

Baluch Nationalism and Superpower Rivalry

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Visiting Pakistan on a troubleshooting mission for President Kennedy in 1962, Henry Kissinger impatiently brushed aside a local journalist who asked him to comment on the insurgency then beginning to surface in the restless province of Baluchistan. "I wouldn't recognize the Baluchistan problem," Kissinger replied, "if it hit me in the face."¹ Until recently, Baluchistan has been all but unknown to the outside world, an obscure, exotic place of interest primarily to ethnographers and the more venturesome explorers. Since the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, however, it has suddenly been discovered by Western policymakers. Warning of the historic Russian drive for warm water ports, American officials point to Baluchistan as the most plausible example of a future Soviet target. President Carter was deliberately vague in his pledge to defend the "Persian Gulf region," but his National Security Advisor, Zbigniew Brzezinski, has specifically underlined its applicability to Baluchistan as part of a broader U.S. commitment to Pakistan.

A glance at a map of Southwest Asia quickly explains why strategically-located Baluchistan and the five million² Baluch tribesmen who live there could all too easily become a focal point of superpower conflict. Stretching across a vast desert expanse of western Pakistan and eastern Iran bigger than France, the Baluch homeland commands more than 900 miles of the Arabian Sea coastline, including the northern shores of the Straits of Hormuz. Soviet control of the Baluch coast would not only give Moscow a powerful new springboard for spreading its political influence throughout the Middle East and Southwest Asia but would also radically alter the military balance in the

1. Marvin and Bernard Kalb, *Kissinger* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1974), pp. 63-64.

2. Estimates of the total population range from less than 4 million to 30 million, depending on whether one extrapolates from official census figures in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran or accepts Baluch nationalist claims. The figure used here makes allowance for the political character of official census figures. It excludes those of Baluch ethnic origin who do not speak the Baluchi language but includes Baluchi speakers living outside of the Baluch homeland in other parts of Pakistan and Iran as well as in the Persian Gulf.

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region. Together with continued Soviet access to military facilities in South Yemen, the Soviet development of naval and air bases at Gwadar, Pasni and other Baluch ports would make it difficult, if not impossible, for the United States to defend the Straits of Hormuz in a conventional war, given the limited and conditional character of its projected military facilities in Oman, Somalia, and Kenya.

In the most familiar scenario envisaged by those who foresee further Soviet expansionism, Moscow simply sends its troops and tanks across Baluchistan to the shores of the Gulf, a distance of less than 350 miles, annexing the Baluch area directly to a Soviet-controlled "Greater Afghanistan." But this worst-case scenario completely ignores the role of the Baluch themselves and thus grossly oversimplifies the nature of the Baluchistan problem. On the one hand, it obscures the political obstacles that Moscow would confront in attempting to control the Baluch through conquest. On the other, it under-rates the danger that Moscow will pursue its objectives more flexibly through a combination of political and military means, perhaps utilizing allied Baluch groups as proxies. For example, while not ruling out the possibility of a naked Soviet thrust comparable to the Afghan invasion, Pakistani and Iranian leaders are more concerned that Moscow might help Baluch nationalist factions to achieve their long-standing goal of an independent Baluchistan through guerrilla warfare. In this scenario, Moscow would give the Baluch sophisticated weaponry, technical advisers, logistical support, and funds, but would seek to avoid the risks and costs of direct aggression. Alternatively, Moscow might seek to use the threat of a Baluch insurgency to pressure Pakistan or Iran, or both, into granting the use of Baluch ports for military purposes.

Whether or not Moscow decides to play its "Baluch card," the Baluch nationalist movement has acquired a growing momentum of its own and is likely to have an increasingly significant impact on the course of events in Southwest Asia. The Baluch bitterly resisted their forcible incorporation into Iran by Reza Shah in 1928 and later into the new state of Pakistan left behind by the British Raj in 1947. In the case of Iran, the Shah's iron repression kept the Baluch largely under control with the exception of a brief, Iraqi-supported insurgency until the Khomeini revolution led to a weakening of the central authority in 1979 and an outpouring of long suppressed nationalist feeling. In Pakistan, by contrast, Baluch insurgents have waged an on-again, off-again guerrilla struggle ever since the departure of the British, culminating in a brutal confrontation with 80,000 or more Pakistani troops from 1973 to 1977 in which some 55,000 Baluch were involved, 11,500 of them as organized

combatants. Casualty estimates during this little-known war ran as high as 3,300 Pakistani soldiers and 5,300 Baluch guerrillas killed, not to mention hundreds of non-combatants caught in the crossfire. At the height of the fighting in late 1974, U.S.-supplied Iranian combat helicopters, some manned by Iranian pilots, joined the Pakistani Air Force in raids on Baluch camps. The Baluch, for their part, did not receive substantial foreign help and were armed only with bolt-action rifles, homemade grenades and captured weaponry.

