Balochistan

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C. Christine Fair

Assistant Professor
Georgetown University
Security Studies Program,
Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service

Introduction to Balochistan: Demography and History

Balochistan (also spelled Baluchistan) is Pakistan's westernmost province, sharing international borders with Iran's restive Balochistan-o-Sistan province, as well as with several southern provinces of Afghanistan (Nimruz, Helmand, Kandahar, Zabol, Paktika). Among Pakistan's four provinces, Balochistan is the largest, occupying 43 percent of Pakistan's total area of 796,000 square kilometers. (See Map 1.) It is ethnically diverse and is home to many religious minorities, including Sikhs, Hindus, Parsees (also known as Zoroastrians), and a diverse array of Sunni sectarian adherents, as well as Shia (Yusufzai, 2011). (See Map 2.) However, Balochistan is the country's least populated and thus least densely-populated province, accounting for a mere five percent of the country's burgeoning population (Pakistan Census, 1998a).

While the Baloch ethnic group is indubitably the largest in the province, it is not known definitively whether or not its members comprise the majority of the province's inhabitants as the census is both out of date (from 1998) and does not ask about ethnicity. Without providing a source for his claims, Khan (2009) suggests that Baloch are the largest group in the province (followed by the Pashtuns and the Brahui) but fall short of forming a majority of the population. In addition to these three largest ethnic groups, Balochistan is also home to Sindhis and Punjabis. Using the 1998 Pakistani census data on mother tongue as a proxy for ethnicity, those who claim the Baloch language are a slight majority (55 percent), followed by Pashto speakers (30 percent), Punjabi (three percent), and Saraiki (two percent). Those who speak Urdu (the national language) comprise a mere one percent (Pakistan Census, 1998). However, the census does not distinguish Brahui speakers from Baloch speakers, even though the two languages are linguistically distinct and completely unrelated. This is one reason why some scholars are wary of declaring Baloch the majority ethnic group while others insist that they are the majority community of the province. (See map 3).

Determining Balochistan's ethnic composition is complicated by Pakistan's census. The census is supposed to be decennial, but has been deeply politicized since the 1980s. The 1981 census was delayed until 1998 (a full 17 years). This extraordinary delay was due in part to the Pakistan government's hope that many of the millions of Afghan refugees who had flocked to Pakistan would return to Afghanistan before the census was conducted (Weiss, 1999). Balochistan, along with the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK, formerly Northwest Frontier Province, NWFP) has hosted millions of Afghan refugees since 1979. While Pashtuns had lived in Balochistan long before the Afghan crises unfolded, there can be little doubt that developments across the border have altered the ethnic, political, and even religious and social fabrics of the province, as many Afghans and their offspring have acquired (legally or illegally) Pakistani national identity cards and have made Pakistan their home (S. Baloch, 2010). As of January 2012, there were more than 1.7 million Afghan refugees in Pakistan, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR, 2012). Current figures for Balochistan in particular are not available, but in 2010 there were more than 406,000 Afghan refugees in the province (UNHCR, 2010).

In light of the continuing security challenges throughout Pakistan, the ongoing population movement between Afghanistan and Pakistan, and the massive internal displacement caused by floods and

Pakistani security operations, no census is likely in the near future, despite the fact that one should have been conducted in 2008. Perhaps the strongest resistance to the census comes from Pakistan's political elite, who rely upon rural constituencies despite the country's expanding urbanization. They fear that substantial proof of urbanization may result in redistricting, which would undermine the power of rural-based political parties such as the Pakistan People's Party, among others (Yusuf, 2011).

Balochistan is also Pakistan's most developmentally under-privileged province. Consider the statistics given in Table 1. Whether one looks at traditional measures of human capital or human development, Balochistan lags behind the nation generally. In contrast, the Punjab tends to fare better than the nation on average on most measures.

Many people in the province of Balochistan—irrespective of their ethnicity—decry the lack of investment in the province and its persistent paucity of development relative to the other three provinces. This has fostered considerable anger at the Pakistani state, which along with the area's peculiar history, contributes to an episodic but intense demand, among some Baloch both within and without the province, for either greater autonomy or outright independence. Like elsewhere in South Asia, Baloch nationalists root their demands for autonomy or independence in the way the British managed the area now called Balochistan during their the colonial period, as well as the way in which they partitioned the erstwhile Raj into the successor states of India and Pakistan. Thus the Balochistan crisis, like the Kashmir conflict, stems from the British management of the area and ultimate hasty disengagement as it abandoned its empire.

Balochistan and the Pakistani State

The British Empire in South Asia coexisted with many princely states over which the British had varied levels of suzerainty, granting them considerable internal autonomy at the price of fealty to the British. In 1884, the British annexed Balochistan, seeking both to establish a buffer zone between its own empire and that of the Russians and to secure safe transit routes to Afghanistan (Khan, 2009). The area of Balochistan was and remains fragmented by desert and mountains with pockets of settlements that were often tightly organized around tribal structures with few lines of communication connecting settlements to each other or to the rest of the country. Contrary to the claims of some contemporary Baloch nationalists, there was no historically stable, "autonomous" Baloch kingdom *per se* that covered the expanse of today's Balochistan. The sixth Khan (leader) of Qalat, Nasir Khan, did manage to organize most of the major Baloch tribes under one military and administrative system in the mid 18th Century. However, that arrangement was fleeting and did not survive his death, after which power and control again returned to the tribes (Khan 2009; Harrison 1981).

Prior to annexation the Khan of Qalat promised the British safe passage through Balochistan, even though he did not in fact control the anti-British tribes in the territory. When the British were eventually attacked, they held the Khan of Qalat to be in breach of the treaty and seized the region. They ceded the western part of the territory (now Sistan-o-Balochistan Province) to Iran and the northern part to Afghanistan. Part of the remaining area became "British Balochistan," and the remainder was divided into the Khanate of Kalat and three principalities (Khan 2009, Harrison 1981).

