistance from the Taliban, who have targeted its top leadership in the past.<sup>48</sup>

The present government of Balochistan has mostly denied the presence of the Taliban in the province, a policy that is in line with the federal government’s rejection of the Taliban’s presence in other parts of the country, and comes from the desire of the state to reflect that its writ is being imposed throughout the country. When state law enforcement agencies do appear in the news in Balochistan, it is mostly from engagements with nationalist elements. Lately, the government has been responsive to Iran’s complaints of infiltration of the Sunni terrorist group Jundallah from Balochistan across its shared border with Iran. To this, Pakistan has taken stringent actions, such as reportedly helping with the arrest of the group’s leader, Abdelmolek Rigi.<sup>49</sup>

## Baloch Nationalists

Major Baloch nationalist forces in the province include the Balochistan National Party, the Balochistan National Front, and the Jamhuri Watan Party. These forces have easily made it into the provincial legislature, though they often boycott elections over claims of unfair treatment by the Pakistani government.

The nationalists’ opposition to the Taliban is multi-faceted. The Pashtun presence in the Taliban makes them repulsive to the Baloch nationalist movement. Because nationalists fear the rapidly changing demographic equation with respect to the Pashtun refugees from Afghanistan, they see the Taliban as an extension of the violence perpetrated by

Pashtuns. In addition, Baloch nationalists have been resistant to what they see as controlling attempts of the strong central government. The nationalists have a desire for provincial autonomy, while some seek independence. Hyrbair Marri, a former member of the provincial parliament and one of six sons of veteran Baloch leader Nawab Khair Baksh Marri, told Britain’s House of Lords in October 2009, “Our struggle is not a movement of separation, but it is against the occupation of our independent state which was occupied at gunpoint by Pakistan in 1948.”<sup>50</sup>

## Jamiat Ulema Islam (F)

A political party affiliated with the Deobandi school of Islam, Jamiat Ulema Islam-Fazl-ur-Rehman (JUI-F), was able to rule the province after the alliance it was part of won 30 percent of the parliamentary seats in 2002. Some JUI-F leaders are frustrated with what they call the Taliban’s distortion of Islamic principles, but they do not voice their concerns<sup>51</sup>. Others, however, have expressed their opposition publicly, and Maulana Sherani, a JUI-F leader and a critic of the Taliban, survived an attack in 2004 while travelling in his home district in Balochistan.<sup>52</sup>

## State Security Apparatus

Within Pakistan, there is a debate about how intensely the military should pursue the Taliban and allied movements, and some distinguish between “good” Taliban – those that do not attack the Pakistani state, like the Haqqani network and Lashkar-e-Taiba for strategic purposes-- and “bad” Taliban, like the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), which does attack Pakistan. This also applies to the United States, which is more concerned about the Afghan Taliban’s connections with the TTP. Even among U.S. leaders, there is a desire to separate criminals from ideologues. Vice President Joseph Biden, in a visit to NATO headquarters in Brussels, said that more than 70 percent of Taliban fighters are mercenaries, and can be negotiated with; only a few, according to Biden, are ideologically committed.<sup>53</sup>

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In a conflict that involves many players, covert deals and negotiations are often being conducted among a different set of players. Both the CIA and Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate (ISI) are reported to have maintained contacts and deal with some of the local players without informing each other.<sup>54</sup> On some occasions, the ISI has felt left out of discussions about the "end game" in Afghanistan, as illustrated by Pakistan's arrest of Mullah Baradar, the Afghan Taliban's purported number two, in early 2010. The U.N.'s former envoy to Afghanistan, Kai Eide, said the arrest had cut off a channel of secret, preliminary communications with the U.N."<sup>55</sup>

## Balochistan-Afghan Border

Balochistan shares a 517-mile border with Afghanistan and a 728-mile border with Iran. The border areas are mostly rugged terrain, dotted with mountains and deserts, and sparsely populated on both sides. However, the tough terrain is not an obstacle to the movement of people, which occurs on a daily basis through both formal and informal crossings. The Chaman border post connects the cities of Kandahar and Quetta, and is Balochistan's largest crossing point, with a daily exchange of thousands of people.<sup>56</sup> Moreover, the border cities of Chaman (Pakistan) and Vesh (Afghanistan) are also dependent on each other's customers, and are inhabited by the same Pashtun tribe, the Achakzais. Vesh is a large market for Pakistani buyers interested in products ranging from used automobiles to electric appliances, goods that come primarily from Dubai. The absence of customs duties and registration lowers the prices of automobiles, when compared with those sold legally in Pakistan.<sup>57</sup>

