



“The (New) Great Game” Regional Geopolitics



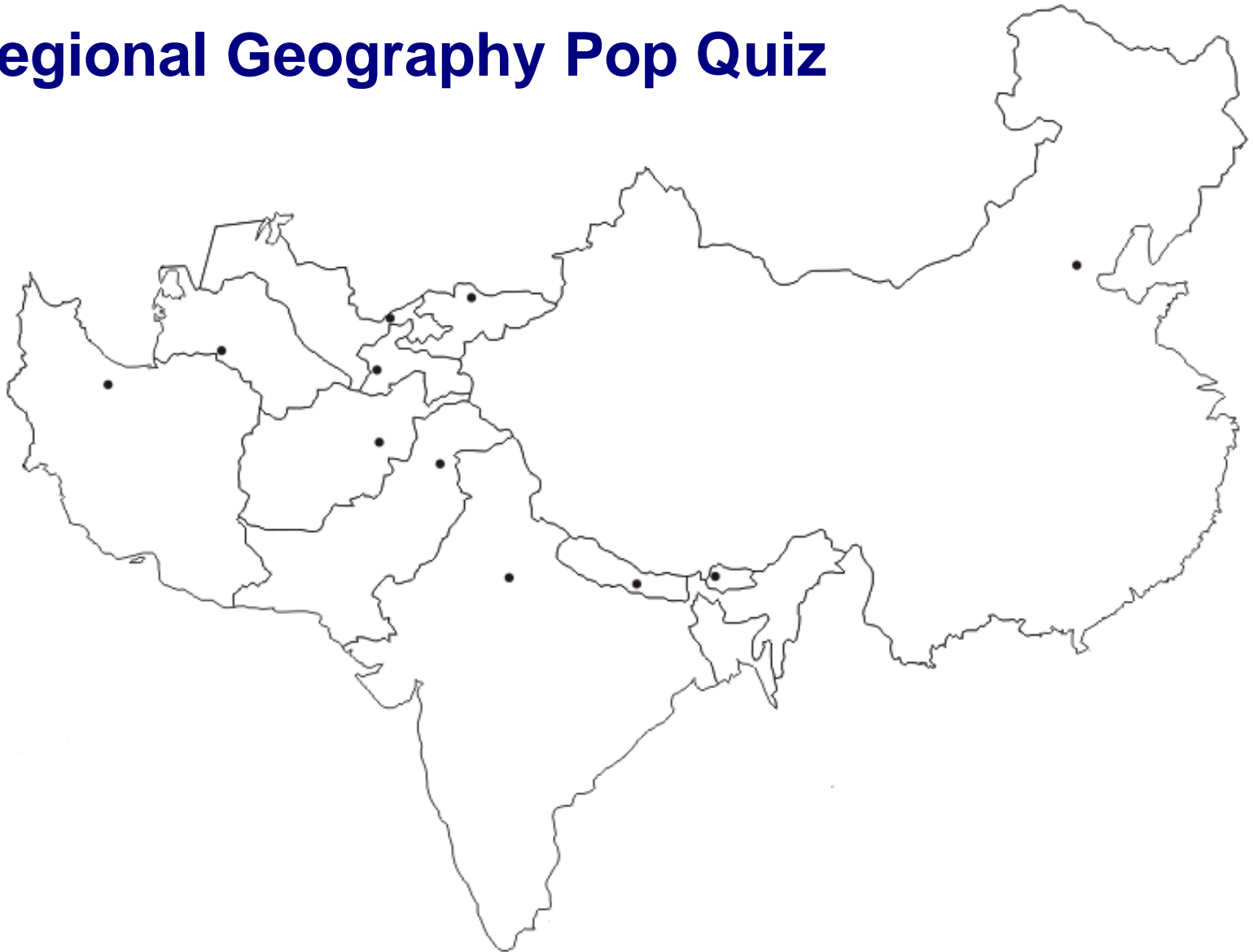
Instructor: Tim Hollifield, LTC Ret'd

This presentation is Unclassified



Directorate for Human Capital

Regional Geography Pop Quiz



IRAN



Official Name: *Jomhuri-ye Eslāmi-ye Irān*

(Islamic Republic of Iran)

Capital City: Tehran

Population: 74 - 78 million

Size (land): 636,372 sq mi
(18th largest)

Got Nukes?

