

The Geopolitics of Energy & Terrorism

Part 9

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Introduction

The following chapters are independent essays written in June and July 2016, and they can be read in any order.

The wars for the global resources of oil and natural gas are the topic of most essays. To a large extent, the wars of the 20th and 21st centuries were the result of energy rich countries competing to secure their exports, or the result of energy poor countries competing to secure their access to energy resources.

Many episodes of the energy wars of the 20th and 21st centuries are described in the following essays.

I.A.

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The 2 Faces of the Taliban

At the following map you can see the Pashtun areas of Afghanistan and Pakistan. The Pashtuns are a martial Sunni tribe, and they are the largest ethnic group of Afghanistan, while they are the second largest group of Pakistan. Punjabis are by far the largest ethnic group of Pakistan.

Map Pashtuns



http://iakovosal.blogspot.gr/2016/05/blog-post_66.html

According to Wikipedia 30 millions of the Pashtun population live in Pakistan, and 14 millions live in Afghanistan. But Pashtuns very often cross the borders, and therefore the distribution of their population is not stable.

The Pashtun Population

Pashtuns

پښتانه

Paṣṭānə

Total population	
(Approx. 49 million (2009) ^[1])	
Regions with significant populations	
 Pakistan	30,699,036 (2015) ^[2]
 Afghanistan	13,750,117 (2008) ^[3]
 UAE	338,315 (2009) ^[4]
 United States	138,554 (2010) ^[5]
 Iran	110,000 (1993) ^[6]
 United Kingdom	100,000 (2009) ^[7]
 Germany	37,800 (2012) ^[8]
 Canada	26,000 (2006) ^[9]
 India	13,000 (2009) ^[10]
 Russia	9,800 (2002) ^[11]
 Australia	8,154 (2006) ^[12]
 Malaysia	5,500 (2008)
 Tajikistan	4,000 (1970) ^[6]
Languages	
Pashto	
<i>Urdu, Dari and English as second languages</i>	
Religion	
Islam (Sunni)	
<i>with small Shia minority</i>	

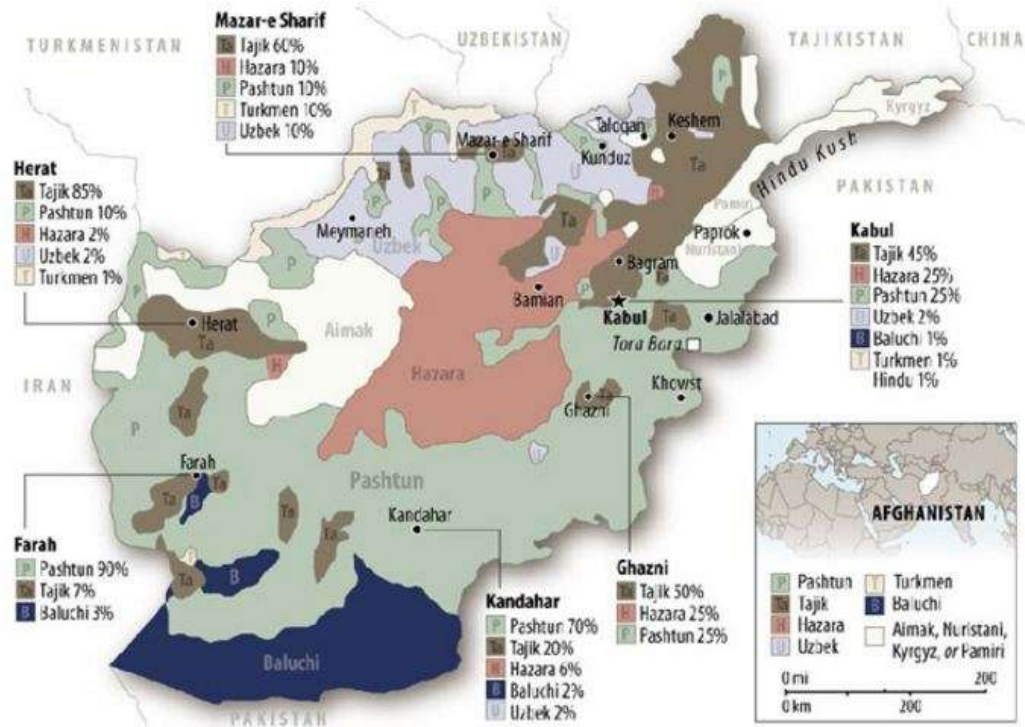
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pashtuns>

What is very important is that even though there are fewer Pashtuns in Afghanistan than in Pakistan, Pashtuns are the largest ethnic group of

Afghanistan and therefore they dominate Afghanistan. On the contrary while there are more Pashtuns in Pakistan than Afghanistan, the Punjabis dominate Pakistan since they are by far the largest ethnic group.