Afghan and Pakistani officials have not officially accepted the validity of the Durand Line separating Afghanistan and Pakistan,<sup>58</sup> saying that a border should not divide the Pashtuns, nearly 29 million of which live in Pakistan and just over 12.5 million in Afghanistan.<sup>59</sup> Pakistan's government sees this porous border as a source of destabilization and considers monitoring of the border

areas a mutual responsibility. Pakistan has established 280 check posts along the border, and Afghanistan has created 40.<sup>60</sup> Pakistani officials believe that this imbalance creates an insubstantial barrier to informal crossings.<sup>61</sup> Pakistan has even floated the idea of fencing or mining the border,<sup>62</sup> a move rejected by Afghanistan. Further, Pakistan has tried to introduce a biometric identification system at the border crossings, but that system has failed to take hold.

## Cargo Routes

The majority<sup>63</sup> of Afghanistan-bound NATO/International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) cargo is transported from Pakistan via surface routes through the Torkham gate in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa or the Chaman gate in Balochistan.<sup>64</sup> On average, 73 cargo trucks pass through Chaman and 96 through Torkham every day.<sup>65</sup> These trucks are owned and operated by commercial contractors, who are concerned about the vulnerability of their trucks and drivers to attacks by terrorist or criminal elements. With the heightened risk, these contractors are able to charge substantial amounts for their services -- part of which has to go to the militant factions in the different areas so that they do not disrupt the supply route on a regular basis. This financial arrangement benefits a number of stakeholders in this war.

In 2010, in Balochistan, there were 97 attacks on cargo trucks resulting in a total of 15 casualties.<sup>66</sup> In some cases, the oil was pumped out of tanker trucks and the trucks set on fire to either record a protest against the foreign presence or to sell the stolen oil or goods. A survey of main shopping centers of Quetta reveals the presence of many such goods for sale. However, given the number of trucks that cross the border at Chaman each day, it is fair to conclude these attacks affect a miniscule amount of annual traffic.<sup>67</sup> Nonetheless, the attacks create or sustain a threat to the supply line, and it is only against this threat that the various militant outfits can charge the truck contractors, who then forward the bill to the ISAF forces in Afghanistan. These local militants have to perpetuate a reason for them to be paid.

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## Recommendations

1. **Empathy.** Empathy is very important to understand the nature of the Taliban in context. Both the political and military leadership of the United States need to think from the adversary's perspective, not only thinking about motivations, but also the cost-benefit calculus charted by the Taliban of staying in Balochistan.
2. **Do not expand drone strikes to Balochistan.** Any drone strikes in Balochistan might lead to a realigning of the ethno-nationalist forces with religious groups, and could create a bigger problem for Pakistan and NATO in Afghanistan. This may feed the rhetoric of religious parties, ultimately fueling anti-Western sentiments across Pakistan, leading to more volunteers for war across the border. This would adversely affect the free flow of goods transported via Balochistan, which are critical to the survival of coalition forces in Afghanistan.
3. **Mainstream Balochistan.** Even though Balochistan is not in the FATA, the feeling in the province of being colonized is palpable. The remedy has long been identified in the reports of various state-led commissions and ad-hoc reform packages, but implementation is still lacking. A serious attempt needs to be made by the political and military leadership to expedite the implementation, which has been initiated recently. This would ensure Baloch involvement in the decision-making process regarding utilization of natural resources so as to share the revenue from these resources with them. A good outcome of empowering the province through its representatives is likely to erode the space for fringe elements, be they ethnic or religious extremists, to

operate. This would also improve law and order, thereby securing the communication and transit networks, such as those used by NATO.