Significantly, when they started their poorly prepared insurgency in 1973, the Pakistani Baluch were not fighting for independence but rather for regional autonomy within a radically restructured, confederal Pakistani constitutional framework. By the time the shooting subsided in 1977, however, separatist feeling had greatly intensified. The wanton use of superior firepower by the Pakistani and Iranian forces, especially the indiscriminate air attacks on Baluch villages, had left a legacy of bitter and enduring hatred. Since nearly all Baluch felt the impact of Pakistani repression, the Baluch populace is now politicized to an unprecedented degree. In mid-1980, a mood of expectancy prevailed among the Baluch, a widespread desire to vindicate Baluch martial honor and a readiness to renew the struggle when and if circumstances should appear favorable.

The Historic Roots of Baluch Separatism

In order to assess the potential of Baluch nationalism as a flash point for intra-regional tensions and superpower rivalry in Southwest Asia, it is not enough to focus on the political and economic conflicts of the recent past or even to search for the roots of Baluch attitudes in the stormy encounters of the Baluch with British colonial armies. It is first necessary to understand the strength of the deeply implanted historical memories that underlie Baluch nationalism, memories of a tempestuous struggle for survival stretching back for more than 2,000 years.

According to the most widely accepted Baluch legends, the Baluch and the Kurds were kindred branches of a tribe that migrated northward from Aleppo in what is now Syria shortly before the time of Christ in search of fresh pasture lands and water sources. One school of Baluch historians attempts to link this tribe ethnically with the original Chaldean rulers of Babylon;

another with the early Arabs.³ In any case, there is agreement that the Kurds headed toward Iraq, Turkey, and northwest Persia, while the Baluch moved into the coastal areas along the southern shores of the Caspian Sea, later migrating into what are now Iranian Baluchistan and Pakistani Baluchistan between the sixth and fourteenth centuries.

Western historians regard the Aleppo legends as unsubstantiated, but scholars in Baluchistan and the West generally agree that the Baluch were living along the southern shores of the Caspian at the time of Christ. This consensus is based largely on linguistic evidence showing that the Baluchi language originated in a lost language linked with the Parthian or Medean civilizations which flourished in the Caspian and adjacent areas in the pre-Christian era.⁴ As one of the oldest living languages, Baluchi is a subject of endless fascination and controversy for linguists. While it is classified as a member of the Iranian group of the Indo-European language family, consisting of Persian, Pushtu, Baluchi, and Kurdish, Baluchi is a separate language and is closely related only to one of the members of the Iranian group, Kurdish. In its modern form, it has incorporated borrowings from Persian, Sindhi, Arabic and other languages, but it has retained striking peculiarities of its own.

The Baluch have been remarkably successful in preserving their separate cultural identity in the face of continual pressures from strong cultures in neighboring areas. Despite the isolation of the scattered pastoral communities in Baluchistan, the Baluchi language and a relatively homogeneous Baluch literary tradition and value system have provided a unifying common denominator for the seventeen major Baluch tribal groupings scattered over the 207,000-square mile area reaching from the Indus in the east to the Persian province of Kerman in the west. Politically, however, the Baluch record is a mixed one, marked by relatively brief interludes of unity and strong leadership among centuries of fragmentation and tribal strife.

The most impressive demonstration of Baluch political unity came in the

3. For example, see Sardar Mohammed Khan Baluch, *History of The Baluch Race and Baluchistan* (Gosha-e-Adab, Quetta rev. ed., 1977), pp. 5, 16-17, and Ma'an Al-I'jly, *Baluchistan Diyal Al-'Arab (Baluchistan: The Home of Arabs)*, Bahrain, 1979, an Arab work citing Baluch sources.