At the following map you can see the ethnic groups of Afghanistan. With light green the Pashtuns, from whom come the Afghan Taliban, a Pakistani ally, with somon the Shia Hazara, an Iranian ally, with brown the Sunni but of Iranian origin Tajics, who most of the time cooperate with Iran, with purple the Uzbeks, who also often cooperate with Iran, and at the south with blue the Baloch. The Baloch would like to see an independent Balochistan, by uniting the Balochistan of Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran. Therefore the Iranian and Indian allies in Afghanistan are located on the north whereas the Pakistani allies are on the south of Afghanistan.

Map of Afghanistan

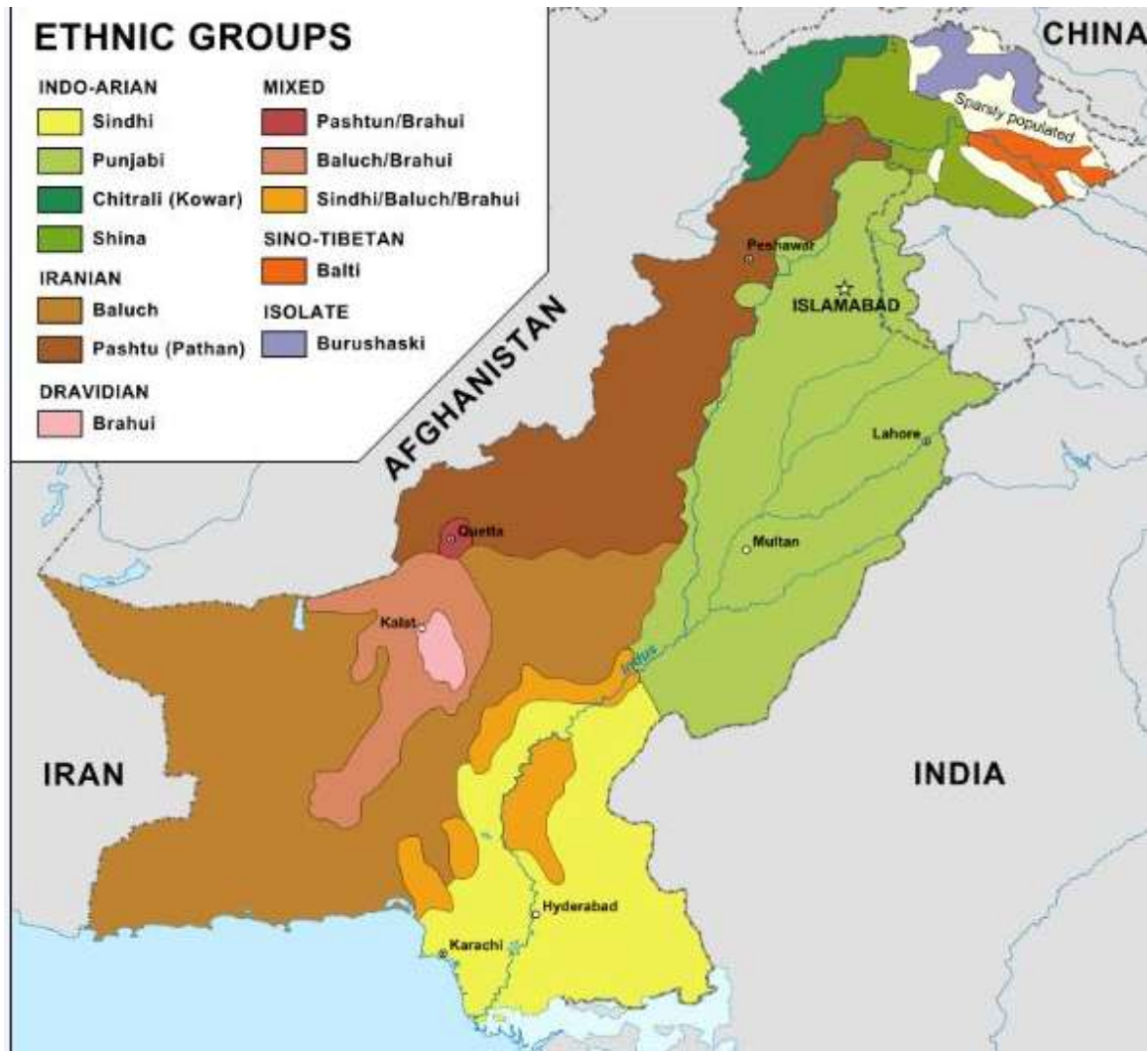


Courtesy Congressional Research Service

<http://www.cfr.org/afghanistan/taliban-afghanistan/p10551>

At the following map you can see the ethnic groups of Pakistan. With light green you can see the largest group i.e. the Punjabis, with dark brown the Pashtuns, with light brown the Baloch, who think they are exploited by the Punjabis, and with yellow the Sindh people, some of whom want an independent Sindhudesh.

Map Pakistan



https://simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethnic_groups_of_Pakistan#/media/File:Pakistan_ethnic_map.svg

At the following map you can see Balochistan, most of which lies in Pakistan and Iran.

Map Balochistan



There is also the issue of Kashmir, which is claimed by both Pakistan and India, and which would give India access to Central Asia bypassing her great rival Pakistan. India controls a part of Kashmir, and Pakistan another part of it.

Map Kashmir



<http://media.web.britannica.com/eb-media/05/64605-004-1CB809FC.gif>

Map Kashmir 2



http://www.wefightcensorship.org/sites/default/files/20110521_bbm960_kashmir.jpg

Next to Pakistan and Afghanistan you can see Xin Jiang, the sensitive Muslim province of China, where there are Muslim separatists.

The following map shows how the Tibetan, the Uyghur and Mongol separatists see China. The map does not represent my views. I just include the map because it is a visualization of the problems that China faces.

