

# Pakistan Caught in British-Saudi Plan To Dismember the Country

by Ramtanu Maitra

June 9—The ongoing disintegration of Pakistan is not just a matter of penetration of the military and the intelligence services by forces friendly to the Taliban, but is the direct result of British-Saudi collusion—with the help of U.S.-based co-conspirators—to partition the country into a potpourri of ethnic entities.

Let us review the deteriorating security situation over the past weeks:

The May 22 raid by militants into Pakistan's Mehran Naval Base is an indicator that the country's security has become merely notional, and that Pakistan is under attack from within by a formidable foe. The daring raid by six alleged militants, two of whom are still at large, included a rampage through the base, destroying two highly prized Orion PC-3 multi-role naval planes and killing at least 11 Naval officers. It took Pakistani security forces 16 hours to end the raid, killing four security personnel. Seventeen foreigners inside the base, including 11 Chinese technicians, were unhurt.

The attack is similar to a raid in October 2009, in which Taliban militants laid siege to the Army headquarters in the garrison town of Rawalpindi, killing dozens. Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), a militant group that was formed in the tribal areas of Pakistan bordering Afghanistan to spearhead operations against the Pakistani military in the aftermath of the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan, claimed responsibility for the raid. Pakistani officials claim that both the Mehran Naval Base and the 2009 attack were coordinated by the TTP and an al-Qaeda leader, Ilyas Kashmiri, a Britain-linked terrorist.

While Pakistan's security is breached almost every day throughout the country, the Mehran Naval Base attack is considered more than an exercise by the militants to flex their muscles, but a serious attempt to hurt the country and convey the message that they have their accomplices throughout Pakistan's security and military apparatus.

One analyst pointed out that the fact that such raids continue to take place, and that the security forces and intelligence agencies continue to be taken by surprise, should add to the concerns of the international community regarding the physical security of Pakistan's nuclear facilities. There could be people inside them who are sympathizers of al-Qaeda and the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LET), and who would facilitate an act of terrorism involving the use of nuclear material seized from such establishments.

## U.S. Drone Attacks

There are now regular attacks into Pakistan from across the border by the insurgents in Afghanistan, and by U.S. drone attacks from the air, aimed at eliminating militant leaders operating in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) along the border. Many of the American targets are TTP and other Pakistani militant groups, while the Afghan insurgents have set the Pakistani military as their target. For instance, on June 9, more than 100 militants stormed a security checkpoint in northwestern Pakistan, killing at least eight soldiers, officials said. The attack happened near the town of Makeen in the tribal district of South Waziristan, near the Afghan border. The area has seen a surge in missile strikes by U.S. drones in recent days.

These drone attacks may have eliminated a number of terrorists, or suspected terrorists, but they have also provoked an intense animosity between the Pakistani military and the local people. The U.S. government, led by the CIA's Special Activities Division, has been carrying out drone attacks since 2004. Islamabad publicly condemns these attacks, but has secretly shared intelligence with the Americans, and also allegedly allowed the drones to operate from Shamsi Airfield in Pakistan until April 21, 2011, when 150 Americans left the base.

The Brookings Institution suggests that drone

FIGURE 1  
**Pakistan's FATA and NWFP Provinces,  
 Where U.S. Drones Are Hitting**



Creative Commons/Pahari Sahib

strikes may kill “10 or so civilians” for every militant killed. The Pakistani military has stated that most of those killed were hardcore al-Qaeda and Taliban militants. According to secret cables from WikiLeaks, Pakistani Army Chief Ashfaq Parvez Kayani not only tacitly agreed to the drone flights, but in 2008, requested that the Americans increase them. However, Pakistani Interior Minister Rehman Malik said, “Drone missiles cause collateral damage. A few militants are killed, but the majority of victims are innocent citizens.”

These strikes have increased substantially under President Barack Obama. Generally, the unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) used are MQ-1 Predators and more recently MQ-9 Reapers firing AGM-114 Hellfire missiles.

Here is a quick round-up of the reported drone attacks, and the casualties these attacks caused, during May and early June (see **Figure 1**):

**May 6:** 12-15 people are killed and several injured

at Dua Toi, North Waziristan, in the first such attack since the killing of Osama bin Laden on May 2.

**May 10:** Four suspected militants are killed in an attack near Angoor Adda village in South Waziristan. According to Public Multimedia, two missiles hit a vehicle in the village, wounding four. An unnamed Pakistani official said three of those killed were “Arabs.”

**May 12:** 5-8 suspected militants are killed when a U.S. drone fires two missiles into a vehicle in North Waziristan. Pakistani officials stated that some of those killed were “foreigners,” according to the *Long War Journal*.