At the time of partition, the many princely states within the Raj were forced to choose between joining India or Pakistan. Most princely states decided to join one dominion or the other based upon demography (Hindu or Muslim majority) and geography. The process was largely complete by Independence. However, several notable outliers remained. The Muslim rulers of Hyderabad and Junagarh—both deep within India—opted to join Pakistan even though they governed over largely Hindu polities. (India forcibly annexed them both, to Pakistan's enduring chagrin.) The Hindu ruler of the princely state of Kashmir, Maharaja Hari Singh, governed over a Muslim majority. He dithered, hoping to retain an independent state. As marauders from Pakistan's tribal areas and Swat invaded Kashmir in an effort to seize it for Pakistan, Singh agreed to join India in exchange for military assistance in repulsing the raiders. (That conflict morphed into the first Indo-Pakistan war of 1947. To date, the territorial disposition of Kashmir remains disputed, with Pakistan claiming sovereignty over the entire region and India generally seeking to ratify the status quo, which would leave about one third of it under Pakistan's administration and the remainder under that of India.)

A somewhat similar situation developed in what is now Balochistan. Many Baloch leaders did not embrace an independent Pakistan, before or after partition. Despite these misgivings, "British Balochistan" joined the Pakistan union. However, the Khan (leader) of Qalat—like the Maharaja of Kashmir—wanted independence. Unlike the other principalities, the Khanate of Kalat had a treaty with Whitehall, not with the British Indian government. Thus, the legality of its succession to Pakistan was contested by proponents of an independent Baloch state. The Khan of Kalat (Mir Ahmad Yar Khan) declared independence one day after Pakistan became independent. Ultimately, Pakistan annexed the Khanate by force (Axmann, 2008). Some Baloch continue to decry their inclusion in Pakistan on first principles and contend that Pakistan and its army is an occupying force. As discussed below, several Baloch organizations have engaged in militancy either to achieve greater autonomy, with devolution of power to the province, or to attain outright independence.

After forcibly seizing Balochistan, Pakistan's first governor-general, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, established an advisory council for the province, under his direct oversight (Khan, 2009). From 1948 to 1955, Balochistan was an administrative unit managed by a Quetta-based commissioner, with most of the Baloch sardars (tribal leaders) receiving a stipend from the federal government. (The policy was inherited from the British, who formulated this system of levies.) (Aslam, 2011).

Despite some misgivings among the Baloch, the province was relatively peaceful until 1955, when Pakistan promulgated the "One United Scheme," which abolished all of the provinces in what was then West Pakistan. This change was intended to combine the strength of the Western provinces to balance the ethnically homogenous and politically powerful Bengalis of East Pakistan. But the strategy, which denied provinces their own territorial identity, met resistance (Khan, 2009). Simultaneously, in the years following Independence, a few Baloch sardars had become wealthy after the discovery of natural resources on their lands. In 1958, a dispute arose about royalties from natural gas located in the area controlled by the Bugti tribe. In that year, some members of the Bugti tribe tried to disrupt the supply of gas from the Sui area in effort to increase the royalty fees from the government (Aslam, 2011). Responding to unrest resulting both from Bugti efforts to manipulate the gas market and protests

against the One United scheme, the government launched a military campaign that lasted until the early 1960s.

Following the elections of 1970, the ethno-nationalist National Awami Party (NAP) won the largest block of seats in both Balochistan and what is now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and formed governments in both provinces with the political support of the Jamiat-e-Ulema-e-Islam (an Islamist party associated with the Deobandi interpretive tradition). Following the 1971 civil war in which East Pakistan, with India's assistance, became Bangladesh, the NAP government finally took control of the provincial government and tried to correct some of the developmental, economic, and political problems of the province. Pakistan's first elected prime minister, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, opposed such reforms, fearing that they would undermine the Punjabis, Pakistan's dominant ethnic group, and other non-Baloch who controlled businesses in the province (Khan, 2009).

In 1973, the Pakistani authorities manufactured a reason to invade Balochistan when they raided the Iraqi Embassy in Islamabad, discovering 300 Soviet submachine guns and 48,000 rounds of ammunition. Although Pakistani and American officials knew the weapons were meant for Baloch rebels in Iran (punishment for Iran's support of Kurdish rebels in Iraq), the government claimed that Iraq was planning to transfer the arms to Pakistan's Baloch. The elected provincial government was dismissed, Governor's Rule imposed, and the central government dispatched 80,000 troops to fight 55,000 Baloch guerillas. Iran provided 30 Cobra helicopters with their own pilots to help Pakistan put down any insurrection. (Iran has its own problems with its ethnic Baloch, who struggle under ethnic discrimination and, as they are Sunni, Shia domination.) In the end, about 3,300 Pakistani army soldiers died, as well as 5,500 militants and thousands more innocent civilians (Khan, 2009; Aslam, 2011). After Bhutto's government was toppled by General Zia ul Haq, Zia launched several development projects, such as road construction, expansion of power transmission, and building small dams, in hopes of appeasing Balochistan's residents. Zia also ensured that Quetta received Sui gas for the first time even though deposits had been discovered in Balochistan some four decades earlier (Khan, 2009).

The most recent insurgent violence began with General Musharraf's seizure of power in 1999. In particular, Musharraf outraged many in the province when he announced the development of the deep-water port at Gwador (a huge project being carried out in partnership with the Chinese) and the construction of two army cantonments.

