

# Balochistan in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

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I want to explain something which I've been trying to explain for the past four years without any measure degree of success. Pakistan is generally known as an important frontier on the global war on terrorism. I have [some differences] with the phrase "global war on terrorism," I think it needs to be rephrased. I think it is a misnomer, it is inaccurate and it is misleading and I will explain why. It does not cater to situations such as exist or existed in, say, Ireland, the IRA; Basque, Spain; East Timor, Sri Lanka, or Rwanda. There is this confusion which has, in my opinion, prevented the global community coming up with an appropriate strategy whereby, six years after 9/11, we should have had some measure of success. I feel we don't have that. I feel that in Afghanistan things are going back to worse and that in Pakistan as regards to global terrorism things are not going as desired. Why do I say this? Because I use the phrase "my terrorist can be your freedom fighter." I propose what I feel is a more appropriate and more accurate terminology which can be rephrased as "war on global terrorism." When I say that it means war on terrorists who have a global reach, who have a global agenda, global designs, whatever they may be and that have developed a global strategy. This is essential to differentiate from what I call "local militants" or "local terrorists" who have a localized reach or a localized agenda.

While there may be a nexus between the two and there has been and some cooperation between the two. Because of this foundational difference between them—one has a global reach and a global agenda and the others have a localized reach and local agenda—they require different treatments. This differentiation, I feel, is very important for formulation of correct strategies to tackle them.

This rephrasing throws objectives to Pakistan. Now there I may emphasize a point that while the global community, of which Pakistan is a responsible member, has common objectives, common concerns and common issues as regards to global terrorism, but every country has its own frame of reference through which its views certain issues. So, while the issues are common, the objectives are common, the approach can be different. Here is my hand—everyone can see my hand. I'm looking at it and you are also looking at it but what you see is different from what I see. But we looking at the same issue, we're looking at the same objectives. The approach may be different and it is very important for allies to understand each other's frame of reference.

We presume in the formulation of these objectives that the global community shares common concerns as far as global terrorism is concerned. The main concern of us all is to prevent another 9/11-type attack globally. That is the main concern and that is the objective. For Pakistan, what are the objectives? What are the strategies? One, not to allow the use of Pakistani territory to global terrorists for their activities. Second, to help prevent global terrorists from using Afghanistan as a base for global terrorism as was the case in the past with Al Qaeda. Third,

stabilize Afghanistan in order to defend Pakistan from the fallout of the 30-year old conflict situation in Afghanistan. These are extremism, terrorism, heavy weapons, narcotics, etc. and Pakistan has been hurt by this conflict for the past 30 years. We've been badly hurt and therefore it is in Pakistan's interest that the situation in that region, Pakistan and Afghanistan, stabilizes and becomes peaceful in the shortest time possible.

While I'm qualified only to talk about Pakistan, we cannot avoid discussing Afghanistan. In the next two slides I am now going to analyze the present state of global terrorism in the Pakistan and Afghanistan region and what we're doing about it. People say Pakistan is a frontier against global terrorism. It is misleading. Why? Because global terrorism—and this is something you must understand—global terrorism no longer requires a base to operate from. Initially, Al Qaeda had a base in Afghanistan but I always say that was a holdover from a jihad when they were training people for actual physical combat against the Soviet occupation. Today, the global terrorists have dispersed globally, in urban centers, they are operating from businesses, from safe houses, hideouts and they're operating independently, or semi-independently. No frontline exists any more. Every country in the world is now a frontline against global terrorism.

As regards global terrorism structure in the region that has largely been dismantled. Remnants remain but they have lost global reach. Osama bin Laden's role is basically now inspirational only. I was talking to the U.S. Ambassador Ryan Crocker and I mentioned to him and I said, "Ambassador, Osama alive is an icon for the terrorists, dead he's a bigger icon. So just leave him be, let him rot in a cave. Let's concentrate on the structures that have been set up."

