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## Pakistan's Balkanization

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Re-mapping of the Muslim world is under spotlight in the US and Pakistan's balkanization forms a part of this agenda. American strategists are propagating the need to redraw its borders on ethnic lines by creating new political entities in the name of justice long denied to 'oppressed Muslim minorities'. *'Internal factors'* are identified in each case, sometimes very naively, that they believe could lead to desired fragmentation. Redrawn maps were released, ostensibly to test the waters. That this also reflects the mindset of the US administration can be seen by its efforts and actions to engineer grounds for military intervention, regime-change or fragmentation in target countries.

Rising militant Islam, serious challenges to American hegemony as world power, shifting of the economic epicenter to Asia and the worsening economic situation at home, all point to another 'New World Order' in the making – wherein America stands to lose much of its power and glory by mid century, if not sooner. Resurgent Russia and a powerful China are forcing it to redefine its strategic global planning, with focus on Eurasia. A paranoid America is willing to pursue all options to prevent its slide from power.

American strategists favor fracturing and weakening the national unity of Islamic states that could become strongholds of Islamic militants. They want oil rich territories like Kurdistan, Eastern Arabian Peninsula and Balochistan carved out, unified and controlled by puppet regimes, while splintering other Muslim countries. This would enable the US to secure its oil supplies, micromanage a fragmented Muslim world and choke vital financial resources to Islamic militants. Iraq is already going through the motions.

US invasion of a hostile Iran is feared to come before the new administration takes over. Apart from considering it dangerous to Israeli security and a spoiler in Iraq, the US suspects Iran will trigger the crash of US dollar, and consequently the US economy, by transacting oil sales in Euros in collusion with Venezuela.

The US considers Pakistan unstable due to "political and economic mismanagement, divisive politics, lawlessness, corruption and ethnic friction" and cites this as cause for growing Talibanization. It fears that this might bring Islamic radicals to power with control over the nukes - a frightening scenario for Israeli and the US.

Pakistan's military controls Pakistan's nukes, is an important player in the political dispensation of the country, is resentful of American pressure to fight a war against



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Taliban that it considers against Pakistan's interests, and has made a shift from the liberal British colonial mindset to a more religious one. From its strategic perspective a friendly government in Kabul that will keep peace on Pakistan's western border has always been critical to its defense planning for this would enable it to face off India on the east, which remains its primary concern. This has led it to maintain close links with Afghan Jihadi groups and the Taliban, until the US forced General Musharraf to abandon them after 9/11. Aware of this, the US fears that this can eventually tilt the balance of war in Taliban's favor and impede its long term objectives in the region. Therefore, a weaker military with lesser geographical spread and without nuclear fangs would clearly suit the US, as well as the Indians who are piggybacking the US.

Of late, Balochistan has been the target in the Indian scheme of Pakistan's further dismemberment. India and the US were disturbed by Gen. Musharraf's new overtures towards China, seeking Chinese strategic economic interests in Balochistan. Motivated by the prospects of Balochistan's development and economic uplift and to checkmate foreign aided secessionist moves in the province, he wanted China to use Gawadar-Sinkiang land corridor for its imports through Gawadar port and transportation of oil refined at a Chinese owned Gawadar based refinery. China also showed interest in joining Pak-Iran gas pipeline project transiting through Balochistan. China's presence in Gawadar would bring it to the Indian Ocean, a sensitive spot both for Indians and Americans – the former seeing this as a threat to its control of the ocean with its blue water navy in the offing and the latter upset with its proximity to the Straits of Hormuz.

These are grounds enough to balkanize Pakistan.

Col. Ralph Peters, supposedly Pentagon's military scholar and former intelligence official, writing in June 2006 issue of Armed Forces Journal on balkanization of the Middle East (*Blood Borders*), advocates the incorporation of North West Frontier Province into Afghanistan and creation of a sovereign Free Balochistan, carved out of Baloch areas of Pakistan and Iran. His grounds: ethnic affinity. Pakistani Balochistan is estimated to hold 25.1 trillion cft. of gas and 6 trillion barrels of oil.

In his recent article "Drawn and Quartered" Selig Harrison of the Center of International Policy, Washington, DC, concludes that Pakistan's balkanization is imminent owing to the rising nationalist sentiment in the Pashtun belt and growing disillusionment of the Pashtuns, Balochis and Sindhis with Punjab and Pakistan. He believes that ethnic diversity threatens Pakistan's unity,

Both Col. Peters and Harrison are essentially singing the same tune and seem to be presenting a doctrine that broadly reflects US foreign policy.

General Aslam Beg, Pakistan's former Army Chief, notes in an article that to pursue certain common interests with regard to Pakistan and the region, India and the US



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have signed the Strategic Partnership Deal the declared objective of which is "to contain and curb the rising military and economic power of China and the increasing threat of Islamic extremism in the region". Gen. Beg says this deal has led to the creation of a joint espionage network of CIA, Mosad, MI-6, Raw and others in Afghanistan, which is engaged in activities aimed at destabilizing Pakistan, Iran, China, Russia and other Central Asian states. He claims that dissidents from Pakistan are being trained at Sarobi and Kandahar for missions inside NWFP, whereas bases at Lashkargah and Nawah are being used to train dissidents from Balochistan for missions inside that province and also in support of the so called Balochistan Liberation Army.

In this backdrop, recent calls by some Afghan leaders to 'liberate Pakistani Pashtuns', the departure of Gen. Musharraf and the cozy relationship between his successor and Karzai of Kabul who lost no opportunity to malign Pakistan, assume significance. The latest American decision to send drones and troops into Pakistan's territory, despite the declared Pakistan's opposition, to launch aerial and ground attacks on its tribesmen killing innocent women and children, also raise serious concerns. This seems to be an attempt at drawing a wedge between Pakistan and the independent tribes on the Pakistan side of the Pak-Afghan border belt by establishing Pakistan's inability to protect their life and property and promote a secessionist movement.

Michel Chossudovsky, Director of the Center for Research on Globalization, Ottawa in his article "The Destabilization of Pakistan" says: "Washington's foreign policy course is to actively promote the political fragmentation and balkanization of Pakistan as a nation". He states: "The US course consists in fomenting social, ethnic and factional divisions and political fragmentation, including the territorial breakup of Pakistan. This course of action is also dictated by US war plans in relation to both Iran and Afghanistan. This US agenda for Pakistan is similar to that applied throughout the broader Middle East Central Asian region."

Chossudovsky points out that "the US strategy, supported by covert intelligence operations, consists in triggering ethnic and religious strife, abetting and financing secessionist movements while also weakening the institutions of the central government."

The US initiatives to balkanize the region are misguided and a grave miscalculation, promising an extremely volatile and unstable geopolitical scenario. Given the ability of jihadi militants to challenge and even defeat US imperialism, this could cause the situation to easily spiral out of control, proving counterproductive to US interests worldwide and seriously undermining the regional and international security environment. It is doubtful if EU will go along with such US plans due to its own security imperatives and in the end the US might find itself to be the Lone Ranger.



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In case of Pakistan, the plan will not be easy to accomplish. The military that holds the key to political power and unification of the country, supported by pro-Pakistan segments of the population, will be the biggest stumbling block. Having the benefit of East Pakistan experience behind it and geography no more a handicap, it stands a much better chance at successfully thwarting such attempts and maintaining national integrity.