While many Baloch see the army cantonments as part of Pakistan's "colonizing presence," the Pakistan army has long sought to increase the number of Baloch in its ranks. This desire stems from the belief—long held by the Pakistan army—that the institution must reflect the population from which it draws. Achieving this goal has proved a challenge because few Baloch meet the educational standards and/or wish to join the Pakistan army. (A similar situation prevails in Sindh.) In response, the army has built cadet schools in Quetta in the hopes of increasing the number of recruits from the province. Pakistan's army has long dominated the state, and its extensive welfare system is the best in the country. Thus disproportionate representation amongst its ranks and officer corps adds further ballast to the numerous critiques of the army's state within a state (Fair and Nawaz, 2011).

Pakistan's Extractive Policies

Ironically, while Balochistan is Pakistan's most underdeveloped province, the region is also perhaps its most resource-rich. These resources no doubt explain the central government's interest in exerting ironclad control over the state. The desolate area contains copper, uranium, gold, coal, silver, and platinum deposits. In addition, it is responsible for about 36% of Pakistan's total gas production. *Astonishingly, only 17% of the gas produced is consumed in Balochistan while the rest is consumed in other parts of Pakistan*. Many Baloch with whom I have interacted over the years lament (perhaps with some hyperbole) that the only time Baloch gets gas hookups in their home is when the military builds a cantonment. (Army officials interviewed by this author counter unpersuasively that the population patterns of Balochistan make it very costly to expand the provision of natural gas noting that it is easier to pipe it to the densely populated Punjab with its extensive lines of communication and control.) Not only is Balochistan denied the use of its own resources, the government has historically required Balochistan to *sell gas at a lower rate than the other provinces*. For example, Balochistan receives a mere $0.29 per thousand cubic feet for its gas. Nearby Sindh gets $1.65 and Punjab receives $2.35. To make matters worse, many of the development projects in the region have been given to the Chinese government. The Chinese obtained exploration rights to the Saindak copper mine. The Chinese government will receive 50% of any proceeds from the mine and the Pakistani central government 48%, leaving a meager 2% for the Balochistan provincial government. The Chinese, following their well-honed management approach to such mega-projects, are highly self-dependent and have not engaged local labor in these efforts (Khan, 2009).

The construction of a deep-sea port at Gwador has proved to be the most controversial of the central government's undertakings in the province in recent decades. The port will be situated on Balochistan's Makran Coast at Gwador and will be an important counterweight to the Iranian deep-sea port at Chahbahar (built with assistance from India). Work began in March 2002, with China paying $198 million of the $248 million total budget. China also provided 450 engineers (Grare, 2006; ICG; 2006). Baloch nationalists allege that the contract between the Pakistani and Chinese governments demonstrates the center's misuse of Balochistan's resource. The national Pakistani government and the Chinese government will take 50% and 48% of the proceeds, respectively, leaving (as at Saindak) only 2% for the province. As with Saindak, all of the construction contracts have gone to non-Baloch firms and the majority of the jobs on site are taken by Punjabis or other non-Baloch. Balochistan's residents may not currently have the skills to allow them to work on the project, but the government has missed an opportunity to train the local inhabitants and ensure that they are invested in the project's success (Aslam, 2011).

Many in the province (actual percentages are unknown) perceive Gwador as a massive effort to further colonize the province by Punjabis and other patrons of the military and bureaucracy. The reasons for this perception are numerous and include several disconcerting allegations: elites bribing revenue officials to register land in their name, cutting out locals who had owned the land for generations but lacked proof of ownership; civilians and military personnel alike acquiring land in Gwador at extremely low cost and in turn selling it to developers from Karachi or elsewhere at a higher price; the army's

mafia-like behavior in appropriating Baloch land and offering it to Punjabis at concessionary prices; and the complete lack of involvement of Baloch at any level in the project (Khan, 2009). Moreover, the project will fundamentally change the demography of the area. Before it began, the population of Gwador and the surrounding areas was a mere 70,000. When the project is complete, the population of the same area is expected to explode to nearly two million, mostly non-Baloch. Baloch nationalists fear that the expanding presence of Punjabis and Sindhis, among others, will transform the culture of the area. Even more provocative is the fact that the project has displaced many poor Baloch from the area without adequate compensation from the government. Since construction has begun, there have been numerous attacks against Chinese personnel, among others (Aslam, 2011).

The Current Crisis: Ongoing Human Rights Challenges

The International Crisis Group, Human Rights Watch, and many scholarly commentators place the blame for the current crisis on Pakistan's military and central government. Critics of the Pakistani government note that at the heart of the Balochistan problem are reasonable political and economic grievances which are eminently resolvable (e.g. through government transparency, greater devolution, permitting Balochistan to control its ample natural resources including fixing the price at which these commodities sell, investing in Balochistan's human development, expanding access to electricity and gas, and so forth). However, the government has largely chosen to pursue military action, involving the forced disappearance of youths with no criminal records and the elimination of Baloch tribal leaders, among other excesses (Human Rights Watch 2011a, 2011b; ICG, 2006). Until recently, the government evinced no willingness to negotiate on the subjects of political and economic autonomy.

The exact toll of the most recent spate of insurgent and counterinsurgent violence is not known. According to one Baloch nationalist (cited by Khan, 2009, p. 1083) anywhere between 8,000 and 12,000 Baloch have "disappeared." The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP), which has investigated this issue, counted 143 missing persons as of May 29, 2011 and also published a list of 140 persons whose bodies were found after they went missing. HRCP also identifies 18 persons whom the organization believes were slain in targeted killings (Human Rights Commission Pakistan, 2011).

Human Rights Watch conducted its own investigation into forced disappearances (2011b). That report detailed 45 cases of alleged forced disappearances, most of which occurred between 2009 and 2010. Their investigation accuses Pakistan's security forces—especially its intelligence agencies and paramilitary outfit the Frontier Corps—of "disappearing" ethnic Baloch whom the security services believe to be involved in Baloch nationalist causes. Human Rights Watch obtained information about the campaign, which appears to be fairly extensive, from those who have escaped captivity as well as family members of the abductees. Astonishingly, most of the abductions took place during the daytime, often in well-trafficked public areas in the presence of multiple witnesses (Human Rights Watch, 2011b).

