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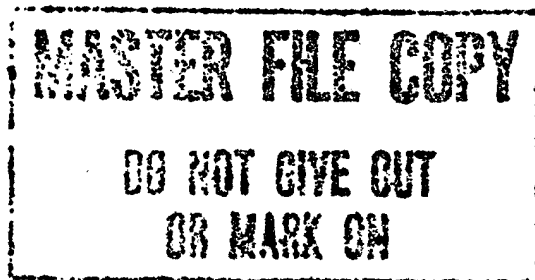


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Pakistan's Baluchistan: Prospects for Renewed Instability



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A Research Paper

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NESA 86-10012
February 1986

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Pakistan's Baluchistan: Prospects for Renewed Instability

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A Research Paper

This paper was prepared by
 Office of Near Eastern and South Asian
Analysis, with a contribution from
 Office of Central Reference. It was coordinated
with the Directorate of Operations.

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Comments and queries are welcome and may be
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[Redacted]

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**Pakistan's Baluchistan:
Prospects for Renewed
Instability** [Redacted]

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Summary

*Information available
as of 2 January 1986
was used in this report.*

Growing ethnic tensions and religious rivalries will cause an increase in violence in Pakistan's Baluchistan Province over the next year or two. The government will probably be able to cope with this unrest, but resentment of the central government will linger and the province's economic prospects will continue to be uncertain. Potentially unstable, the province will be vulnerable to Soviet subversion, especially if the government in Islamabad weakens in the post-martial-law period. [Redacted]

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Government-sponsored economic progress during the past five years has increased the material well-being of the average Baluch and done much to alleviate problems that led to full-scale revolt in Baluchistan in the mid-1970s. Baluch economic expectations, however, are likely to accelerate at a faster pace than real economic growth. Federal funding has increased the province's dependence on Islamabad and has given the central government increased control over the province, but potential budgetary constraints may force a reduction in federal funds allocated to Baluchistan. [Redacted]

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The convening of the National and provincial assemblies in March 1985 has provided peaceful outlets for Baluch grievances. Traditional Baluch autonomist aspirations remain, however, and could spark new tension now that martial law has been lifted. [Redacted]

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Separatist and nationalist sentiments remain high among some of the younger, better-educated Baluch. Tribal chiefs—the traditional power brokers in Baluchistan—resent Islamabad's undermining of their traditional authority, although they have adapted to new political rules imposed by Islamabad. [Redacted]

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A crackdown on Baluch separatists would increase anti-US sentiment among Baluch leaders and endanger US nationals in Baluchistan. Disaffected Baluch tend to see Washington as their enemy because of US ties to the government in Islamabad and US supply of military hardware to Pakistan's armed forces. In the face of government suppression, more moderate Baluch may turn to Afghanistan or the Soviet Union for support. [Redacted]

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The Soviets have maintained contact with Baluch dissidents over the past year. The most powerful pro-Soviet Baluch tribal chief lives in Afghanistan in self-imposed exile with his followers. Some of his retinue have infiltrated into Pakistan to set up rebel camps. The Soviets' willingness to increase support to this group is probably constrained by their realization that, even with outside help, the Baluch would be hard pressed to successfully challenge the Zia government. 

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Figure 1
Baluchistan Province



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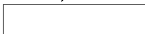
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**Pakistan's Baluchistan:
Prospects for Renewed
Instability**



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The province of Baluchistan has been relatively quiet since the Pakistani Army quelled a major insurgency in 1977, but the Baluch's strong grievances against the government in Islamabad have not disappeared. The martial law regime's measured efforts to assimilate the Baluch into the Punjabi-dominated state contributed to the province's stability. An intensive economic development program and occasional use of force have reduced Baluch dissent. If the new civilian government in Islamabad fails to meet Baluch expectations for political representation and access to economic resources, separatism, in our view, could again become a potent force.



Baluchistan has been a thorn in the side of every Pakistani government since independence. Baluchistan's leaders—mostly semifeudal chieftains—opposed the area's integration into Pakistan at independence and sought far-reaching autonomy. Shortly after Pakistan declared independence in 1947, the Khan of Kalat—the most influential Baluch leader—created the state of Kalat. Located in central Baluchistan, it was to be independent of Pakistan except in defense and foreign policy. The Pakistani Army spent almost a year subduing the rebel state. Formal accession agreements between Islamabad and the Baluch leadership were not signed until late 1948.