4. J. H. Elfenbein, "Baluchi," in *Encyclopedia of Islam*, Vol. I, A-B (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1960), p. 1006. See also Elfenbein, *The Baluchi Language: A Dialectology With Text*, Monographs, Vol. XXVII (Royal Asiatic Society: 1966), pp. 41-45, and Richard N. Frye, "Remarks on Baluchi History," *Central Asiatic Journal*, Vol. VI, no. 1 (1961), p. 49.

eighteenth century, when several successive rulers of the Baluch principality of Kalat succeeded in expanding their domain to bring most of the Baluch areas under one political umbrella. Mir Nasir Khan, who ruled Kalat for 44 years beginning in 1749, set up a loose bureaucratic structure embracing most of Baluchistan for the first time and got the principal Baluch tribes to adopt an agreed system of military organization and recruitment.

During the early years of Nasir Khan's reign, Kalat was a tributary of the newly established state of Afghanistan, a salient historical fact which is cited by Afghan nationalists today as a justification for including Baluchistan in a "Greater Afghanistan." Once he had established his army on a solid basis, however, Nasir Khan took on the Afghans militarily, fighting Ahmad Shah Durrani's forces to a standstill in 1758. Thereafter, Kalat enjoyed sovereign status until the arrival of the British, though it remained a military ally of Afghanistan.

Prior to the Nasir Khan period, the early Kalat rulers had paid tribute to Iran, and Nasir Khan himself was installed on his throne with the backing of the Persian Emperor Nadir Shah. But Nasir Khan rejected this tributary status following the assassination of Nadir Shah and the decline of centralized authority in Iran. He even made nominal claims of sovereignty for Kalat over the far-flung Iranian Baluch areas. For their part, the Iranian Baluch never produced a unified kingdom of their own comparable to Kalat, though they consistently resisted Persian and Afghan incursions. Certain strong chieftains were able to establish localized confederacies covering much of Iranian Baluchistan. Notable among them was Dost Mohammed, who was beginning to forge a coherent kingdom in southeastern Iran when Reza Shah Pahlavi subdued his forces in 1928.

For Baluch nationalists today, Nasir Khan's achievements remain an important symbol, providing some semblance of historical precedent for the concept of a unified Baluch political identity. Indeed, Ghaus Bux Bizenjo, former Governor of Pakistani Baluchistan and a leading nationalist, argued in an interview that Nasir Khan's successors would have succeeded in creating an enduring polity if it had not been for the deliberate manipulation of the internal divisions in Baluch society by the British Raj. Playing off rival chiefs against each other in the confused decades after Nasir Khan's death, Britain systematically divided the Baluch area into seven parts. In the far west, the Goldsmid Line gave roughly one-fourth to Persia in 1871; in the north, the Durand Line assigned a small strip to Afghanistan in 1894; and in British India, the Baluch areas were divided into a centrally-administered

entity, British Baluchistan, a truncated remnant of Kalat and three other smaller puppet principalities.

In Bizenjo's view, the Baluch suffered this unhappy fate simply because they happened to live in an area of vital military importance to the British, in contrast to the more fortunately situated Afghans. It was historical accident, he explained, that gave the Afghans the opportunity for independent statehood denied to the Baluch. Thus, it served the interests of the British to foster a unified Afghanistan under their tutelage as a buffer state that would shield their Indian Empire from Russia. Conversely, it was necessary to divide the Baluch in order to assure unimpeded control of the resulting imperial frontier with this Afghan buffer. Nasir Khan's Baluchistan might have emerged in a buffer state role instead, Bizenjo contended, if the Russians had moved southward sooner than they did and if they had swallowed up Afghanistan before Britain embarked on its nineteenth century "forward policy."⁵

Baluch Aspirations: Regional and Global Dimensions

Viewing recent developments from their own particular angle of vision, Baluch leaders are increasingly persuaded that the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan could prove to be as opportune for the Baluch cause, in one way or another, as the arrival of the British was for the Afghans two centuries ago.