While Baloch nationalists are wont to call attention to their grievances and losses, they are not the only victims and in many cases they are the perpetrators. Baloch nationalist militants are widely suspected

to be the culprits in a wide array of killings of Punjabis, ostensibly to protest Punjabi colonization of the state. Teachers and police have been particularly vulnerable because they are seen as the representatives of the so-called Punjabi-dominated state generally and the military in particular. (As Fair and Nawaz (2011) show, the Pakistan army is not as Punjabi-dominated as is widely believed.) The targeted killing of teachers has had a profound impact on the province's already fragile educational system. There are too few educated persons in Balochistan to supply an adequate numbers of teachers, and the hostile and dangerous environment makes recruiting teachers from other provinces difficult.

A second conflict, largely distinct from the ethnically-based tension, is the continuing problem of sectarian violence. In Pakistan, this almost always takes the form of Deobandi Sunni extremist violence against Pakistan's minority Shia community. In recent years, these Deobandi Sunni militant groups (e.g. Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, Tehreek-e-Taliban-e-Pakistan, etc.) have also taken up arms against other Sunnis (e.g. Barelvis) whom they deride as being apostates or hypocrites (Fair, 2011). In Balochistan, the group most vulnerable to such attacks, which tend to be concentrated in Quetta and environs, is the Persian-speaking Hazaras (Human Rights Watch, 2011a).

In 2007, Pakistan's Supreme Court Chief Justice gained wide notoriety when he demanded that General Musharraf account for the for the thousands of Pakistanis who had been disappeared. Unfortunately, the United States has not pushed for transparency about the fate of the detained, as Pakistan has long been detaining such persons at the Americans' behest in prosecuting the war on terror (Human Rights Watch, 2011b).

In general, Pakistan's law enforcement capabilities are shambolic and inadequate to meet the state's myriad criminal and terrorist challenges. Worse, Pakistan's judges, for any number of reasons, are far more likely to let terrorist suspects go free than not (Fair, 2012). As for state involvement in assassination, harassment, and disappearances, there is no sign that the state is willing to forswear these methods of controlling the problems it perceives in the province.

The Pakistan government tends to blame the violence upon various vested tribal interests which seek above all to ensure that the province remains backwards and thus amenable to the prerogatives of tribal leaders. Military and paramilitary action is justified, the state argues, because these tribal leaders are irreconcilable to the state. However, Major Gregory Pipes, in research conducted for a MA thesis at the Naval Postgraduate School, discovered little evidence to support this view. Instead, he found that any conciliatory move by the government results in a decline in militant attacks, while state hostility corresponds to a spike in violence (Pipes, 2010). If the various Baloch parties to the conflict were unwilling to settle for anything short of independence, Pipes should not have observed this correlation between state action and violence.

Similarly, Pipes undermines the government's contention that the Baloch sardars seek to stunt the economic and social development of the province. If this were in fact the case, we would expect to see lower levels of development in areas controlled by separatist sardars than in other parts of the province where leadership is more aligned with the state. Pipes compares Nasirabad (home of former Prime Minister Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali, who has long been friendly to the state) with Dera Bugti (ancestral

dominion of Baloch leader Nawab Aktar Khan Bugti, who was killed in an army operation in August 2006). Nasirabad does have more households with electricity than Dera Bugti (61% vs. 16%), reflecting Jamali's patronage network. But Dera Bugti performs only marginally lower than Nasirabad in terms of access to piped water (15% vs. 15%) and literacy rates (12% vs. 13%). Dera Bugti marginally outranks Nasirabad in contraceptive use (14% vs. 12 %) and has nearly twice the number of medical facilities (64 vs. 34). This sample challenges the truth of the government depiction of retrogressive sardars (Haider, 2012; Pipes, 2011).

Despite the intense and ongoing military operations, few Pakistanis outside Balochistan know about the province and the problems that plague it. A recent BBC report asked several Punjabis from Anarkali Bazaar in Lahore whether or not they even knew what Balochistan is. Shockingly, many indicated that they did not. They could not even name a single city in the country's largest province (BBC, 2011).

Worse, because Balochistan is the least populated province, it elects a mere 17 members of the National Assembly, out of a total of 335 (National Assembly of Pakistan). While it has equal representation with Pakistan's other four provinces (22 seats) in the 100-member Senate, the Senate is the weaker of the two houses.[i]

Curiously, while public opinion in Pakistan has ranged between being outright opposed to or espousig tepid support for Pakistan's military action against the Islamist militants that have attacked the state with increasing ferocity since 2004, few Pakistanis seem remotely bothered by the military operations against Balochistan and the extra-judicial killings of Baloch youth and political leaders. This is likely due to the widespread belief that India—along with Afghanistan—has in the past supported Baloch insurgents and continues to do so. (While India's past role in supporting Baloch insurgents is less debatable, this subject raises considerable rancor in New Delhi and Islamabad alike. Unfortunately, the United States has not generally deemed this issue of adequate importance to collect information about it.) The firm belief in Pakistan that the varied Balochistan crises are due in part to external interference no doubt allows the state to justify the actions against the Baloch because this narrative renders rebellious Baloch as proxies of Pakistan's mortal enemy, India and its presumed client Afghanistan. Lest anyone be fooled by the improving atmospherics between India and Pakitsan, India is widely seen by many Pakistanis to be one of the country's greatest threats rivaled only by the United States (Pew, 2010).