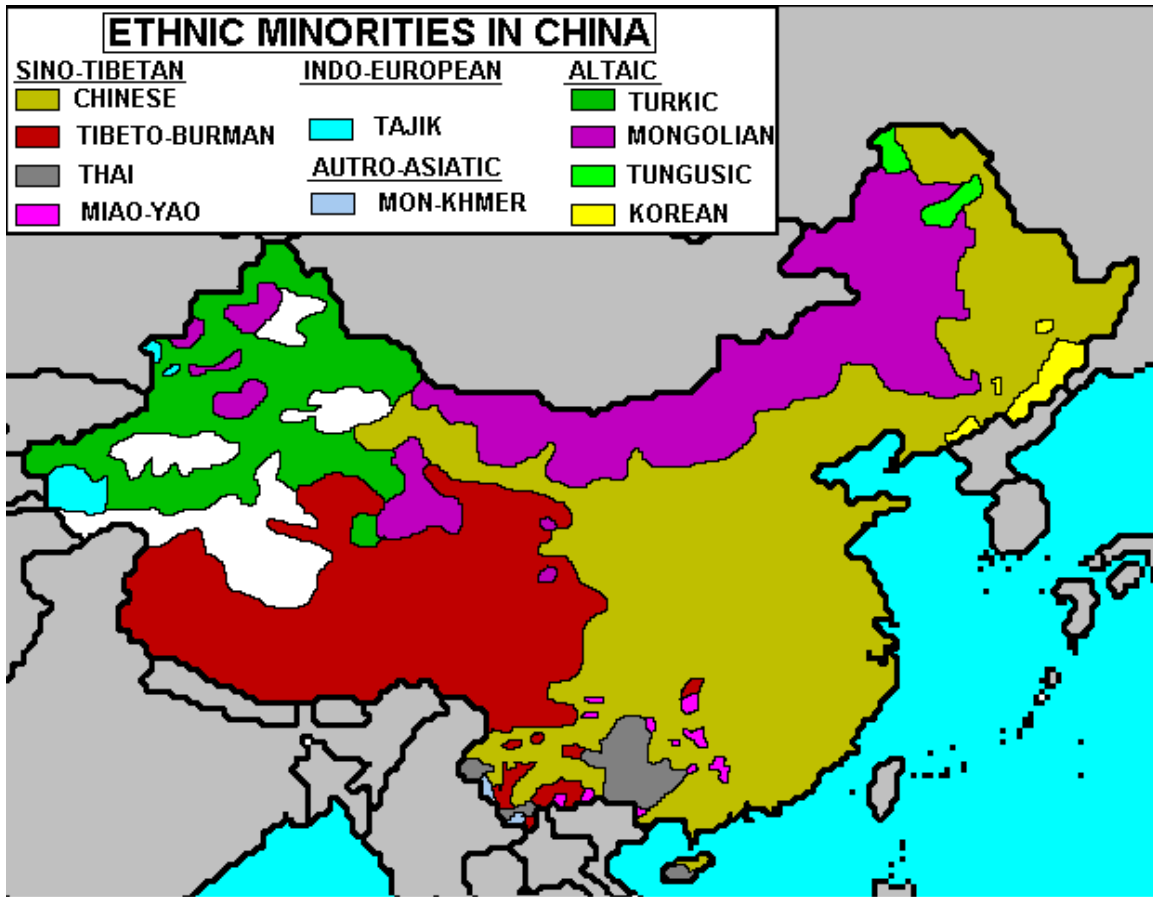
Map of Xin Jiang and Tibet



http://admin.americanthinker.com/images/bucket/2015-07/194965_5_.png

http://www.digitaljournal.com/img/2/4/8/3/0/3/i/7/1/5/o/map_xinjiang_tibet.jpg

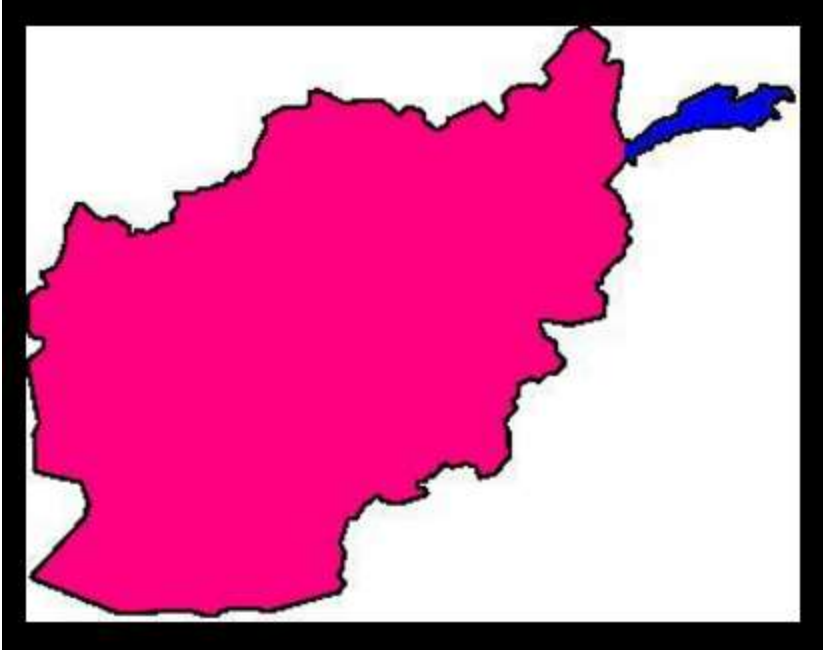
Map Ethnic Groups of China



<http://www.chinatouristmaps.com/assets/images/chinamaps/chianethnic.gif>

You cannot see it with the first glance, but Afghanistan and China have common borders.