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## Appendix: Demographics of Balochistan

More than half of the province's population, 54.8 percent,<sup>68</sup> is composed of a single ethnicity -- the Balochis. Balochis are spread over a large geographic area in the southern districts of the province and are divided along tribal lines. The Balochi-speaking tribes include Rind, Lashar, Marri, Jamot, Ahmedzai, Bugti Domki, Magsi, Khosa, Rakhashani, Dashti, Umrani, Nosherwani, Gichki, Buledi, Sanjarani, and Khidai.

In the northern districts, the primary ethnic identity is that of the Pashtuns --the same ethnic group as across the border in Afghanistan, composed of several tribes. The predominant Pashtun tribes in Balochistan include Kakar, Ghilzai Tareen, Mandokhel, Sherani, Luni, Kasi and Achakzai. The Pashtuns straddle the border (*See Figure 1*). Even though the figures are contested, Pashtuns form the second-largest ethnic identity in Balochistan, ranging from 29 percent<sup>69</sup> by official 1998 census to 50 percent by Pashtun nationalists<sup>70</sup>. Many of Balochistan's Pashtuns either own or work in orchards of fruits and trade.

There are other ethnic groups represented in the province, such as Hazaras, Sindhis, and Punjabis.<sup>71</sup> The capital city, Quetta, is the only place in the province with a multiethnic population; other parts of the province are largely populated by one ethnic group. The Brahvi, for instance, is an ethnic group of Dravidian origin and is based in central Balochistan. Balochis are concentrated mostly in the south and southwest, and Pashtuns in the north. (*See: Figure 2*). Brahvi-speaking tribes include Raisani, Shahwani, Sumulani, Bangulzai, Mohammad Shahi, Lehri, Bezenjo, Mohammad Hasni, Zarakzai (Zehri), Mengal, and Lango. Most of these tribes are bilingual and are quite fluent both in the Balochi and Brahvi languages.

Hazaras, who are Shi'a Muslims and thus largely opposed to Taliban, are confined to Quetta, where they are dispersed around two main areas of the city: Hazara Town and Mehrabad. Initially, they migrated from Afghanistan after

being persecuted in the Hazarajat area of Afghanistan during the 1920s and later in 1970s. The former governor of Balochistan, Gen. Muhammad Musa, himself a Hazara, also co-opted the Hazaras to integrate in Balochistan by patronizing them during his term from 1985 to 1991. This was evident by the increased induction of ethnic Hazaras in government jobs during his tenure, and the bias was obvious to people of Balochistan.<sup>72</sup>

Presently, the Hazaras enjoy the same status as that of other minorities, which ensures benefits such as quotas in education and jobs. In fact, in the provincial assembly, they are able to secure one seat out of a total of 65. At the same time, they are being persecuted in the province, as some locals accuse them of taking away the rights of the local population. Such a persecution is not only grounded on nationalistic claims, but also on religious grounds.

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<sup>1</sup> These figures are based on the official census done in 1998;

since then no census has been conducted by the Government of

<sup>2</sup> For description of demographics, see Appendix A and Figure B.

<sup>3</sup> Mutahida Majlis Amal (MMA) got several important ministerial slots in the Balochistan cabinet.

<sup>4</sup> This figure is based on author's interviews with officials in government and officials with the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees.

<sup>5</sup> "BalochistanFunction of Afghan Refugee Organizations" Afghan Refugee Organizations. Balochistan.gov.pk, [http://www.Balochistan.gov.pk/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=497&Itemid=852](http://www.Balochistan.gov.pk/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=497&Itemid=852) (accessed on January 10, 2011)

<sup>6</sup> Author's interview with Gen.l (R) Qadir Baloch, former governor and corps commander, Balochistan; January 2011.

<sup>7</sup> This is based on author's visits to different parts of Quetta and interviews with, for example, Usman Kakar, general secretary of PKMAP; Raza Muhammad Raza, former senator from Balochistan; and Gen. (R) Qadir Baloch, former governor and corps commander.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

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<sup>9</sup> Constable, Pamela. "U.S. Says Taliban Has A New Haven in Pakistan." *Washington Post*. September 29, 2009. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/09/28/AR2009092803751.html> accessed .