Thus, under Pakistan's current system, Balochistan is unlikely to receive the policy attention at the center that it deserves, and it has too little representation and too few domestic allies to sustain a Balochistan-centric agenda that could resolve the various conflicts in the province.

Implications and Recommendations

Most Americans have scarcely heard of Balochistan. When Pakistan does occupy a place in American popular discourse it is generally in the context of the War on Terror and Pakistan's critical but equally flawed contribution to the same. Since much of the crisis in Balochistan does not appear to be directly relevant to U.S. interests, there have been few calls in U.S. policy circles to hold Pakistan to account for

its misdeeds in the province or to seriously examine the numerous crimes perpetrated by state and non-state actors alike.

Yet Balochistan is not entirely irrelevant to U.S. interests. First, as in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and elsewhere, the Pakistani state patronizes religious forces in Balochistan as a counterweight to ethnic forces. In Balochistan the most obvious partners are the varied factions of the Pashtun-dominated, Deobandi ulema party, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI). The JUI has long had ties to an archipelago of madrassahs across Pakistan that has spawned numerous regional and extra-regional Islamist militant groups. JUI is most notorious for its ties to the Afghan Taliban. The varied militant groups operating under its umbrella include the Tehreek-e-Taliban-e-Pakistan, Jaish-e-Mohammad, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, Harkat-ul-Ansar/Harkal ul Mujahideen among others. Many of these groups are also local collaborators of al Qaeda. Evidence of the state's ties to these groups and the salience of Balochistan is found in the simple fact that much of the Afghan Taliban's leadership council is based is based in Quetta. (Thus its name: the Quetta Shura).

A second area of interest for the United States is simple conformity with its own laws. The Leahy Amendment precludes the United States from providing assistance to a foreign security force if there is credible evidence that the unit has committed gross violations of human rights. To remain in compliance with the law, American officials must review the human rights record of those units of the Pakistani security forces that may become recipients of U.S. assistance. (After years of interviewing U.S. personnel it has become clear to the author that the United States has not taken this responsibility terribly seriously; but there has been increasing attention to it in recent years.)

Despite well-documented evidence of Pakistan military and paramilitary excesses in Swat, the Tribal Areas, Balochistan and elsewhere, the United States has not responded with alacrity. The lone exception to this rule came in October 2010, when the United States withdrew aid to some Pakistani security forces because of the evidence of mass-killings in Swat. The withholding of a small amount of aid was announced at the same time as a $2 billion aid package (Schmitt and Sanger, 2010).

While the United States has been understandably loath to take action against Pakistan's army for an array of shortcomings (e.g. supporting the Afghan Taliban and groups like Lashkar-e-Taiba and the Haqqani Network while receiving U.S. assistance to fight the war on terror), the United States has substantively lessened our dependence upon Pakistan in recent months. The United States should take the Leahy Amendment, and other provisions of US law pertaining to human rights abuses and support of terrorist groups, more seriously and develop the domestic will to enforce them.

However, while Balochistan is strategically important to the United States (as well as Iran and Afghanistan and even India), what is happening within the province is largely a Pakistani internal affair. In principle, there is nothing wrong that cannot be remedied within the country's embattled constitutional framework given a genuine commitment by all relevant parties and state willingness to exert proper governance and law and order—with appropriate external pressure. *Given the ethnic diversity of the province, its complicated history, and the existing geographic constraints, an independent Balochistan is untenable and proposals on this point will not be entertained by this author*. However

Pakistan should be encouraged by all means of suasion to normalize relations with this important province and reverse decades of mismanagement, state-sponsored violence, and even predation by the center.

Unfortunately, one of the down sides of this hearing is that it comes at a time when U.S.-Pakistan relations could not be more strained and when U.S. ability to successfully prosecute its varied interests in the region could not be more in question given public exhaustion with the eleven-year war in Afghanistan as well as an ongoing global and domestic financial crisis. With some of the rhetoric surrounding this hearing and intimated U.S. "….support for a Balochistan carved out of Pakistan to diminish [Pakistan's] radical power," (Gohmert and Rohrabacher, 2012) it is easy to lose focus upon the real issues in Balochistan. Thus the U.S. government would be behooved to not make this an issue that further complicates the tough road ahead for U.S. diplomacy with respect to an obdurate set of security risks that inhere in Pakistan and will continue to do so for any foreseeable future.

Turning to Pakistan and its ability to bringing about some change in the wretched prevailing situation, one important proposed step that needs to be fully executed is the initiative undertaken in 2009 by the current civilian government called "Aghaz-e-Haqooq-e-Balochistan" (Beginning of Right in Balochistan). This is a package of constitutional, economic, political, and administrative reforms, motivated by an understanding that the government has failed to empower the provinces, as called for in the 1973 constitution. This scheme—if fully implemented—would require the government to: obtain the consent of the provincial government before undertaking any major project; compensate communities displaced by violence; increase the representation of Baloch in the civil service; and grant provincial and local government authorities a greater share of revenues (Human Rights Watch, 2011a). The package also calls for a temporary hold on construction of controversial military outposts and the replacement of the military in the province by the Frontier Corps (which recruits locally even though its officers come from the Pakistan army). Law and order operations would be placed under the control of the chief minister. The initiative also calls for investigations of targeted killings and other murders as well as into the cases of persons who have "disappeared," and for the immediate release of all persons who are detained without charges. Reflecting at least some degree of commitment, the federal government released Rs. 12 billion (roughly $140 million) in outstanding debts from Balochistan's natural gas revenues and announced a Rs. 152 billion ($1.77 billion) budget for the province. It also announced a judicial inquiry into the killing of Nawab Akbar Bugti and other Baloch political leaders (Human Rights Watch, 2011b).