Probably... sooner or later

TURKMENI STAN



Official Name: *Türkmenistan*
(formerly known as
Turkmenia and
Turkmen Soviet Socialist
Republic)

Capital City: Ashgabat (also
largest city)

Population: 5.1 million
(5,110,000)

Size (land): 188,456 sq mi

UZBEKISTAN



Official Name: *O‘zbekiston Respublikasi*

(Republic of Uzbekistan)

Capital City: Tashkent (also largest city)

Population: 27.6 million

**Size (land): 172,742 sq mi
(56th largest)**

Got Nukes? Not likely

KYRGYSTAN



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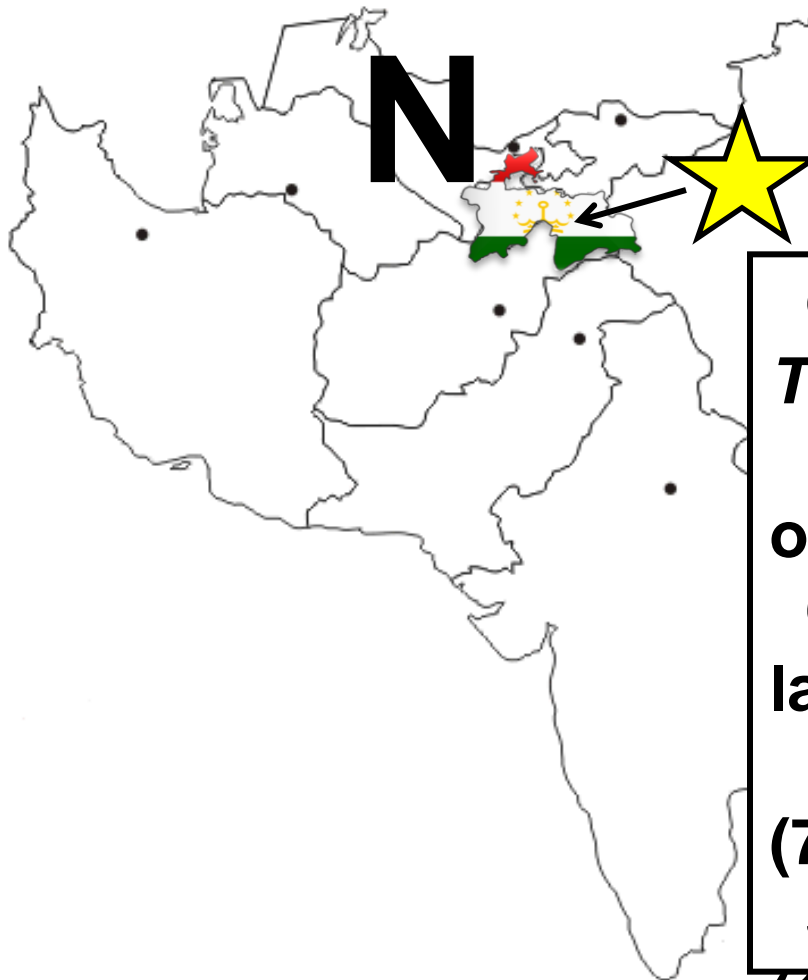
Official Name: *Kirgiz*
Respublikası
(Kyrgyz
Republic)

Capital City: Bishkek (also
largest city)

Population: 5.4 million
(5,482,000)

Size (land): 77,181 sq mi
(86th largest)

TAJIKISTAN



Official Name: *Ҷумҳурији Тоҷикистон*
(Republic of Tajikistan)

Capital City: Dushanbe (also largest city)

Population: 7.9 million
(7,995,754)

Size (land): 55,251 sq mi
(102nd largest)

AFGHANIS TAN



Official Name: *Jomhūrī-ye Eslāmī-ye Afgānistān* (Islamic Republic of Afghanistan)