<sup>10</sup> Copy of the resolution (PAB/Legis:IV (28)/2004) was provided to the author

<sup>11</sup> Iqbal, Nadeem "The civil and military bureaucracy took a hawkish line" *The News*, June 15, 2008 <http://jang.com.pk/thenews/jun2008-weekly/nos-15-06-2008/spr.htm#4>

<sup>12</sup> The translation of the title of this package is "Start of Rights of Balochistan Package."

<sup>13</sup> Author's discussion with senator Abdul Malik from Balochistan in Islamabad. December 2010.

<sup>14</sup> These calculations are based on data compiled by South Asia Terrorism portal. <http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/pakistan/Balochistan/index.html> last accessed on May 22, 2011.

<sup>15</sup> Akbar, Malik Siraj "Taliban consolidating grip on Quetta: Sanaullah Baloch," *Daily Times*, May 1, 2009, [http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2009\01\05\story\\_5-1-2009\\_pg1\\_11](http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2009\01\05\story_5-1-2009_pg1_11).

<sup>16</sup> Sympathy here means a passive support by being silenced against them, either forcefully or willfully.

<sup>17</sup> Author's interview with senior government official of Balochistan. December 2010.

<sup>18</sup> "Another Taliban Leader Captured in Pakistan." *Newsweek*. February 17, 2010. <http://www.newsweek.com/blogs/declassified/2010/02/17/exclusive-another-taliban-leader-captured-in-pakistan.html>.

<sup>19</sup> "Afghan Taliban chiefs 'held in Pakistan.'" *BBC*. February 19, 2010. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8523429.stm>

<sup>20</sup> Filkins, Dexter "In Blow to Taliban, 2 More Leaders Are Arrested," *New York Times*, February 18, 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/19/world/asia/19taliban.html>

<sup>21</sup> "Afghan Taliban chiefs."

<sup>22</sup> Filkins, "In Blow to Taliban."

<sup>23</sup> "Taliban leader Mullah Abdul Kabir 'seized in Pakistan.'" *BBC*. February 23, 2010. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8529726.stm>.

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<sup>24</sup> "Taliban leader Mullah Abdul Kabir 'seized in Pakistan.'" *Ulavann News*. February 23, 2010. <http://ulavannnews.blogspot.com/2010/02/taliban-leader-mullah-abdul-kabir.html>.

<sup>25</sup> Thomas, Gary. "Analysts: Fear of India Drives Pakistani Support for Militants." *Voice of America*. May 18, 2011. <http://www.voanews.com/english/news/news-analysis/Analysts-Fear-of-India-Drives-Pakistani-Support-for-Militants-122174139.html>

<sup>26</sup> Author's interview in Peshawar with Brig. (R) Mohammad Saad, former defense attaché in Afghanistan, January 2011

<sup>27</sup> Interview with Peshawar-based defense analyst, January 2011.

<sup>28</sup> Based on several interviews, such as with Syed Saleem Shahzad, author of "*Inside Al-Qaeda and the Taliban: Beyond 9/11*"; Saleem Safi, journalist and anchor of the program "*Jirga*" on GeoTV. Some sources requested anonymity.

<sup>29</sup> Gopal, Anand, Mansur Khan Mahsud, and Brian Fishman. "The Battle for Pakistan: Militancy and Conflict in North Waziristan," New American Foundation, Washington, D.C., April 19, 2010. <http://counterterrorism.newamerica.net/sites/newamerica.net/files/policydocs/northwaziristan.pdf>.

<sup>30</sup> Ruttig, Thomas. "The Other Side: Dimensions of the Afghan Insurgency: Causes, Actors and Approaches to 'Talks.'" Afghanistan Analysts Network. July 24, 2009.

<sup>31</sup> Author's own discussions with sources. December 2010 - January 2011; Stein, Jeff. "Report: Pakistani Spy Agency Rushed Mullah Omar to Hospital." *The Washington Post*. January 18, 2011. [http://voices.washingtonpost.com/spy-talk/2011/01/mullah\\_omar\\_treated\\_for\\_heart.html](http://voices.washingtonpost.com/spy-talk/2011/01/mullah_omar_treated_for_heart.html)

<sup>32</sup> Key arrests last year include the son-in-law of Mullah Omar, a key aide of Omar Baradar, and a close aide of bin Laden, to name a few.