Another important step is the 2010 Eighteenth Amendment which provides for greater devolution of powers from the center to the provinces and further to sub-provincial governance institutions (Council on Foreign Relations, 2010). The process of devolution is ongoing but has not been without problems. Without proper taxation. One critic (Bangash, 2011) argues that the "The 18th Amendment, rather than improving the centre-provincial equation in terms of more provincial autonomy, has further exacerbated the problem. Without sufficient taxation powers, the provinces will never have enough funds to effectively run the subjects currently being devolved, nor would they be able to control the rate of taxes in response to the conditions of their province." He also believes that devolving control of the natural and mineral resources in the varied provinces exacerbates rather than mitigates tensions and

results in negligible provincial revenue generation and concomitant development. Another observer (Bhutta 2011) has noted recently that Balochistan in particular is actually worse after devolution.

These moves by the center are important, and will be even more so if they are fully executed with adequate attention to the provinces ability to raise revenue. Unfortunately, fractured politics and inadequate capacity at the provincial level may well undermine national efforts. This is particularly acute in Balochistan. First, few politicians in the Baloch Provincial Assembly bother to show up for work. In 2008, I spent several hours with a member of the provincial assembly who told me bluntly that she had no interest in legislating. She is not alone. The Balochistan state assembly frequently cannot conduct business because it lacks a quorum (Baloch, 2011). Second, in the past, provincial bureaucracies have had trouble executing their budgets due to human capital and other capacity constraints (author interviews with provincial educational officials in 2008). Simply augmenting the budget without expanding capacity is unlikely to translate into substantial improvements to any of Balochistan's abysmal metrics. Third, it is difficult to envision the recruitment of sufficient teachers or other service providers for this chronically underserved population without going outside the province. Similarly, non-local civil servants will likely be necessary to increase government capacity. In other words, there is an immediate need for external assistance in human service provision, even though in the future the province should eventually produce its own public servants.

If Balochistan is ever to transition from its current state of underdevelopment, those Baloch nationalists who are using violence as a cool of coercion must put down their weapons. Targeted killing based upon ethnicity is abhorrent under all circumstances irrespective of the motivation or identity of the murderer. At the same time, the state needs to abandon its preferred militarized conflict resolution techniques in preference to engaging legitimate grievances, fortify its commitment to its own constitution, continue devolution of power (and revenue generation) to the provinces, and pursue good faith efforts to expand development opportunities for all of its citizens. These are tall orders that should not foster optimism. However, the United States working with its partners can use select instruments of its national powers to encourage Pakistan to the right thing.

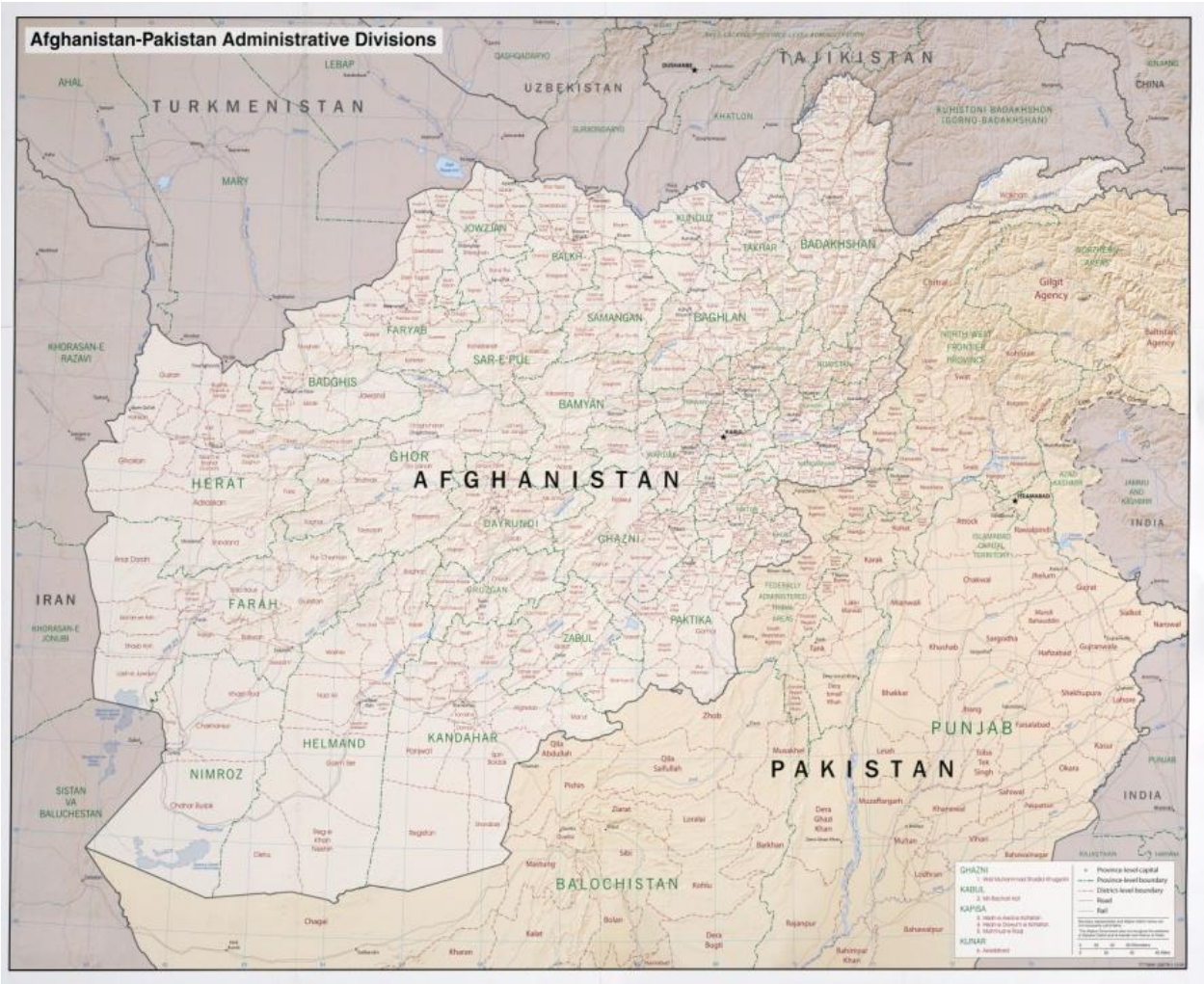
[i] Pakistan's senate has 100 members. Each of the four provinces (Balochistan, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab and Sindh) have 22; the Federal Capital of Islamabad has four and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas have eight. (Senate of Pakistan, 2012).