Capital City: Kabul

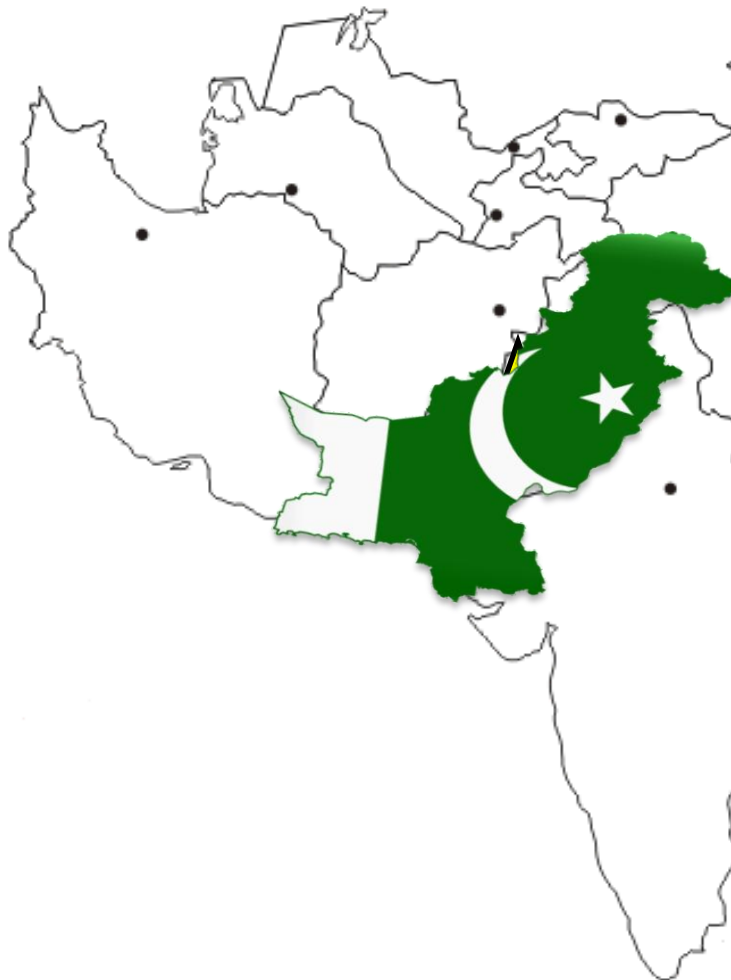
Population: 29.8 million

Size (land): 251,772 sq mi
(41st largest)

Got Nukes? Nope

(alhamdulillah!)

PAKISTAN



Official Name: *Islāmī Jumhūrī-ye Pākistān* (Islamic Republic of Pakistan)

Capital City: Islamabad
(Karachi largest city: 18 million!)

Population: 177 million (6th largest pop.)

Size (land): 307,374 sq mi
(36th largest)

INDIA



Official Name:
Bhārat
Gaṇarājya
(Republic of India)
Capital City: New Delhi
(Mumbai largest city: 20 m)
Population: 1.2 billion
(2nd largest pop.)
Size (land):
1,269,219 sq mi

CHINA



Official Name: *Zhōnghuá Rénmín Gònghéguó* (People's Democratic republic of China)

Capital City: Beijing (Shanghai largest city)

Population: 1.3 billion (world's largest pop.)

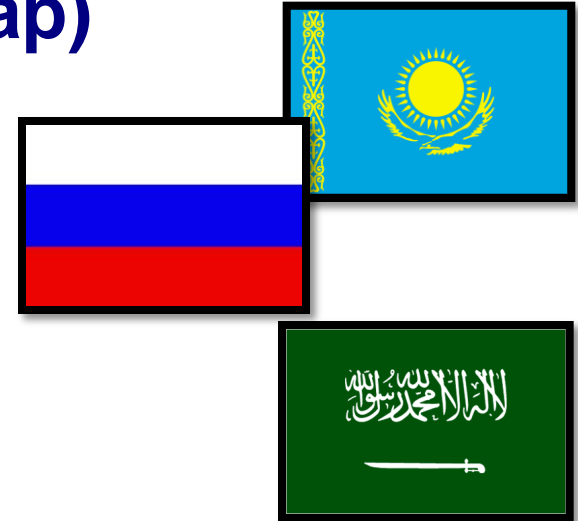
Size (land): 3,704,427 sq mi (3rd or 4th largest)



Other Countries (On and Off Map)

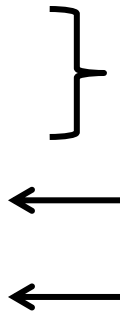
Not identified (but important)

- Russia and Kazakhstan
- Gulf States / Saudi Arabia



Identified (but not discussed)

- Nepal
- Bhutan
- Bangladesh
- Burma



Awesome trekking destinations!