<sup>33</sup> MQM leaders' fear of "Talibanization," although valid, is a bit overplayed as they have been at struggle with a Pashtun national party in Karachi.

<sup>34</sup> This is based on the press conference by the MQM leader, Dr. Farooq Sattar (Urdu). See: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Opoo0Q94-i0> last accessed May 22, 2011.

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<sup>35</sup> President of the Awami National Party (ANP) Sindh, Shahi Syed, rebutted the allegations of MQM. See <http://www.geo.tv/7-24-2010/68896.htm> last accessed May 22, 2011.

<sup>36</sup> Several locals and correspondents, such as from BBC and local press, have recorded the sighting of the militants.

<sup>37</sup> The calculation is from author's interview with locals who frequently travel across the border.

<sup>38</sup> "Unrest in Balochistan: 'No Quetta Shura or Taliban leaders here.'" *Express Tribune*, December 12, 2010. <http://tribune.com.pk/story/88872/no-quetta-shura-in-Balochistan> last accessed May 22, 2011.

<sup>39</sup> For a discussion of the Haqqani Network's longstanding use of Pakistan's tribal areas as a sanctuary, recruitment and planning ground, see Ressler, Don and Vahid Brown, "The Haqqani Nexus and the Evolution of al-Qa'ida," *Combating Terrorism Center at West Point*, July 14, 2011. [http://www.ctc.usma.edu/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/CTC-Haqqani-Report\\_Ressler-Brown-Final\\_Web.pdf](http://www.ctc.usma.edu/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/CTC-Haqqani-Report_Ressler-Brown-Final_Web.pdf)

<sup>40</sup> Based on author's interview with a leading international journalist and practitioner (anonymity requested). December 2010.

<sup>41</sup> However, some targeted assassinations and security checkpoint overruns have been reported in the local press.

<sup>42</sup> Discussions with Pakistani and Afghan sources, January 2011, anonymity requested.

<sup>43</sup> Author's interview with Brig (R) Muhammad Saad, former Pakistan's Defense Attaché in Afghanistan and a western source operating in Balochistan, there is an economic side of the current conflict.

<sup>44</sup> Author's interview with sources in the border area of Chaman

<sup>45</sup> "Two Injured in Rocket Attack." *Dawn*. December 7, 2010 <http://www.dawn.com/2010/12/07/two-injured-in-quetta-rocket-attack.html>

<sup>46</sup> Author's interview with Usman Kakar, General Secretary PKMAP. Mahmood Khan himself in several talkshows aired in Pakistan has raised this point. Most of his speeches are also available online on YouTube.

<sup>47</sup> Zaef, Abdul Salam. *My Life with Taliban*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2010. pg. 116

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<sup>48</sup> Khattak, Daud. "The cost of Pakistan's double game." *The AfPak Channel*, Foreign Policy. May 25, 2011. [http://afpak.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2011/05/25/the\\_cost\\_of\\_pakistan\\_double\\_game](http://afpak.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2011/05/25/the_cost_of_pakistan_double_game)

<sup>49</sup> Tharoor, Ishaan. "Iran's Arrest of Extremist Foe: Did Pakistan Help?" *TIME.com*, February 25, 2010. <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1968126,00.html>

<sup>50</sup> See <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bhtMYPLTMUc&feature=related> last accessed on May 28, 2011.

<sup>51</sup> Authors interview with sources (Jan 2011).

<sup>52</sup> JUI blamed this attack on a group of the Afghan Taliban led by Mullah Dadullah, who was later killed by U.S. forces in Afghanistan. Maulana Sherani later lost the election of 2008 to a candidate of JUI (Ideological), a splinter group that was against Sherani's rhetoric against the Taliban. Further, even though Sherani supposedly took a stance against what is read as of JUI's, Sherani enjoys strong support among the top hierarchy of JUI. Only recently in 2010, he was tipped as the chairman of the Council of Islamic Ideology, an advisory body that recommends government on legislation as per Islamic law. Even though the various factions of JUI have distanced themselves from openly supporting the Taliban, they don't openly criticize them either. Open criticism would entail huge political costs in an area where any outsider cannot help notice the widespread wall-chalking, praising the Jihad and its martyrs. Such vocal condemnation of the Taliban or its practices, might elicit a violent terrorist backlash.