Table 1. Demographic Indicators -1998 Census

Indicator	***Pakistan***	**Balochistan**	Punjab	Sindh	KPK	FATA	Federal Territory of Islamabad
Literacy rate*	***44%***	**25%**	47%	45%	35%	17%	73%
Unemployment Rate*	***20%***	**33%**	19%	14%	27%	NA	16%
Percent of households using electricity for lighting**	***91%***	**72%**	93%	90%	93%	NA	98%
Use wood or charcoal for cooking**	***65%***	**66%**	41%	45%	76%	NA	23%
Use piped water as main source of drinking water**	***32%***	**35%**	24%	43%	45%	NA	NA
Using flush toilets**	***86%***	**31%**	72%	62%	62%	NA	96%
Human Development Index (2005)***	***0.62***	**0.56**	0.67	0.63	0.61	NA	NA

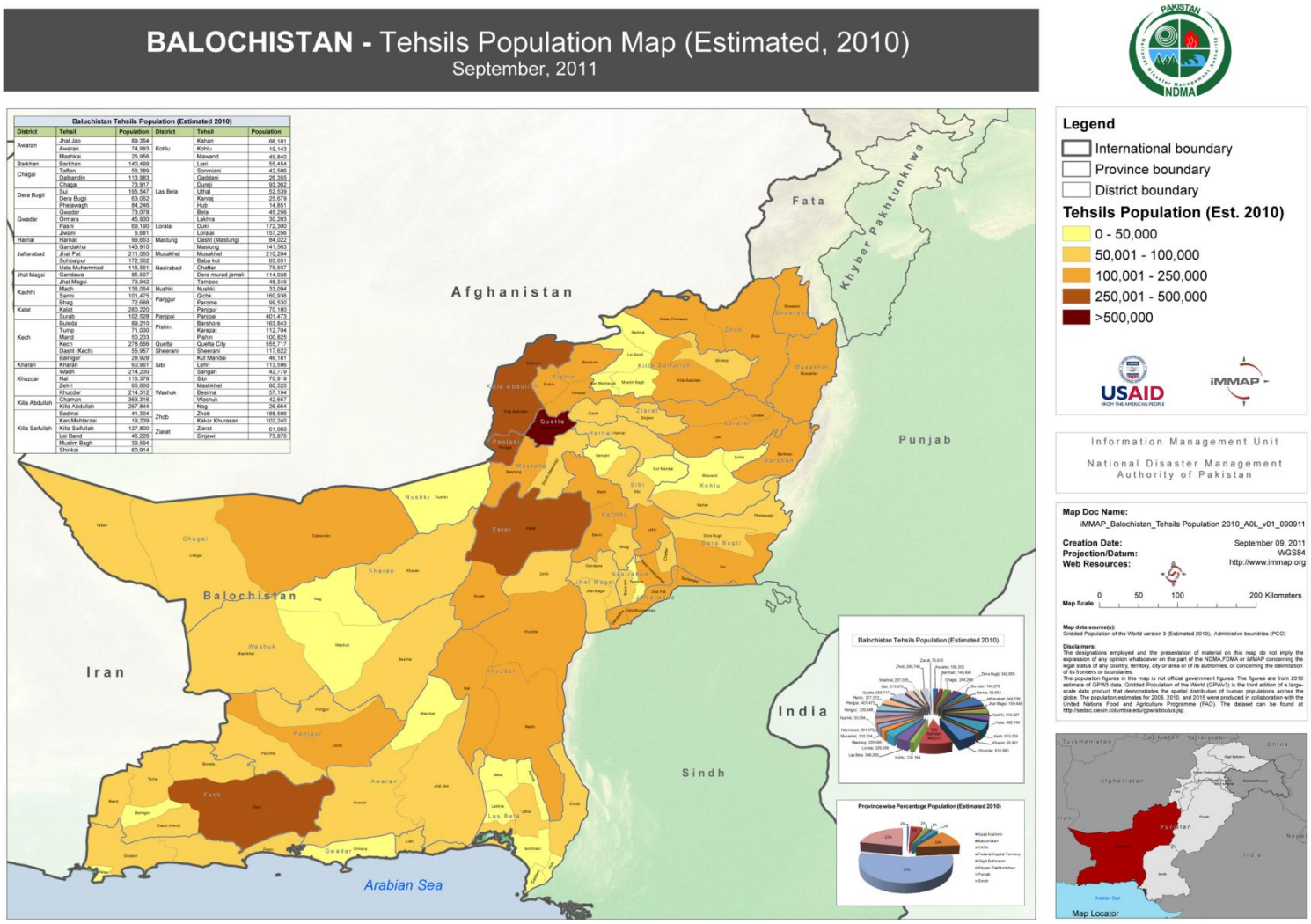
Sources: * Pakistan Census, "DEMOGRAPHIC INDICATORS - 1998 CENSUS," http://www.census.gov.pk/DemographicIndicator.htm (accessed February 5, 2012).
** Government f Pakistan, Statistics Division, Federal Bureau of Statistics, *Pakistan Social And Living Standards Measurement Survey (2010-11) National / Provincial / District,* Chapter 4. "Housing, Water Supply and Sanitation," http://www.pbs.gov.pk/content/pakistan-social-and-living-standards-measurement-survey-pslm-2010-11-provincial-district-0 (accessed February 5, 2012).
***Haroon Jamal and Amir Jahan Khan, "Trends in Regional Human Development Indices," SPDC Research Report No. 73, July 2007, http://www.spdc.org.pk/Publications/Research%20Reports/RR-73.pdf (accessed February 5, 2012).