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A History of Discontent

Baluchistan is Pakistan's largest, least populated, and least developed province. Large stretches of the region are uninhabited, and even the inhabited portions are rugged and barren. Ethnic Baluch in the province represent about half of the estimated provincial population of 5.6 million.¹ The province's other major ethnic group, the Pushtuns, numbers about 40 percent of the population and tends to be better off than the Baluch.



Baluch tribal chiefs, known as sardars, mounted armed rebellions in 1958 and 1962 and conducted an extended insurgency from 1973 to 1977. The revolt in the mid-1970s was sparked by the policies of Prime Minister Bhutto, who, fearing a Baluch move for autonomy, dismissed the elected Baluch-controlled provincial government and arrested key Baluch leaders. During the height of this revolt, the Pakistani Government had 70,000 troops—nearly 20 percent of the Army—in the area. About 3,500 Pakistani soldiers and at least 6,000 Baluch were killed, according to press estimates. The rebellion was quieted only after then Army Chief of Staff General Zia seized the national government and reversed the policies of Prime Minister Bhutto.



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The Baluch have resented the outsiders who have ruled the region for most of its modern history—first the British from 1877 to the partition of India in 1947, and, since then, the Punjabi-dominated Government of Pakistan. Scholarly studies have shown that the Baluch have long opposed central government-sponsored development efforts that they believe are undermining their tribal culture. The Baluch believe these programs are designed to submerge Baluch ethnicity into an all-embracing Pakistani identity.



Economic Development

President Zia has resolved many of the problems that contributed to earlier violence in Baluchistan, and we believe his policies are largely responsible for the relative quiet in the province. He has taken a conciliatory approach that recognizes the sardars' authority over aspects of tribal ways of life and has allocated more funds for provincial economic development sought by Baluch leaders.



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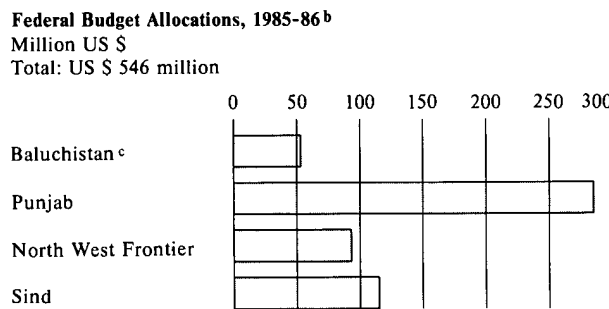
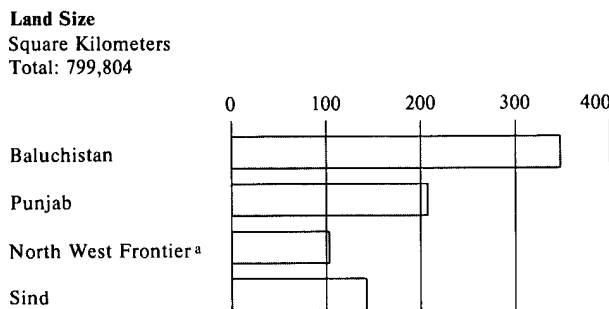
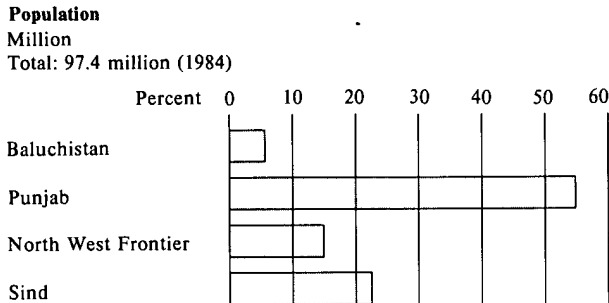
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¹ The Baluch are found mainly in western Pakistan, southwestern Afghanistan, and southeastern Iran. In addition to the Baluch in Pakistan, Western scholars estimate that 300,000 Baluch live in Afghanistan, and 500,000 to 750,000 are found in Iran.



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Figure 2
Pakistan: Provincial Comparisons



^a Includes tribal areas.
^b Pakistan fiscal year starts 1 July to June 30.
^c Plus a supplementary \$12.5 million for special development projects.