Ideally, these leaders, many of them getting on in years, would like to avoid the dangers and hardships of a guerrilla war. They are attempting to use the implicit threat of a Soviet-supported independent Baluchistan as a bargaining lever to win regional autonomy for the Baluch within the existing Pakistani and Iranian constitutional structures. What they are demanding, in concrete terms, is a division of powers under which Islamabad and Teheran would retain control over defense, foreign affairs, communications and currency, while the Baluch would have unfettered local authority over everything else, including the exploitation of natural resources and the allocation of development funds. If Islamabad and Teheran should reject these demands, the Baluch leaders are confident that geopolitical factors will none-

5. For a differing interpretation of Baluch history, see Brian Spooner, "Tribal Ideal and Political Reality in a Cultural Borderland: Ethnohistorical Problems in Baluchistan," *Ethnohistory Workshop*, University of Pennsylvania, 1978, esp. pp. 8, 15-16.

theless work in their favor. Even if the Soviet Union is slow to support an independent Baluchistan, in their view, other powers are likely to do so in order to forestall the possibility of Soviet action.

How realistic are these hopes and expectations? Judging from extensive conversations with General Zia and other Pakistani officials, there seems little chance that Islamabad will make the concessions necessary to reach an accommodation with representative Baluch leaders. Zia typifies the attitudes of Pakistan's dominant Punjabi majority. The Punjabis constitute 58 percent of the population and are reluctant to grant local self-rule to Baluch, Pushtun and Sindhi minorities whose ancestral homelands cover 72 percent of Pakistani territory. It is particularly galling to the Punjabis that the Baluch, who make up some four percent of the population, assert a proprietary right over 40 percent of the land area of the country. The very idea of demarcating provincial units in accordance with ethnic homelands has been a persistent source of conflict since the inception of Pakistan. Dominated by Punjabi military and bureaucratic elites, a succession of authoritarian Pakistani regimes have identified their interests with the preservation of a unitary state and have thus resisted pressures for democratic government that have been linked, inseparably, with demands for provincial self-rule.

There is an unmistakable note of ethnic arrogance in the Punjabi attitude, a desire to show the "primitive" Baluch tribesmen who is master and a feeling that the armed forces could suppress the Baluch once again, if necessary, as they did in the case of the 1973-77 insurgency. This condescending posture is reflected in the almost complete exclusion of the Baluch from the political, bureaucratic, and military power structure of Pakistan.

The Baluch charge that their area is neglected economically and that Punjabi-linked big business interests in Lahore and Karachi are milking Baluchistan of its resources. They point, in particular, to the natural gas deposits at Sui, which have been used solely to build up industries outside of Baluchistan. Evidence abounds to back up these allegations, as well as parallel charges that Punjabi settlers are grabbing the prime farm land in Baluch areas, and that Punjabi real estate speculators are buying up properties in Quetta, the principal urban center in Baluchistan. The Zia regime has responded to such criticism with increased economic development spending, especially on roads, and has promised to pipe some of the Sui gas to Quetta. But Zia continues to channel development funds through the Punjabi bureaucracy, ignoring Baluch pleas for local control over development decisions.

Although he occasionally consults several marginal Baluch politicians and businessmen for cosmetic purposes, Zia refuses to negotiate on the autonomy issue with the three Baluch leaders who command the overwhelming support of the Baluch populace: Bizenjo, Ataullah Mengal and Khair Bux Marri. These are the leaders who emerged triumphant in 1970 when the Baluch had their first—and last—opportunity to elect their own provincial government. It was the dismissal of this government by the late President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto that touched off the 1973–77 insurgency.

Despite Zia's refusal to hold new elections and to negotiate on the autonomy issue, he sharply criticizes Bhutto for "needlessly inflaming the passions of the Baluch" by summarily removing their elected regime. Zia says that he will be careful to avoid comparable frontal assaults on Baluch pride. Given the proper mixture of benign neglect and "non-provocative" firmness, he maintains, the Baluch problem will gradually subside. Thus, he has ordered Army units in Baluchistan to maintain a low profile, and he has appointed a suave, non-Punjabi military intellectual, Lieutenant General Rahimuddin Khan, as Governor of Baluchistan. At the same time, Zia has clamped down firmly on political activity in the Baluch areas along with the rest of the country, forcing most nationalist activity underground.

Disgusted with what they see as Zia's obduracy and fearful of arrest if they challenge him openly, Ataullah Mengal and Khair Bux Marri have recently gone into political exile in Europe. Mengal and Marri are both the hereditary chieftains of large tribes collectively numbering some 200,000 people, but they emerged during the 1973–77 insurgency as "national" leaders. Nominally in Europe for medical treatment, they are quietly exploring the prospects for winning Baluch independence with foreign help, whether from the Soviet Union, China, the United States, India, the Arab world or a combination of these. Meanwhile, they are encouraging nationalist groups in both Pakistan and Iran to build up their organizational strength in preparation for a possible resumption of hostilities.