Map 1. Balochistan and Afghanistan



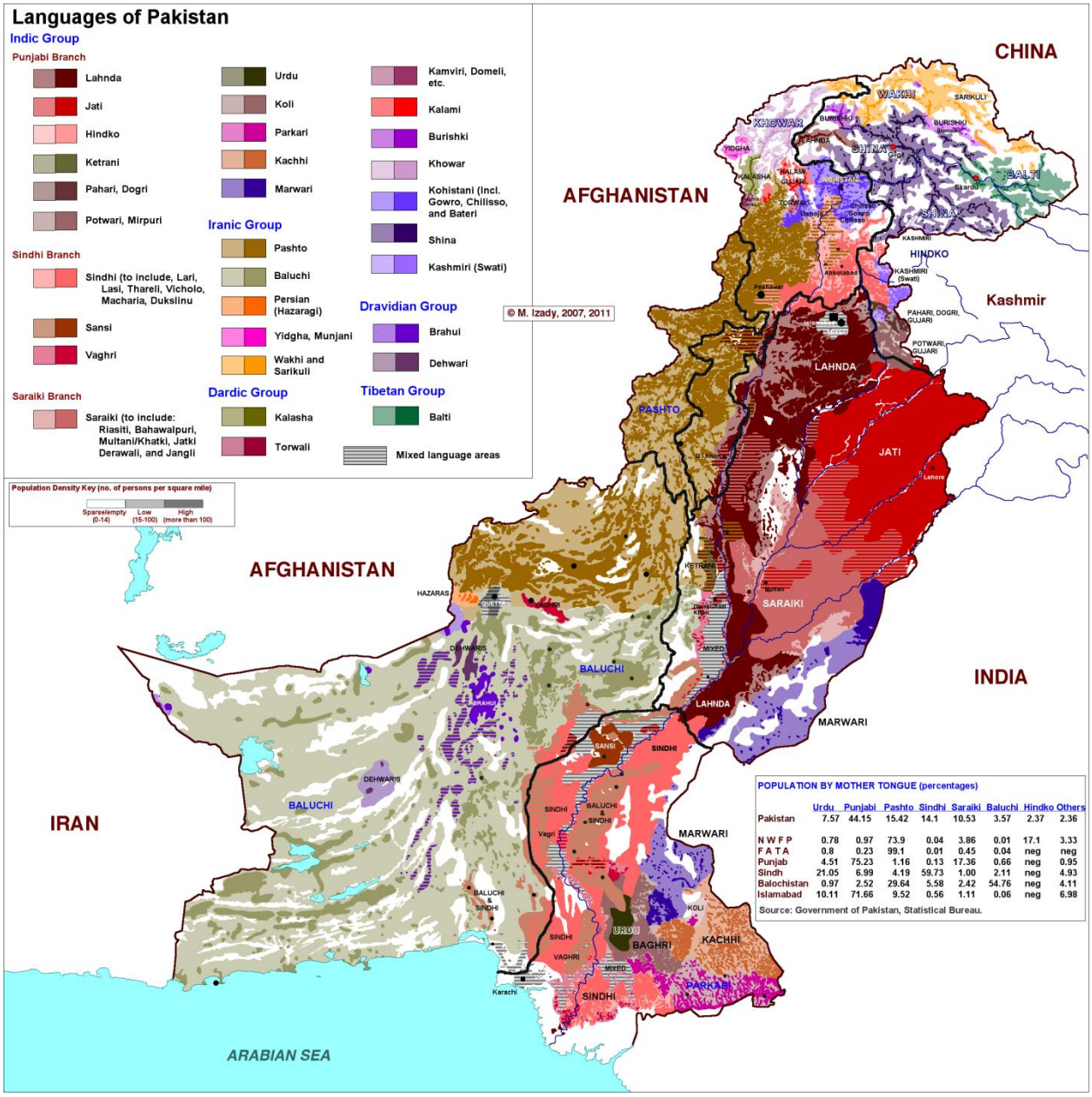
Source: Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection at the University of Texas, Austin http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/middle_east_and_asia/txu-oclc-300481561-afghan_paki_admin_2008.jpg.

Map 2. Balochistan Population by Tehsil



Source: IMMAP, http://www.immap.org/files/maps/395.jpg.

Map 3. Languages of Pakistan



	Urdu	Punjabi	Pashto	Sindhi	Saraiki	Baluchi	Hindko	Others
Pakistan	7.57	44.15	15.42	14.1	10.53	3.57	2.37	2.36
N W F P	0.78	0.97	73.9	0.04	3.86	0.01	17.1	3.33
F A T A	0.8	0.23	99.1	0.01	0.45	0.04	neg	neg
Punjab	4.51	75.23	1.16	0.13	17.36	0.66	neg	0.95
Sindh	21.05	6.99	4.19	59.73	1.00	2.11	neg	4.93
Balochistan	0.97	2.52	29.64	5.58	2.42	54.76	neg	4.11
Islamabad	10.11	71.66	9.52	0.56	1.11	0.06	neg	6.98

Source: Columbia University, School of International and Public Affairs, http://gulf2000.columbia.edu/images/maps/Pakistan_Baluchistan_Linguistic_lg.jpg.

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