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Baluchistan has lagged behind the rest of Pakistan in development. Per capita income is about half of the national figure, according to Western diplomatic sources; health services are inadequate; and the majority of the people still support themselves by herding and subsistence agriculture. Of the province's mineral resources, only natural gas and coal are exploited.

Zia's commitment to Baluchistan's development is reflected in the growth in federal funds devoted to this purpose. These have increased fourfold since the early 1970s, and Baluchistan's share of Pakistan's development spending has increased from 8 percent in FY 1972-73 (July-June) to 10 percent in FY 1985-86. Development expenditures for FY 1985-86 are to increase by 14 percent over the previous fiscal year, with most funding to be used for water facilities and schools. Furthermore, the US Consulate in Karachi reports that each member of Baluchistan's provincial assembly, which was elected in early 1985, has received about \$500,000 from the federal government for discretionary purposes.

Islamabad has sought foreign aid for Baluchistan's development. Foreign assistance for development projects in Baluchistan has come from the United States, the United Kingdom, and Kuwait, and other countries are looking into underwriting development projects, according to US officials.

The primary emphasis of Zia's development program is on the economic infrastructure (extending the road network, drilling tube wells for water, building irrigation systems, and expanding the electric power network). The increase in federal largess has increased the province's dependence on Islamabad and created a rationale for cooperation with Zia's regime. In 1983, President Zia opened a gas pipeline from the main line in central Pakistan to Quetta, the capital of Baluchistan. This was a key demand of the Baluch, who resented the fact that the province's most valuable resource was supporting industries in Punjab and Sind Provinces, but not in Baluchistan.

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Figure 3. Baluch tribesmen in Quetta. [redacted]



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Detribalization

Development has reduced the influence of the tribal chiefs. In the past, the sardar was judged on his abilities as a warrior-leader and was considered the embodiment of tribal independence. Western scholars and diplomats note that a good sardar is now judged on his ability to represent tribal interests to the authorities, to wheel and deal with the bureaucracy, and to take advantage of new opportunities for acquiring resources. Government officials in Baluchistan assert that the dilemma among tribal chiefs is whether to be "left behind by history" or make peace with the central government and retain some of their authority. [redacted]

US diplomatic reporting indicates that the provincial governor of Baluchistan during 1984-85, Lt. Gen. K. K. Afridi, brought local leaders and groups into closer touch with Islamabad, unlike his predecessors. President Zia made a short, peaceful tour of Baluchistan in November 1984 and met with tribal leaders, according to US diplomatic reporting. [redacted]

Some Baluch tribal resentment toward the central government remains. The fiercely independent Marri

tribe is suspicious of government intentions, according to US Embassy reporting, and is reluctant to allow the establishment of major road projects in its tribal areas, fearing that such projects would displace the indigenous Baluch population. Islamabad temporarily ceased construction of a major road in 1983 that passes through Marri territory to avoid a confrontation with the tribe, [redacted]

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Emigration

Emigration to other parts of Pakistan, as well as to the oil-rich Persian Gulf states, is contributing both to detribalization and to modernization among Pakistan's Baluch. No longer must a Baluch depend solely on his tribe for support and security. Even if a tribesman does not choose to migrate, the knowledge that this option is available weakens tribal authority. Remittances from migrants to relatives still living within tribal areas provide a measure of economic independence by creating small centers of economic power not directly controlled by local tribal leaders. [redacted]

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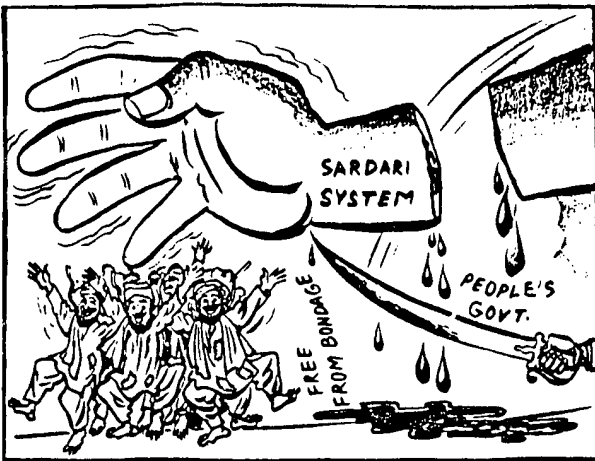
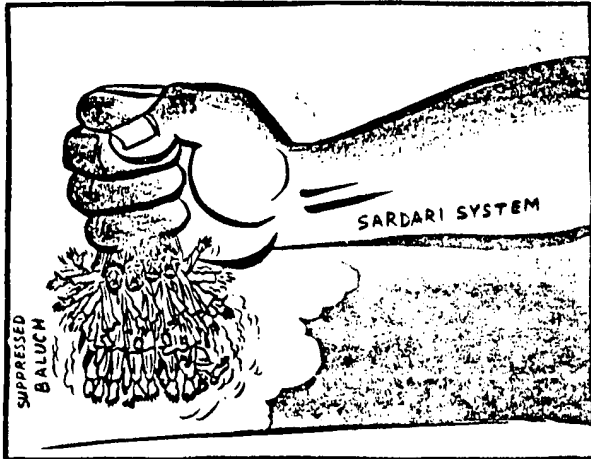