I would like to you to keep in mind that all the major successes that have been achieved against global terrorist structures and networks have been through intelligence operations and not through any broad military operations. We must keep that in mind because that is the guideline for what we have to do in the future. Today, in the Pakistan- Afghanistan region, only the local terrorists or the local militants who have a localized reach and a localized agenda are active, both in the tribal areas of Pakistan and in Afghanistan. We need to look at Afghanistan because whenever you talk about global terrorism it is traced back to Afghanistan—that is where it all started.

Today, what is the position? We must face the fact that we must understand what is happening. Today, the Taliban and other militant groups in Afghanistan are reviving and gaining public support. I fear that the backing for hearts and minds is being lost in Afghanistan. You must understand that. Six years of military operations by the international forces are failing in their objectives. Why? Because of something which I have repeatedly been saying for the past four years. The historical evidence is that there has never been a pure military solution in Afghanistan—starting right from the time of Alexander the Great through Genghis Khan through the Taliban, through the Mongols, and the Turks. There has never been a pure military solution in Afghanistan and we should not attempt to find one. Ask the British, ask the Soviets—see what is happening now. I repeat for emphasis, there is no pure military solution in Afghanistan. It is an unfortunate fact but the government in Afghanistan is failing administratively and politically and I feel it is because of an absence of political strategy. Too much emphasis on pure military methods and absence of political strategy is resulting in failure.

The sad part of it is that I predicted this [failure] more than three and a half years ago, to the U.S. Ambassadors then there was Nancy Powell, then we had Ryan Crocker, to the British High Commissioner Lyle Grant, to Thomas Koenigs the United Nations Mission Head in Afghanistan. Repeatedly I told them we are headed for failure and we needed to change our methods. The reasoning was very simple and I'd like to explain that. One, which I have been talking about, is

an absence of separate strategies for global terrorists and for local militants. The second and most important was opium cultivation in Afghanistan. Three and one-half years ago reportedly about 40,000 acres were under the cultivation in Afghanistan. There were about 10,000 acres of cultivation in Balochistan. We finished ours, today its zero. In one and one-half years we brought it down to zero. I begged the Ambassadors of all the European countries and the U.S. Ambassadors and everybody who mattered “do not allow opium cultivation in Afghanistan.” What will it do? It will do two things. One, you will throw a funding lifeline to the militants who were at that time hard pressed and cut off from all support of other resources. I said, “The moment you [allow] this you will throw them a funding lifeline” and I was right and that has happened.

Secondly, I said, “you will clear such a huge vested interest in opium cultivation and the narcotic trade of Afghanistan that it will be in their interests not to allow Afghanistan to stabilize so that they can protect their source of supply.” What does narcotic cultivation do? It criminalizes the economy, it will criminalize the government, it will penetrate government systems and they will prevent stability from coming to Afghanistan. I remember telling Ryan Crocker I said, “Excellency, I would not be surprised if half the attacks on your forces are narcotic guns and not by these militants. Unfortunately, that has happened. In my opinion and in my assessment, opium cultivation is the single largest factor contributing towards instability and the continued conflict in Afghanistan.

Today, Afghanistan has almost what you call a narco-economy. These are not my figures that I’m going to quote, they are United Nations’ figures: sixty percent of the economy is narco-based. Afghanistan supplies 90 percent of the world’s heroin and opium; it is valued at somewhere between 45 through 50 billion rupees and about 3 to 3.5 billion goes into Afghanistan and the rest stays within the international narco-Mafia system. Today, we know that Afghanistan’s government has been penetrated by narco-warlords. Parliament gave itself amnesty which was greatly resented by people within Afghanistan and the international community but you also know that the same warlords organized a very large public gathering and a demonstration in favor of the amnesty. It is in the interest of these people to prevent political stability and political national reconciliation within Afghanistan so that the state of conflict continues and they can keep on with their business.