<sup>53</sup> Neuger, James G. "Biden Sees Conversion of Taliban in Afghanistan," *Bloomberg News*. March 10, 2009. <http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=newsarchive&sid=at5u9AlQP2eg>

<sup>54</sup> This is based on several interviews with sources, accusations by the two states viz. a viz. each other, and author's interview with officials (anonymity requested). For instance, on one occasion, President Karzai told a journalist, Saleem Safi, that there were efforts by the United States and CIA to integrate Taliban who give up fighting through monetary incentives. These incentives led many other state officials to create fake Taliban, get them surrendered and receive the riches.

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<sup>55</sup> Doucet, Lyse. "Pakistan arrests halt secret UN contacts with Taliban." BBC. March 19, 2010.

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south\\_asia/8575623.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/8575623.stm). Accessed February 22, 2011.

<sup>56</sup> Based on interviews with several officials in the government, estimates made by media outlets, and author's visit to Chaman border, the figure is believed to be ranging from 10,000 to 40,000.

<sup>57</sup> These crossings are used by many people as witnessed by the author and locals. Pakistani customs also maintain their presence along with Frontier Corps Balochistan. For Customs presence See: <http://www.cbr.gov.pk/newcu/Collectorates/CustomsHouseQuetta/newChouse.asp#qamarzhob> accessed January 12, 2011.

<sup>58</sup> The Durand Line was demarcated in 1893 between the Emir of Afghanistan and British India.

<sup>59</sup> Afghanistan (2009). *CIA World Factbook*. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/af.html> Accessed August 2, 2011

<sup>60</sup> This is based on interview of the former inspector general of the Frontier Corps Balochistan, Maj. Gen. Saleem Nawaz; available on youtube.com. See:

<http://www.awaztoday.com/playvideo.asp?pageId=7967>

<sup>61</sup> These figures are based on discussions with Pakistani officials.

<sup>62</sup> In an exclusive address in an Islamabad hotel on January 16, 2011, Gen. Ihsan ul-Haq, former chief of Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) said: "If a suicide bomber comes to U.S. from the Mexican border, U.S. will make sure that the border is sealed. However, this porous border is a problem for Pakistan, but it is not being allowed to fence it or seal it."

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<sup>63</sup> Only sensitive or classified cargo is flown into Afghanistan aircraft. All other cargo is shipped via the port of Karachi, then transported by commercially contracted vehicles along two primary routes to Afghanistan. See: Maj. Gen. Kenneth S. Dowd, "Building 'Log Nation' in the U.S. Central Command," *Army Sustainment*, 42.5 (2010)

[http://www.almc.army.mil/alog/issues/SepOct10/log\\_nation.html](http://www.almc.army.mil/alog/issues/SepOct10/log_nation.html)

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> These figures are based on author's interviews with officials in the Federal Bureau of Revenue in Islamabad and Quetta. January 2011.

<sup>66</sup> These figures are based on data found in: "Pakistan Security Report 2010" Pakistan Institute of Peace Studies (PIPS) January 2011. Annex 3, pg. 54.

<sup>67</sup> These calculations are based on the total attacks in Balochistan vs. the annual traffic flow, derived from conversations with government officials in Islamabad and Chaman.

<sup>68</sup> "Federal Bureau of Statistics." Government of Pakistan.

<http://www.statpak.gov.pk> (accessed January 27, 2011)

<sup>69</sup> "Federal Bureau of Statistics." Government of Pakistan.

<http://www.statpak.gov.pk> (accessed January 27, 2011)

<sup>70</sup> Author's interview with Usman Kakar, General Secretary of PKMAP; Professor Kalim, University of Balochistan.

<sup>71</sup> "Federal Bureau of Statistics." Government of Pakistan.

<http://www.statpak.gov.pk> accessed January 27, 2011.

<sup>72</sup> Author's interview with a cross-section of local political party workers and analysts. December 2010.



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