Figure 4. Pakistani Government propaganda against sardar system during Bhutto era.

In our view, emigration has provided a safety valve for the Pakistani Baluch's population and unemployment pressures. The number of Baluch who have emigrated during the last 100 years is estimated at 1.5 million, a figure based on estimates of expected natural increase in population. About half of these migrated to the Indus valley lowlands and half to the Persian Gulf and East African coastal regions. The number of Baluch living outside Baluchistan may exceed the estimated 2.8 million living within the province. At least 1.5 million Baluch are settled in Sind and Punjab Provinces.

A large but unknown number of Baluch live in the Persian Gulf states and elsewhere outside Pakistan.

Historically, most migrants have come from the western Baluch tribes. Migration from the Kharan, Makran, and Lasbela districts has apparently offset an estimated 2.5- to 3-percent annual natural increase in population;

More recently, the construction boom in Karachi and the Gulf states has attracted migrants from the eastern hill districts, draining the traditional areas of Baluch dissidence and easing job competition, which is a source of tension. Leaner economic times in the Persian Gulf region, however, are probably reversing this trend and forcing some Baluch to return to Baluchistan.

Destabilizing Factors

Baluch-Pushtun-Punjabi Tensions

The influx into Baluchistan of some 400,000 Afghan refugees since 1979, mostly Pushtuns, increases the chances for significant unrest, in our view. Western diplomats report that the Baluch see Afghan refugees, who were once welcomed as persecuted Muslims, as competitors for jobs and land.

The Baluch also have long been concerned that many of Punjab's 55 million inhabitants will increasingly look to Baluchistan as a potential home. Punjabis already dominate the commerce and administration of Baluchistan as roads have penetrated formerly inaccessible areas. Immigrant Punjabi landholders and retired military officers from Pakistan's other three provinces have acquired much of the newly irrigated land in Baluchistan.

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The Physical and Human Geography of Baluchistan

Topography

Baluchistan is the westernmost province of Pakistan and covers an area of 347,188 square kilometers. The terrain alternates between mountains, with some peaks rising to 1,830 meters, and broad expanses of barren, sandy desert. Baluchistan has a few fertile areas near the rivers and the Arabian Sea, but the rest of the region receives less than 25 centimeters of rain a year. The province's 965-kilometer coast has three harbors at Ormara, Pasni, and Gwadar, which are relatively undeveloped, although the Pakistanis are constructing jetties at Ormara and Pasni in addition to the one already built at Gwadar.

The interior districts of Kalat, Khuzdar, Lasbela, Sibi, Kohlu, Kachhi, and Nasirabad comprise a third zone. This region is home to the large Baluch tribes such as the Brohi, Marri, Mengal, and Bugti, whose chiefs rule with little deference to outside authority.

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The fourth zone is near the Makran Coast (Gwadar, Turbat, Panjgur, and Kharan districts) that borders the Arabian Sea. The Baluch who inhabit the Makran coastal area are more progressive and detribalized than those in interior Baluchistan and play a marginal role in Baluch politics.

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Population

Baluchistan is divided into four distinct population zones characterized by ethnic, geographic, economic, and historic differences. The northern area is inhabited by Pushtuns. The districts of Pishin, Zhob, and Loralai have absorbed the majority of the 350,000 to 450,000 Afghans who have entered the province since 1979.

Economy

The province's economy is primarily pastoral and nomadic, with fishing and smuggling along the coast. In recent years, significant mineral and energy development has occurred, a major example being the Sui gasfield and pipeline, which supply natural gas to Punjab and to Karachi, Pakistan's major port.