There is phenomenon that we are seeing which is of great concern to us and is causing a lot of worries in Pakistan. There is an increasing nostalgia amongst the Afghan population for the comparative peace and order of the Taliban era. For that we have to be really concerned. Why? Because today in Afghanistan the law and order situation is very bad—people have no security, development has not taken place on the ground because of massive opium cultivation. About 400,000 acres are now under cultivation. We have narco-warlords and gangsters who are creating problems for the people. Another additional factor has been the collateral damage that has taken place due to miscoordinated action by NATO and other forces.

Some people say they’re going to finish the Taliban and exhaust them. I keep on telling them that to finish the Taliban you have to slaughter half the Afghan nation and you can’t do that. Or, you say you’ll tire them out. People must understand that today Afghanistan’s economy, after 30 years of conflict, has become a war-dependent economy because you have narcotics, you have a thriving illegal weapons trade, you have leakage of war funding which is unavoidable, and due to that the militants can continue a low-key, low-level conflict indefinitely.

In 30 years of conflict, Afghanistan's society has been radicalized. People say it is the madrassas, that it is Islam, I keep on telling them that Islam has been here for 14 centuries and it never had this sort of problem before. Madrassas have been here for four centuries and we never had this sort of thing before. This radicalization and extremism has affected parts of Pakistan because of this 30-year long conflict which has brutalized that society. And, yes, today some extremist madrassas are aggravating problems; yes, Islam's concept of jihad, are elevating the problem. So, if we are to reverse this process of radicalization and extremism we have to first stop the conflict and that is the point I want to emphasize.

Another thing that is happening in Afghanistan that I would like you to understand. In Afghanistan there was a political and social compact for all the diverse ethnic groups within Afghanistan to stick together as one nation with the royal family and monarchy as its focal point. This existed, this compact existed, for 250 years. The 1978 communist coup followed by the 1979 Soviet invasion shattered that focal point. In 1978 the royal family was slaughtered, killed, in that coup and with this loss of the focal point, that social political compact came under huge stress and it was scattered. For Afghanistan to stabilize politically as a nation that national compact has to be recreated. That is the challenge for the Afghan society and the challenge for the global community.

Another tragic thing happened which few people realize. In the face of the Soviet invasion in 1979 the elite section of Afghan society, which was supposed to provide leadership to that nation at that time of trial, abandoned Afghanistan—almost whole scale, they just ran away, they abandoned ship. Into that leadership vacuum walked the religious scholars and the mullahs and they elected to fight back, they led the resistance. So, today in Afghanistan the religious scholars and mullahs who until then had a subordinate role today they have a position of respect and respectability in that society. That must be understood from the point of view that in any future political dispensation there has to be political space for such segments in Afghanistan. That is a reality which everybody must face.

Today any Afghan coming back to Afghanistan, they ask him, "Where were you during the jihad against the Soviets?" If they were there they have a position of respect and if they were not there or not in support of that a ten year long effort—they're not respected.

During the 30-year long conflict in Afghanistan an estimated three million died and the total destruction of the economy, the shattering of families and communities has caused the society to break down. The society had been brutalized and radicalized and this has promoted extremism in that society and areas of Pakistan have not been immune to that influence. What is needed today in Afghanistan, we feel, is a new compact which has to be built around an acceptable political power-sharing formula in which all Afghan groups must have political space. I'm fond of saying, all Afghan groups no matter what the size of the beards—long beards, short beards, no beards at all—they need to be given that political space. Only then can we move forward.

The Afghan conflict has had tremendous negative fall out on Pakistan. I will just quickly go through them. What needs to be understood is that the main conflict is in Afghanistan and Pakistan has been battling the fallout for 30 years. The Soviet jihad in which Pakistan gave full support to Afghanistan and for very good reason because the Russians, when they came into Afghanistan, there was a direct threat to Pakistan and Pakistan took a very deliberate and very difficult decision to take on a superpower. To its good luck the Western world, the U.S. especially, came to its aid and there was a ten-year fight back. We knew there would be a big price to pay, but freedom is worth the price. I tell my Afghan brothers, I talk to them, and I say,

