

From New Delhi by Linda de Hoyos

The Baluchistan gambit

The Soviets are supporting "independence" of Pakistan's province to further their own drive to dominate the region.

As noted in this week's Special Report, the summer issue of the Soviet journal *Asia and Africa Today* contains an endorsement for the independence of Pakistan's western province, Baluchistan. *Asia and Africa Today* is the journal of the Soviet Orientology Institute, the same institute that ran the Russian side of the "Great Game" for the control of the region with the British Empire during the 19th and early 20th centuries, and the Institute's article revives the Game. Leaking its own desires to redraw the map, the article complains that "With calculated disregard for traditional ethnic and cultural links, the British colonial power arbitrarily divided the Baluch lands; the territory west of the Goldsmith line went to Persian Baluchistan, that north of the Durand line to Afghan Baluchistan, and that south of the Durand line to British Baluchistan."

This time the name of the "Game" is, which empire will pick up the key strategic pieces of a shattered Pakistan. The ultimate target is the world's largest republican nation-state, India. The Indian government has already been forced to declare martial law in the region of Punjab on the border with Pakistan, where the Sikh separatist movement, run from London and Switzerland, is demanding the secession of the region.

Meanwhile, a corroborating signal of Soviet intentions toward Pakistan came from London, where leaders of the "Baluchistan Liberation

Front" are making plans for civil war against dictator Zia ul-Haq. Atallah Khan Mengel, a former minister of Baluchistan, vowed to a meeting of the "Front" on Oct. 9: "I will return to Baluchistan, but it will be an independent Baluchistan, free from Punjab rule, which has brought Pakistan to the brink of disintegration." The Zia regime is dominated by people from the eastern province of Punjab.

Mengel indicated that he expected help from the outside "to take on the Pakistani army and to liberate Baluchistan."

In an interview with *EIR*, another leader of the Baluchistan Front, Qadar Bux Nizamani, stated: "We are not interested in democracy in Baluchistan," casting aside pretensions of democratic resistance to Zia's hated dictatorship. "We are only interested in becoming independent."

Nizamani says he "expects help from Afghanistan and the Soviets, because they know that our main enemy is the United States. In fact the United States has a major naval military base close to Gwardar [close to the Straits of Hormuz] and they know we are opposed to it."

Since 1979, when the Soviets moved into Afghanistan, their ability to play the "Baluchistan card" has been steadily built up. Soviet military infrastructure in Afghanistan is not required to fight guerrillas; it reflects Moscow's long-term plans to dominate the region, from the Persian Gulf to the Indian Ocean. According to re-

ports from London, the Soviets have constructed military air bases throughout the country, guarded with regiments of SAM 2s, 3s, and 6s which can match the most modern Western strike aircraft.

By taking full control of Baluchistan, the Kremlin three goals in its drive for empire: a strategic provocation against an important American ally in Asia, the fulfillment of its longstanding desire for access to a warm-water port on the Indian Ocean, and the launching of the destruction of the nation of Pakistan.

On this last question, the aims of Moscow and its Pugwash back-channel partners in London and Washington are in full agreement.

In 1977, Zia ul-Haq was put into power by Henry Kissinger, who forced the ouster and subsequent murder of democratic leader Z. A. Bhutto. Now, after six years of a brutal Islamic dictatorship, Kissinger and company are ready for the next stage: the destruction of the Pakistan's territorial integrity and its existence as a nation-state.

The Soviets and their puppet Muammar Qaddafi are funding and otherwise manipulating the Pakistani Movement for the Restoration of Democracy, which has led the resistance to Zia. In parallel deployment, the Swiss-based Nazi International, through its Society for Endangered Peoples, is funding separatist regional movements. Given that 80 percent of Pakistan's economy, and most of its governmental and army is concentrated in the hands of Pakistanis from the eastern Punjab province, there is fertile ground to turn the movement against Zia into separatist movements against the Punjab. There are signs emerging that leaders in the Sind province, where Zia is using increasingly harsh repressive tactics, are prepared to follow Baluchistan's lead in demands for separatism.