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Quetta, the provincial capital and major city, represents a second zone. Most of the 400,000 people in the city are Pushtuns.

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Figure 5
Population Density in Baluchistan Province by District, 1981



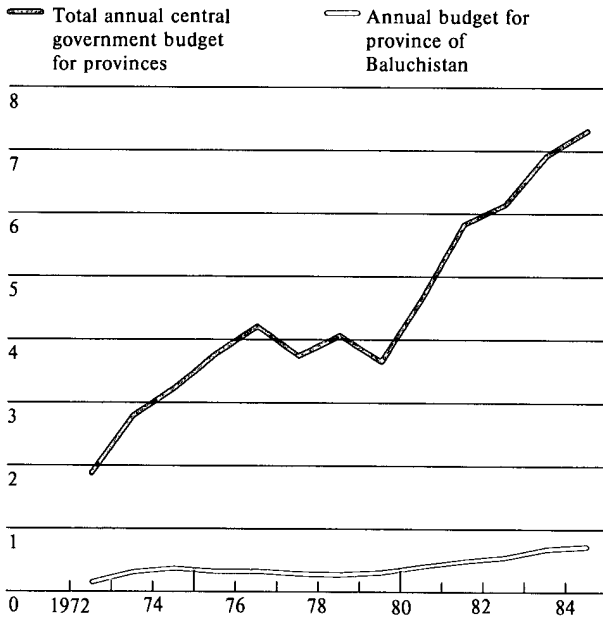
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Figure 6
Baluchistan: Progression of
Development Funds, 1972-85^a

Pakistani rupees in billions



^a Fiscal year is from 1 July to June 30.

[Redacted]

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Figure 7. Street scene in
Quetta. [Redacted]



Separatist Sentiments

Baluch separatists remain active, but, with the major leaders either under arrest or in exile, we do not believe these dissidents can transform Baluch discontent into action against the government. With the lifting of martial law and a civilian government returning to power at the end of 1985, however, Baluch separatism may gain strength if the Baluch cannot compete with the more populous provinces for resources. [Redacted]

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Groups gathered in a loose political alliance called the Baluchistan People's Liberation Front (BPLF) seek to promote separatism. The front encompasses detribalized Baluch professionals, students, radical sardars and tribesmen, and former students living in Quetta who claim that Punjabi immigrants are monopolizing economic and professional opportunities in Baluchistan. About 1,700 fighters belonging to the militant Marri tribe are located in BPLF camps inside Afghanistan, according to a usually knowledgeable Western scholar. Khair Bakhsh Marri, the leader of the Marri tribe, has been in self-imposed exile in Kabul since 1982 and maintains strong links to the BPLF. [Redacted]

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Figure 8
Major Ethnic Groups and Tribes in Baluchistan Province



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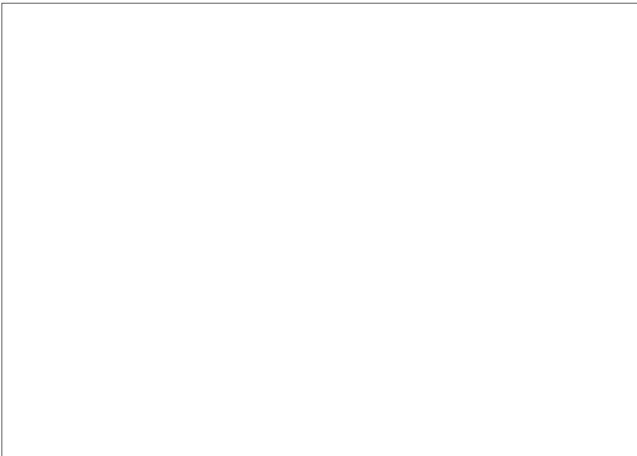
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Figure 9. Bazaar in Quetta. [redacted]

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The Baluchistan Students' Organization (BSO) is a loose collection of Baluch students who also advocate Baluch separatism. [redacted]

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[redacted] The BSO has gone largely underground since Zia banned political activity in 1979 and appears to be losing strength, according to US diplomatic reporting. [redacted]