**May 13:** Five are killed when at least 4 missiles strike a vehicle in Doga Madakhel village in North Waziristan.

**May 16:** Two strikes in Mir Ali in North Waziristan kill ten suspected militants.

**May 20:** Two missiles fired by drones kill six people in North Waziristan.

**May 23:** Drone strike on a vehicle on the outskirts of Mir Ali in North Waziristan kills seven suspected militants.

**June 3:** Drone strike in Ghwakhwa area of South Waziristan kills nine militants.

**June 6:** Three drone strikes kill 16-21 people. Unnamed Pakistani intelligence officials claim that they were suspected militants.

**June 8:** Five missiles strike a militant compound in Zoynarai village in North Waziristan, near the border with South Waziristan, killing 15-23 suspected militants.

In other words, steady drone attacks have killed at least 80 individuals, some of them possibly of Arab origin, during these five weeks.

### Disintegration of Pakistan

Because of the powerful forces, both inside and outside Pakistan, operating at odds with a feeble democratic government and a heavily penetrated Pakistani security establishment, the question arises whether Pakistan will be able to survive as a unified nation for long. There is no question that the country has become virtually ungovernable, and that its economic situation is getting increasingly perilous; the absence of any stable national institution makes the country’s disintegration a genuine concern.

In a recent article in the Indian military journal *Aak-*

FIGURE 2  
**The Durand Line: Border of Afghanistan-Pakistan**



CIA/Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection

The red line (dark in black and white) is the Durand Line, the internationally recognized border between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Poorly marked, it was cut by the British and agreed to by the Emir of Afghanistan in 1893. It slices through ethnic Pushtun (Pashtun) areas, and established the “Great Game” buffer zone between British and Russian imperial interests in the region.

rosh, analyst Vijay K. Nair pointed out that British-Saudi authorities are in the process of negotiating with what they portray as the “moderate” Taliban, who can be induced to share power with Afghan President Hamid Karzai in the post-U.S.-NATO Afghanistan. “By categorizing some Taliban as ‘moderate,’ what Britain and the Saudis are presenting to Washington in particular is

those Taliban who have been indoctrinated with the extreme Wahhabi version of orthodox Islam, propagated solely by the kingdom of Saudi Arabia. These Taliban are all ethnic Pashtuns, who would be induced to demand a ‘Pashtunistan,’ with the objective of joining the Pashtuns of Afghanistan and Pakistan, using the ethno-religious identity of the Pashtuns of the two different countries separated by the nonfunctional Durand Line [see Figure 2].

“Eventually, the formation of such a Pashtun nation will result in the Balkanization of Afghanistan, since the ethnic groups that represent the Northern Alliance will find no reason to remain within Pashtunistan as second-class citizens and would be agreeable to a state of their own. This would be possible only if there is an assured economic patronage that would guarantee to kick-start the new states economic infrastructure and growth.

“None of these developments will happen overnight, but the seeds of these have been laid and watered well during the ongoing 10-year-old Afghan War. The geopolitical ramifications have a greater spill-off on the being of Pakistan when viewed in the light of the map of Pashtunistan projected on the Afghanistan government’s website [Figure 3]. The fragmentation of Afghanistan could result in Pakistan being reduced to two of its existing provinces, Punjab and Sindh,” Nair said.

In fact, in tune with the old British colonial concept, billboards demanding Greater Pashtunistan have appeared in recent days in Swat Valley, Dera Ismail Khan, and other areas of the North West Frontier Province (NWFP, recently renamed Khyber Pakhtunkhwa). The map of Greater Pashtunistan that is being circulating



includes Balochistan, NWFP, and Afghanistan. The Swat Valley, located in the north-eastern part of the NWFP, has already become autonomous and has imposed Wahhabi-style Islamic Sharia law, in violation of Pakistan's Constitution. For all practical purposes, Islamabad has handed the Swat Valley over to the Saudi-funded Wahhabis.

On Sept. 19, 2007, a British historian who uses the pseudonym "Rumbold" wrote: "However much we try and dress it up, both Afghanistan and Pakistan are in the midst of civil wars. In Afghanistan, the situation is serious enough to warrant thousands of foreign troops assisting the Afghan army to hunt down the remnants of the Taliban and their allies. In Pakistan, tens of thousands of Pakistani troops, demoralized and under constant attack, are attempting to fight Al-Qaeda, local tribes and fugitive Taliban.

"Both countries' governments are fighting against the same people: the Pashtuns. Most Pashtuns live in Afghanistan and in the part of Pakistan known as the North West Frontier Province (NWFP). My proposal (albeit not a novel one), is to create a Pashtun homeland based in the NWFP and a sizeable section of Afghanistan."

Rumbold went on to say: "Partition in South Asia has had a chequered history, but it should be pointed out that the reason why the Pashtuns do not have their own country is because the British and Russians carved it up during the Great Game so that a buffer state could be created between British and Russian territory."