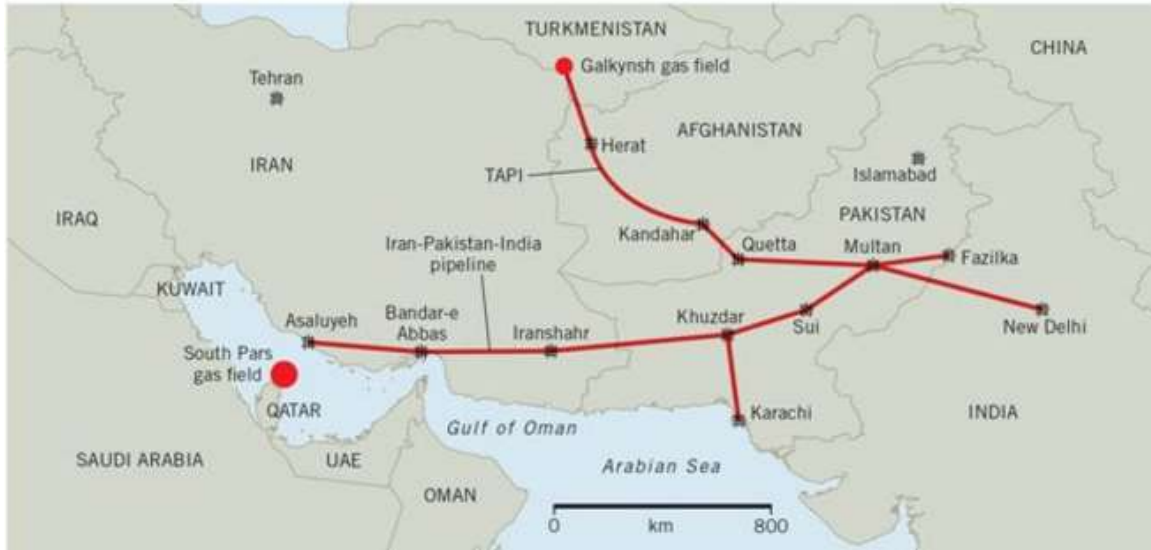
Map Chinese-Afghan Borders



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wakhan_Corridor#/media/File:Corridoio_del_Vacan.JPG

I have many times mentioned how important is the oil and natural gas of Central Asia, and the big rivalries for this oil and gas. For example there is the issue of the TAPI VS the Iran-Pakistan pipeline.

Map Iran-Pakistan and TAPI Pipelines



<http://www.ogj.com/articles/print/volume-114/issue-5/transportation/tapi-pipeline-progresses-but-future-uncertain.html>

That's the picture of Central Asia. But let me go back to the Taliban. To understand the Taliban you need to understand the Pashtuns. The border line between Pakistan and Afghanistan is the border line that the British had with Afghanistan when India was their colony, and Pakistan was part of India.

When India became independent in 1947, Pakistan was separated from India as her Muslim part, and also became independent. Therefore Pakistan's borders with Afghanistan were the British borders with Afghanistan, and Pakistan included the part of Pashtunistan that was under British control.

But when the British left, the Afghans started claiming the Pakistani Pashtunistan, and the Pakistanis were not willing to accommodate their claims. Note that Pashtunistan and Balochistan are very important for the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor.

Afghanistan is a very poor country, and therefore the Afghan Pashtuns want the Pakistani Pashtunistan. But the Pakistani Pashtuns have no motive to leave Pakistan, a richer country, in order to join Afghanistan, which is a much poorer country. Therefore the Pakistani Pashtuns are struggling with the Punjabis not because they want an independent Pashtunistan, but because they want more power in Pakistan. While the Afghani Pashtuns struggle with the Punjabis because they want to take the Pakistani Pashtunistan. That's not a rule, it is just the general idea. Note also that there are separatists among the Sindh people who are asking for an independent Sindhudesh. Therefore there is the issue of Balochistan, Pashtunistan and Sindhudesh.

The Pakistani army is made from Punjabis, while the Taliban are made from Pashtuns. Most Taliban are Pashtuns, but not all Pashtuns are Taliban. The Punjabis want to have good relations with the Pashtuns, in order not to have terrorist attacks in the Pujnabi areas, and to avoid Pashtun nationalism i.e. an independent Pashtunistan.

But as I said the Afghan governments traditionally claim the Pakistani Pashtunistan as their territory. Even the Afghan Taliban, which were created by Pakistan in the 90s, they did not recognize the Afghan-Pakistani borders when they took control of Afghanistan in 1996. And the question is which Afghan government will accept the Pakistani-Afghan borders, if even the Taliban, who were created by Pakistan, did not recognize them.

The thing with the Taliban is that they are not nationalist Pashtuns, i.e. Pashtuns who ask for a greater Pashtunistan, but rather they are Islamists

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