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Cooperation between Baluch and Sindhi separatists poses a potential threat to political stability in Baluchistan. Both groups share an anti-Punjabi interest, and both fear gradual Punjabi encroachment upon their home provinces. Exiled Baluch leader A. K. Mengal in mid-1985 helped form the Sind/Pushtun/Baluch Front, which advocates a confederal structure for Pakistan. The civil disobedience campaign sponsored by Zia's political opposition and the ethnic violence in Sind in August-September 1983 failed to arouse much of a response among the Baluch. Baluch [redacted] supported Sindhi aspirations for increased autonomy but believed that the Sindhi opposition's acceptance of the 1973 Constitution, which calls for strong federal authority, would do little to further Baluch autonomy. [redacted]

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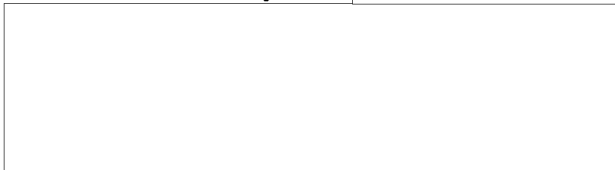
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We doubt that the Marri rebels can convince many Baluch tribesmen to join them in an insurgency because of intertribal rivalries and also because most Baluch are probably aware that a new insurgency would invite a military crackdown similar to that in 1977. There have been no major incidents of antigovernment violence perpetrated by militant Baluch tribesmen since January 1983. [redacted]



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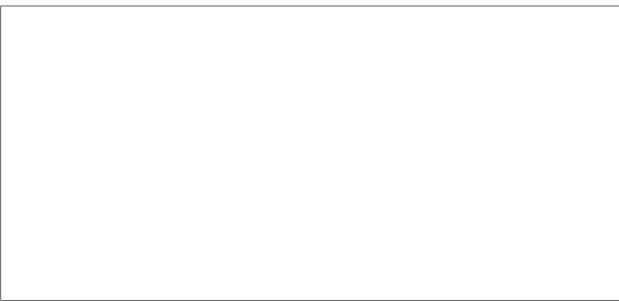
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Major Baluch Dissident Groups

The Baluch People's Liberation Front (BPLF) endorses armed struggle and employs Marxist rhetoric in its advocacy of an independent "greater Baluchistan" encompassing parts of Pakistan, Iran, and Afghanistan. Formed in 1976 by hardcore supporters of the 1973-77 insurgency, the BPLF moved into Afghanistan in 1977, where it has been supported by successive Afghan regimes. [redacted]

[redacted] some 1,700 Baluch tribesmen affiliated with the BPLF are in Afghanistan with several thousand sympathizers in Pakistan. [redacted] the BPLF has strong links to Marri Chief Khair Bakhsh Marri. [redacted]

The Baluchistan Students' Organization (BSO) is the most vocal advocate of Baluch separatism and radical political and social change. The BSO staged frequent protests and engaged in minor violence at Quetta University in 1983 during the nationwide civil disobedience campaign staged by President Zia's political opposition. Most Baluch students identify with the Baluch nationalism voiced by the BSO, but we doubt the majority would support the pro-Soviet rhetoric of the far left element in the group. [redacted]



The government-estimated 3,000 BSO members, roughly half of Baluch high school and university students, are organized into chapters at the university and colleges of Baluchistan and at universities in Sind. The merger of two factions of the BSO in 1983—one had supported Khair Bakhsh Marri and the other supported Ghaus Bakhsh Bizenjo and Ataulah Mengal—may indicate a trend toward a broader antiregime coalition of student dissidents. [redacted]

The Pakistan National Party (PNP), led by former Baluchistan Governor Ghaus Bakhsh Bizenjo, was founded in 1979 and is the predominant party in Baluchistan. It stands for complete provincial autonomy with only defense, foreign affairs, and communications left to Islamabad. The PNP seeks to restructure Pakistan's administration on the basis of culture and linguistic affinity. [redacted]

The PNP traces its lineage to the old National Awami Party (NAP), which was outlawed during the Baluch insurgency in the 1970s. As heir to the NAP, Bizenjo's party enjoys considerable prestige because the NAP was the only sustained organizational vehicle for Baluch aspirations before the insurgency. The roughly 2,000 members of the PNP, [redacted] come primarily from detribalized Baluch in Quetta and smaller urban centers in the province as well as from Baluch migrants in Karachi and other parts of Sind. [redacted]