### Not the British-Saudi Axis Only

In the United States too, one hears the echo of this British-Saudi plan to dismember Pakistan. For in-

FIGURE 3  
**The Afghanistan Government's Version**



Afghanistan government website

*Kabul claims that the FATA and NWFP areas of Pakistan, which are populated primarily by Pashtuns, rightfully belong to Afghanistan (labeled "Pashtunistan" on the map). The 1893 Durand Line was supposed to expire in 100 years, and Kabul refused to renew the treaty when it expired.*

stance, in the July-September 2008 issue of the U.S. *Military Intelligence Journal*, an article titled "Secessionist Jihad: The Taliban's struggle for Pash-tunistan," by Michael D. Holmes, pointed out: "One of the reasons for our failure to subdue the Taliban insurgency may be that we have not identified the proper causes behind it. We have labeled the Taliban a jihadist movement and ascribed motives to them based on religious traditionalist goals, in part because that is what the Taliban itself has stated. But had we looked deeper, we might have found that the root causes behind the enduring and resilient nature of the Taliban have very little to do with religion, and much to do with an ancient ethnic struggle between the Pashtun people, and virtually everyone else in the region. . . .

"By mentally segregating the Taliban as an 'Afghan' problem, by not addressing their roots of support inside the border with Pakistan, and by ignoring the obvious truth of their largely homogeneous ethnic composition, I believe that we have misdiagnosed not only the nature of their insurgency, but also the best way to deal with that insurgency. This approach has put us on the path of treating the symptom, but not the disease.

"As a result of this imprecision, we have applied a series of remedies designed to combat religious extremism (but not ethnic separatism) with lackluster results. However, had we correctly identified the ethnic nature of this conflict early on, and applied remedies designed to counter and combat an ethnic secessionist insurgency, and in so doing faced that transnational nature of 'Pashtunistan,' we would very likely have been more effective in combating them.

"Up to this point, we have viewed the Taliban as a Jihadist Muslim insurgency, composed largely of Pash-

tun tribesmen. I argue that what we should be doing is viewing and, more importantly, treating the Taliban as a Pashtun ethnic insurgency, composed largely of Jihadist Muslims.”

### Could It Get Worse?

The primary reason that Pakistan is in such difficulty now, is that its so-called only institution, the military, had walked in lockstep with Britain and Saudi Arabia, driven by its zeal to remain in power forever by projecting India as its mortal enemy. These two forces who have different geopolitical agendas: Britain wants not only an independent Kashmir in order to position itself on the driver’s seat at a highly strategic location, but also to seek control of Pashtunistan, if that comes into being. Saudi Arabia, on the other hand, wants to spread its vicious doctrine of Wahhabism so as to secure control of the majority Muslims, who are Sunnis. The intrusion by these forces has not only kept such regional nations as Iran, Russia, and India out of Pakistan’s circle of friends, but it has opened up Pakistan for subversion and chaos.

If the Pashtuns of Pakistan and the Pashtuns of Afghanistan join hands, with the help of the British and the Saudis, while the Pakistani military, under pressure because of the threatened dismemberment of the nation, indulges in large-scale killing of the Pashtun population, as it did in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) in 1971, it is not unlikely that Balochistan will also become a center of a secessionist movement.

For decades now, different Baloch organizations, demanding greater autonomy or independence from Pakistan, have managed to maintain their freedom struggle. An independent Balochistan will not be to the liking of either Iran or China. Iran will be exceedingly uneasy, since a large number of Baloch tribes live in Iran, bordering Balochistan and they are Sunnis in a Shi’a-majority Iran. A Sunni-dominated Balochistan would then be used by both Britain and Saudi Arabia to undermine Iran’s integrity.

Pakistan’s inability to resolve the Balochistan mess with the help of Iran is yet another indicator of who is calling the shots in Rawalpindi and Islamabad.

For different reasons altogether, China would also be opposed to the independence of the Baloch tribes. China has provided Pakistan with significant financial support to develop the Gwadar Port, on the Makran coast of Balochistan next door to the Strait of Hormuz.

It was said that long-term Chinese interest is to use the port to bring oil and gas from Iran and Arabia to West China, across the Pakistan landmass.

But the Chinese reluctance to take up further commitments in Balochistan at this point has become evident. Pakistan’s President Asif Ali Zardari, during his visit to China in July 2010, had reminded the Chinese of the Pakistani proposals for the upgrading of the Gwadar port, the construction of an oil refinery and an airport in Gwadar, and the construction of oil/gas pipelines from Gwadar to Xinjiang. At the time, China did not respond to Zardari’s request.

The Chinese reluctance to get involved in present-day Balochistan came out in the open during Pakistani Prime Minister Yusuf Raza Gilani’s May 17-20 visit to China. An analyst pointed out that the Chinese officials, for the first time, openly indicated to Gilani their lack of enthusiasm for upgrading the Gwadar commercial port, built and commissioned by them initially, into a base for the Pakistan Navy, and subsequently into a base that could be used by Chinese naval vessels operating in the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf.

## THE EURASIAN LAND-BRIDGE

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