In the past, the Baluch have generally fought their wars on a tribal basis, and much of the guerrilla activity against the Bhutto regime was carried on by uncoordinated local tribal forces. As a result of their 1973–77 experience, however, Baluch leaders are now seeking to build nationalist organizational networks that can knit together and energize tribal activity in future crises.

The strongest organized Baluch group overtly seeking independence is the Baluch People's Liberation Front, which espouses an exotic, Baluch brand of national communism that explicitly rejects the primacy of either Moscow or

Peking and flies in the face of traditional Marxist-Leninist doctrine by embracing the "healthy" aspects of nomadic life. An outgrowth of guerrilla groups that opposed the Ayoub regime in the sixties, the Liberation Front was formally launched during the 1973–77 struggle and now consists of some 3,800 guerrillas in organized combat units. Except for a skeleton underground infrastructure in Pakistan and Iran, most of these guerrillas are based in training camps in southern Afghanistan, where they were given sanctuary by the non-communist Daoud regime during the insurgency in keeping with the tradition of Baluch-Afghan kinship dating back to the Nasir Khan period. Many of them are Marri tribesmen, and the group has close, albeit covert links with Khair Bux Marri. Daoud gave the guerrillas \$750,000 per year in food and welfare subsidies as "refugees," and both the Khalq and Parcham regimes have continued to support the camps since the 1978 communist takeover.

Next to the Liberation Front, the best-organized nationalist group is the Baluch Student Organization, boasting some 6,000 members and 50 chapters, including several newly established branches in Iranian Baluchistan. The B.S.O. leadership is divided between sympathizers of the Liberation Front and various Pakistani communist factions but jealously guards its own organizational independence. Although the B.S.O.'s public declarations are circumspect, its underground newsletters and doctrinal journals make thinly veiled allusions to independence as the goal of all Baluch. By contrast, Bizenjo's Pakistan National Party, the voice of moderate urban nationalist opinion, explicitly says that the Baluch should remain in Pakistan if they are given a meaningful degree of regional autonomy. The National Party is primarily a Baluch vehicle but was formed as an all-Pakistan group to circumvent Zia's martial law ban on regional parties.

In contrast to the fairly extensive nationalist organizational base in Pakistan, the Baluch in Iran are just beginning to form political networks after five decades of brutal repression under the Pahlavi dynasty. The Shah systematically curtailed the growth of a politicized Baluch intelligentsia by limiting education in the Baluch areas to the city of Zahedan and towns such as Iranshahr and Khash, where the children of Persian civil servants largely monopolized school admissions. Except for a brief upsurge from 1969 to 1973, encouraged by Iraq, the Iranian Baluch were politically quiescent until the erosion of centralized authority accompanying the overthrow of the Shah opened the way for an outpouring of suppressed political energies.

Four major groupings are now emerging among the Iranian Baluch: a

clerically-oriented faction led by Moulavi Abdul Aziz, which primarily seeks to safeguard the religious rights of the Baluch, as Sunnis, against Shiite pressures; a coalition of conservative tribal chieftains, many of them loosely linked with Baluch nationalist elements in the Persian Gulf Emirates; several Marxist-oriented parties, still miniscule, working closely with the nascent student movement; and *Pesh Margan* (Those Who Fight to the Death), a guerrilla band of some 500 in the Sarawan area led by Amanullah Barakzai, a veteran Baluch nationalist who made his peace with the Shah but has now reverted to a nationalist role.

At first, Khomeini left these groups alone and made conciliatory gestures to Baluch religious leaders, assuring them that Sunni autonomy would be respected. This permissive attitude has changed, however, since Baluch leaders unanimously rejected the new Iranian Constitution, which failed to make substantial concessions to the Baluch and other ethnic minorities even in religious matters. According to Baluch sources, Khomeini's Revolutionary Guards have engineered a series of political assassinations in recent months, including the murder of Rahmat Hossainborr, leader of the Maoist-tinged Paykar faction.