The Movement for the Restoration of Democracy (MRD), suspicious of Bizenjo's motives, has rebuffed his attempts to obtain MRD membership, according to US Embassy reporting. Consequently, the PNP is now in "association" with the MRD. Although it shares the MRD's opposition to the Zia regime, the PNP is suspicious of the MRD's dedication to Baluch provincial autonomy. The PNP has recently merged with the smaller National Progressive Party, which is the overt manifestation of the pro-Moscow Communist Party of Pakistan. [redacted]

In the 1985 elections, the PNP, like all political parties, was banned from running candidates. The ban on political parties was lifted in late 1985, but it is unlikely that the PNP will abide by restrictions, such as registration and a full audit by the government, that Islamabad has imposed. Nonetheless, we believe that in free and open provincial elections, the PNP would win strong Baluch support even if more militant Baluch groups boycotted the elections. [redacted]

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Shia-Sunni Tensions

Increasing Shia grievances toward the Sunni-dominated government in Islamabad are another destabilizing factor. Although most of Pakistan's Baluch are Sunni, many Pushtuns in Baluchistan are Shias. Like their brethren in other provinces, Shias in Baluchistan believe that the government discriminates against them and have demanded their own Islamic legal system. In July 1985, several days of fighting between Shias and police in Quetta left some 30 dead and 50 wounded, according to US Embassy reporting. The provincial government responded by arresting several hundred Shias, deporting about 70 Afghan Shia refugees to Iran, and restricting traffic across the Iranian-Pakistani border, according to US diplomatic sources. [redacted]

Meddling by Iranian zealots may have caused some of the sectarian violence in Quetta last summer. According to US diplomatic sources, local authorities in Baluchistan suspect that the Shias in Quetta were given arms by Tehran. Several Baluch members of the National Assembly publicly charged Iran with inciting the Shia rioters. Both Islamabad and Tehran tried to smooth over strains caused by the Quetta incident, according to US Embassy reports, but Pakistani suspicions of Iran, which has a long border with Baluchistan and a consulate in Quetta, are strong. [redacted]

Soviet Meddling

We believe that the Soviets are attracted to the possibility of gaining warm-water ports on the Arabian Sea on the Baluchistan coast. In our view, however, they will not risk a confrontation with a US-supported Pakistan over the issue. Furthermore, the Baluch harbors in Pakistan, principally at Gwadar, Ormara, and Pasni, are still under development by Pakistan. Only small fishing settlements are located there, they lack good access, and heavy sea conditions frequently preclude their use during the southwestern monsoon months. [redacted]

Moscow has long had contact with Baluch dissidents. [redacted] Soviet contacts with the radical tribal sardars and pro-Soviet elements of the Baluchistan Students' Organization predate the invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979. [redacted]



Figure 10. Soviet-made Kalashnikov rifle used by Baluch guerrillas. [redacted]

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Several Baluch opposition figures represent potential assets for any Soviet designs on Baluchistan. [redacted] the radical [redacted]

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tribal chief Khair Bakhsh Marri believes outside aid is necessary for a successful revolt in Baluchistan and would accept Soviet support for a new insurgency. The Pakistani press reports that Marri traveled to Moscow in January 1984. [redacted]

[redacted]

Another opposition figure, Ghaus Bakhsh Bizenjo, has called for direct talks between Islamabad and Kabul on the war in Afghanistan. Bizenjo traveled to the USSR for the Moscow Youth Festival in July 1985, according to US diplomatic reporting. [redacted]

Afghanistan provides the Soviets with a contiguous base and long border for infiltrating aid to Baluch dissidents. In our view, however, continued strong Afghan insurgent pressures on Soviet forces and lines of communication inhibit Moscow's ability to increase dramatically its involvement in Baluchistan. We believe most Baluch leaders, who closely monitor events in Afghanistan, distrust Soviet long-term objectives in Baluchistan and are wary of accepting substantial support from Moscow. [redacted]

Return to Civilian Rule

The coming to power of a civilian government in Islamabad will probably make it more difficult for Baluchistan to attract the federal government's attention. Punjabis are a majority in the National Assembly, and they may be less sensitive to Baluch concerns than the previous military government. President Zia will probably continue to push for high levels of development funds to Baluchistan, but the other provinces will also demand larger allocations of government resources. Budgetary constraints in the future will probably force Islamabad to level off economic aid to Baluchistan. [redacted]

Will Instability Return?