“We have done you no favor looking after the four million refugees. It was something we did willingly because you were fighting for your independence and you were also fighting to preserve the independence and freedom of Pakistan, and we are grateful to you for that.” However, from that conflict the problems that we’ve had are religious and sectarian extremism, and radicalization. We are also facing a problem from the left-over jihadi and sectarian religious outfits which were used by us and the global community in partnership to fight the Soviet occupation. Also it has given rise to global terrorist outfits like Al Qaeda and others. Today we have new phenomena in the region and that is suicide bombers we’ve just started experiencing that. It is most definitely an important phenomena and probably inspired by Iraq. I repeat that madrassas are not the source but extremist madrassas are aggravating the problem, they are being targeted but, yes, they are aggravating the problem. We have something like 2.5 to 3 million Afghan refugees in Pakistan and one million of them are in Balochistan. There are certainly a lot of Taliban sympathizers among them. So that is a problem, apart from being a social and economic burden, it is adding to Pakistan’s problems.

Heavy weapons smuggling. Afghanistan is awash with weapons. They are being smuggled into Pakistan and it is increasing the level of violence in Pakistani society. Narcotic trade is criminalizing society in Pakistan also. Seventy percent of the narcotic from Afghanistan is smuggled through Balochistan. Balochistan shares a 1200-plus kilometer border with Afghanistan and 950 kilometer-plus border with Iran, has 800 kilometers of coastline, a border with three provinces of Pakistan. As Governor, every morning when I go into my office there is a very large satellite map which I tell people reminds me daily of the administrative nightmare that I face.

We come to some recommendations: Let me here emphasize a point. Pakistan is a responsible member of the global community and it benefits from its interactions in trade with the global community. It’s something we would never want to jeopardize, so, we have the same objective. However, different cultures will give rise to different strategies for reaching those common objectives. When I say cultures it can mean societies, social culture, political culture as well as military. So our approach may be different but the objective is common. For a strategy against global terrorism our recommendation, due to the past successes, is that it has to be through intelligence operations only and not through broad military sweep operations that are counterproductive and create more collateral damage. However, it must be understood that this is necessarily going to be a long-term effort because there are no quick fixes. The global community has to fight this long war. The local militants have separated from the global terrorists. There is, as I stated before, no military solution in sight. We need to seek a political solution but to seek a political solution in Afghanistan it is very important that military pressure be maintained. If you take off pressure they will never sit around, all these groups, and talk amongst themselves.

Extremism, a fall-out of the Afghan conflict, is a serious problem but to tackle it we must first end the conflict, end the fighting and killing and then let the natural forces of moderation take over economic activities, etc. to moderate the society. Two things you need to keep in mind: in Afghanistan the natural agricultural economy of Afghanistan has never supported its population, and Afghanistan traditionally through the ages has supplemented by trade. And they’re excellent traders; they are very reliable traders. I’ve been working with them the past 30 years and they know trading. This is the conversation that I had with David Katz, the Commercial Counselor, in 2000 in Peshawar and I said, “Co-opt Afghanistan into the world trading system and Afghanistan will be okay and they’ll be your best partners. They’re very reliable. You don’t even have to worry about direct agreements with them. Word of mouth is sufficient.” So, to allow those

things to happen you must stop the fighting. I'm a Peshtin myself. I am from Peshawar, I grew up in Peshawar in the northwest province and I've been working in Balochistan for the last four years and I understand how the Afghan mind works.

So we must stop the fighting first. The narcotic cultivation problem has to be tackled. Three and one-half years ago I gave a proposal for crop substitution to the tune of about \$450 million for a period of five years—peanuts. But nobody listened to us. Today from 40,000 the acreage has gone up to 400,000 and we'll probably need to implement a program costing about \$3 billion over six or seven years. But that is important.

We must help Afghanistan to rebuild a new national and social compact but it has to be an Afghan solution. Pakistan cannot do it for them, the Americans cannot do it for them, the world cannot do it for them, they can support, they can help, but Afghans have to do it among themselves. It has to be an Afghan solution.