Surprisingly, there have never been strong Soviet-oriented communist parties in either Pakistani or Iranian Baluchistan, primarily because Moscow has vacillated over the years with respect to the desirability of an independent "Greater Baluchistan." While defining the Baluch as a separate nationality and upholding their inherent right of secession, Yuri Gankovsky, the principal Soviet expert on South Asia, wrote in 1964 that the Baluch nation was still in its "early stages of formation" and it would be premature to exercise the right of secession.⁶ Another Soviet writer acknowledged in 1973 that the Baluch were gradually achieving a "national personality" but argued, nonetheless, that Baluch progressives should work for broad united fronts with progressives throughout Pakistan and Iran, avoiding "bourgeois nationalist" tendencies.⁷

In the case of Pakistan, the faction-ridden communist movement has been controlled by urban, middle class leaders who migrated at the time of the Partition to Karachi and Lahore from areas now in India, and lack local roots in any of the ethnic regions now constituting Pakistan. They have built some

6. Yuri V. Gankovsky, *The Peoples of Pakistan*, English edition (Moscow: Nauka Publishing House, 1971), p. 217.

7. Beknazar Ibragimov, *Baluch Pakistan (The Baluch of Pakistan)* (Moscow: Nauka Publishing House, 1973), p. 4.

Baluch cadres among students and unionists but have won few collaborators among nationalist leaders with the exception of Bizenjo, whose concept of a loose federation is in tune with the current communist line, and Sher Mohammed Marri, a Liberation Front leader, who has worked with them on foreign policy issues. Similarly, the Tudeh Party in Iran is Persian-dominated and has alienated Baluch activists by pushing for a loose federalism rather than secession. Recently, there have been some indications of Soviet efforts behind the scenes to stimulate indigenous Baluch communist organizations in both Pakistan and Iran, but Moscow still stops short of supporting an independent Baluchistan.

The basic reasons for Soviet caution with respect to Baluch independence appear to lie in Moscow's overall assessment of short-term prospects in Iran and Pakistan. Soviet strategists recognize that although Baluch nationalism is boiling, it is still at a low boil. So long as there is a reasonable chance of increasing Soviet influence in Teheran and Islamabad, Moscow is likely to seek maximum flexibility in dealing with changing Iranian and Pakistani political developments. Soviet sources also allude somewhat ruefully to the high risks and costs that would be involved in sponsoring and sustaining an independent Baluchistan. Given the lack of an effective communist organizational base in the Baluch areas, Moscow would have to work primarily through non-communist nationalist groups if it were to promote independence in the foreseeable future. While far from negligible, these groups would need massive military aid, reinforced by sustained financial, technical, and logistical help in order to conduct a successful insurgency. Moscow might well be called upon to intervene directly with its own forces if the going got rough. And the need to rely on non-communist Baluch leaders would make the Soviet position inherently insecure even after the attainment of independence, unless it were to disregard Baluch wishes and attempt to make the new state a Soviet satellite.

Although there is some evidence of oil, copper, uranium and other resources in Baluchistan, it would take multi-billion-dollar investments to determine their extent and to develop and exploit them. The development of Gwadar Harbor alone for military purposes would require estimated outlays of \$2 billion or more to deal with desilting and other technical problems.

Conclusion: The Outlook for Moscow

Some observers assume that a decisive factor deterring a Soviet adventure in Baluchistan is the likelihood that Moscow will be bogged down in Af-

ghanistan for some time to come. Here one should think twice, though, for it is possible that Moscow might seek to relieve pressure on the Afghan front by stirring up trouble in Baluchistan. Just as Soviet hopes for winning greater influence in Teheran and Islamabad deter Moscow from encouraging a Baluch insurgency, so its desire to punish Iran and Pakistan for providing sanctuaries to Afghan resistance forces could well prompt Soviet retaliatory action in the Baluch areas.

If the Soviet Union is able to consolidate its position in Afghanistan during the years ahead, Moscow's interest in Baluchistan would be likely to intensify. But Soviet calculations would still be governed, in my view, by the evolving political and diplomatic environment in Pakistan and Iran. In a climate of growing Baluch discontent, Moscow would no doubt be tempted to pursue an adventurist course—especially if it confronts an entrenched anti-Soviet Islamic fundamentalist regime in Teheran and writes off its hopes for detaching Islamabad from its military ties to Peking and Washington. Conversely, given an accommodation between key Baluch leaders and either Islamabad or Teheran, or both, Moscow would find it more difficult to organize an insurgency and to legitimize an independent Baluch regime. There is still time, in short, for Pakistan and Iran to build their political defenses against possible Soviet pressures. But it is rapidly running out.