We believe Baluchistan will be relatively stable for the rest of the decade unless Pakistan as a whole experiences serious unrest. Although radical Baluch and disaffected Shias and Pushtuns will cause some law-and-order problems, we expect the security situation to be manageable. [redacted]

We expect, however, that ethnic and tribal violence will gradually increase in Baluchistan. The new government in Islamabad, in our opinion, will be faced with local disorders as Baluch and other ethnic groups, armed with weapons infiltrating from Afghanistan, seek to settle grievances with each other as well as with the authorities. Local paramilitary forces and, if necessary, the Army can be used to keep these fights from getting out of hand. We believe that such disorders, while not threatening the government, will hinder economic development and make the area dangerous for Western technicians. We consider unlikely another prolonged insurgency similar to that of 1973-77. Baluch separatist groups, in our judgment, are aware that Islamabad will have the authority to declare a state of national emergency and that the Army would again intervene to suppress any insurgency if civilian authority in Baluchistan seemed in danger of collapse. [redacted]

Although the Soviets almost certainly would step up covert assistance to Baluch dissidents, we do not foresee Soviet involvement deciding any conflict between the Baluch and Islamabad. In our view, Moscow is aware that Baluch separatists would have difficulty mounting a serious challenge to the Pakistani Army in Baluchistan. We believe that the Soviets also would calculate that heightened support for the Baluch would prompt increased Western and Islamic support for Islamabad. [redacted]

Alternative Scenarios

More Disruptive Development Policies

A Pakistani government without President Zia may follow more aggressive economic development policies in Baluchistan as part of an effort to displace the traditional tribal chiefs. Many Baluch would react with hostility to such a policy change and might again take up arms against federal authorities. In the face of renewed Baluch resistance to government policies, the central government might decide to dismiss the provincial government and rule directly from Islamabad or even declare a state of emergency for Baluchistan. [redacted]

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**Indicators of Possible Future Problems
in Baluchistan**

- *Budgetary pressures in Islamabad force a sharp cutback in development and current expenditures for Baluchistan.*
- *Afghan refugees begin to compete seriously with Baluch for access to scarce grazing land and water.*
- *The number of Punjabi settlers who move onto prime Baluchi agricultural lands increases substantially.*
- *Islamabad arbitrarily dismisses elected provincial officials.*
- *The government aggressively pushes economic development in tribal areas and attempts to displace the local tribal population.*
- *Exiled leaders Marri or Mengal return to Pakistan. Political linkages are established between Baluch and Sindhi separatist groups.*
- *Campus demonstrations increase among Baluch students at colleges in Quetta and Karachi.*
- *Substantially more Soviet arms appear in Baluch hands, possibly indicating a Soviet intention to back rebellion in Baluchistan.*

If fighting between federal and tribal forces was sustained, rebel Marri tribesmen in Afghanistan, aided by Soviet and Afghan arms, would probably attempt to move into Pakistan to support the Baluch insurgents. Islamabad would probably respond by requesting additional US military aid. If a civilian government could not halt a Baluch insurgency, the Army would probably step in again and reestablish martial law.

Iranian Meddling

Iran could seek to destabilize Pakistan's Baluchistan Province by supporting Shia dissidents in the Quetta area. Although we believe the present regime in Tehran is divided on promoting an Islamic revolt in Pakistan, a more radical Iranian government might increase support for Shias in Baluchistan by supplying arms and providing sanctuary for Shia dissidents. Other antiregime forces, such as the Baluch Marris, could take advantage of sectarian violence and also challenge federal and provincial authorities. We believe, however, that the Shias in Baluchistan, by themselves, are not strong enough to threaten government authority in the province.

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Implications for the United States

Increasing violence, even well short of an insurgency, poses significant risks for US nationals and other Westerners traveling in Baluchistan. We believe antiregime tribal or Shia groups would seek to capture Americans to obtain ransom, local concessions from provincial authorities, or simply embarrass Islamabad. Foreigners connected with non-US aid projects were kidnaped by Baluch tribesmen in 1985 and taken to Afghanistan and held captive, according to US diplomatic sources.

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In the worst case—full-scale revolt—the Soviets would have a much greater opportunity to meddle in Pakistani affairs. Even a relatively modest Soviet effort to funnel aid to Baluch insurgents would substantially increase the government's counterinsurgency costs and almost certainly prompt Islamabad to seek more military assistance from the United States.

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