Pakistan desperately needs a stable, peaceful, prosperous and friendlier Afghanistan. They are our natural trading partners and throughout the ages that has happened. In these past few days that I've spent here in the United States talking to Congressmen, talking to people in the government, talking to people in society at large and I've found that what's most alarming for me, a matter of huge concern for me, is that I sense a trust deficit between allies, between us and others. There seems to be some doubt with Pakistan's intentions and I ask why should we want to do that? Why would we want to [play] a double game and why would we want to hide Osama bin Laden or support the Taliban? Pakistan is being hurt the most. Pakistan, for 30 years, has been battling fallout from Afghanistan.

We have ambitious plans for Pakistan, for economic development, for bettering the lives of our people. As you know, Pakistan's stock exchange has been doing wonderfully well since the past five to six years. It is a high performer. Pakistan's economy has been growing at six percent-plus. Today with Afghanistan we have \$2 billion annual trade. Pakistan benefits from trading with the global community. For you it's a small one, for us it is very big—\$20 billion of annual exports, another \$23 billion of imports. We have roads, we have cars and we have traffic jams—so many cars are coming onto the roads. We have electricity, we have planes flying, we have railroads running, we have hospitals, we have schools, we have businesses. Today, in Balochistan we have the cooperation of the world's largest copper mining company, its going to invest a billion dollars in Balochistan in developing what would be the world's fifth largest copper mind. We are happy to have them there. They've done their homework. They see Balochistan as a secure place to invest in and they see long-term security there. But we could do much more and much better if we had a nice, friendly, secure environment in the region. Why should Pakistan jeopardize all that by hiding Osama bin Laden our pocket. What do we get out of it? Except a lot of trouble if tomorrow it is known that Pakistan has been doing that. I think the entire world community would come crashing down on Pakistan. Why would we want to do that to ourselves?

What is the end? The end is a political solution in Afghanistan. All the problems start over there. Military options is only one of the means. War is just an extension of policy. We need a combination. What are the methods that we require? We need a combination of military operations and a political strategy to tackle the situation in Afghanistan.

The past 30 years in Afghanistan represents the broken bridge. Before that Afghanistan was on the political highway. There was a process going on. There was gradual liberalization and

democratization taking place. The past 30 years is the broken bridge—what do you do? You make a diversion. Getting of the highway, make sure operations were necessary have taken place. You have to know, get back on the political highway. How do you get back on the political highway? You need a political solution, a political approach, a political process.

I end by recounting a conversation that I had with my Afghan counterparts in the Afghan Constitution Commission. We have been meeting regularly since the past three-four months in trying to make this peace possible. When we finished our official work we were sitting around in a room and I said, “Gentlemen, there is no press here, no public, so let’s talk openly. Let’s talk frankly to each other. The problem is that Afghanistan is a conflict situation; Pakistan is battling the fall out and we have all these problems. However, you guys, you are blaming Pakistan. You say ‘Pakistan is training these people and harboring the Taliban, giving them sanctuary and then sending them across to stage attacks and destabilize Afghanistan.’ I totally deny that; however, for the sake of argument I concede, but tell me what is the contribution of Pakistan to the conflict in Afghanistan—two percent? five percent? What is your assessment?”

So the representative of Kabul said “it’s ten percent.” I said, “I accept that. Let’s move forward.” But the governor of Herat tells me, “No, no. You have training camps and you’re being this and you’re being that.” I said, “Forget about the details, just tell me what is your assessment of Pakistan contribution.” He said, “Twenty percent.” I said, “I accept twenty percent. So, you do concede that eighty percent of the problem lies in Afghanistan? If we address and resolve that eighty percent problem of Afghanistan this twenty percent will disappear.” Silence. I was greeted by silence. And I said, “Let me take the argument further. Give us four to six months and we throw every resource we have on this twenty percent and let’s assume that we finish it. Tell me truthfully, will the fighting end in Afghanistan?” No, it will not end because there is a problem in Afghanistan and we have to come up with a political dispensation with which all of our groups are comfortable. I obviously didn’t get a response. We then broke the meeting.

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