South Asia's version of New Orleans (one "perfect storm" away from oblivion)!

Narco-State ruled by military junta... only Rambo and SecState goes there!

Two contested "autonomous regions"

- Tibet
- Kashmir



“The (New) Great Game” Regional Geopolitics



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Learning Objectives

- Describe and explain the meaning of Geopolitics and the “(New) Great Game”
- Describe major interests and challenges of neighbors and regional powers:
 - Bordering Nations: Iran, Pakistan, and Central Asian States
 - Regional Powers: Russia, China, and India
 - Others: Gulf/Arab States (primarily UAE and Saudi Arabia)*
- Describe how regional powers are affecting and influencing stability and security of AFPAK

* **Note:** U.S. and Coalition partners (i.e. EU and NATO) Turkey, Jordan, and the International NGOs (i.e. UN) will not be discussed in this module



AGENDA

- **Geopolitical Overview**
 - Defining “Geopolitics”
 - “The (New) Great Game”
- **Interests, Policies, Goals**
 - Pakistan and Iran
 - Central Asia States
 - Russia
 - People’s Republic of China
 - India
 - Arab / Gulf States: Saudi Arabia, UAE, Jordan
- **Challenges and Opportunities**



1878 Political Cartoon: Afghan Amir Sher Ali with "friends" Imperial Russia and Britain



Crescent of Crisis?



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Tough Neighborhood: Afghanistan Geopolitics

- **Afghanistan weaker than its neighbors**
 - Sovereignty and security
 - Economy and infrastructure
 - Development
- **Most major ethnic groups are trans-border**
 - Use of co-ethnic proxies common throughout region
 - Ethnic identity factor in present insurgency and past (future?) civil conflict
- **Nuclear Neighborhood (Future WWII: Indo-Pak or Iran)**





Statistical Comparison of the Region

Country	Pop. (in millions)	Population Growth Rate	GDP Growth Rate (%)	GDP Per Capita (USD)	Exports to Region (mil. USD)	Below Poverty Line (%)	Literacy (%)	Political Stability Index
Afghanistan	29	2.67	8	300	1,003	53	36	3.4
Pakistan	152	2.09	7.8	632	5,149	40	49	6.3
Iran	67	1.10	4.8	2,431	10,308	32	77	19.9
Tajikistan	6	2.19	8.0	323	666	64	90	13.1
Uzbekistan	26	1.70	7.2	461	1,389	28	91	9.7
Turkmenistan	5	1.83	11.0	1,251	13,727	58	93	18.9
China	1,269	0.59	9.3	1,272	22,561	10	90	46.6
India	1,080	1.38	7.6	638	12,694	25	61	24.3
Russia	143	-0.37	5.9	4,078	15,669	18	95	21.8



Meaning and Origin of “Geopolitics”

- MacKinder: founder of geopolitics as field of study; coined terms “geo-strategic,” “manpower,” and “heartland”
- Mid-20th cent: IR theory and practice
 - **Theory:** describes relationship between politics and territory
 - **Practice:** Analyzing, proscribing, forecasting and using political power over a given territory
- Today: Shorthand for set of **interests, challenges, and relations between nation-states** and transnational actors

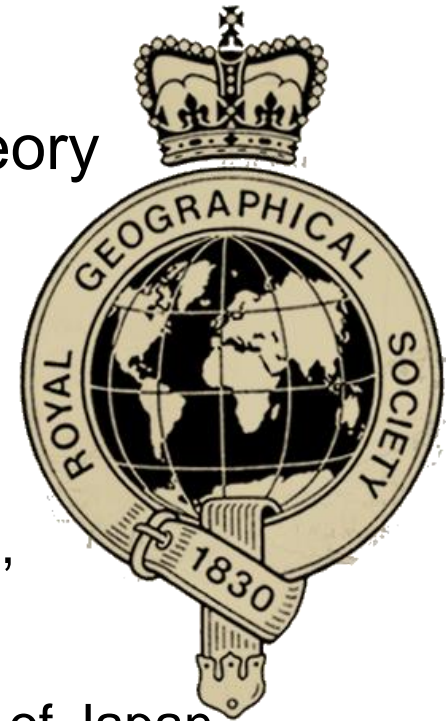


English Geographer
**Sir Halford John
Mackinder**
(1861-1947)



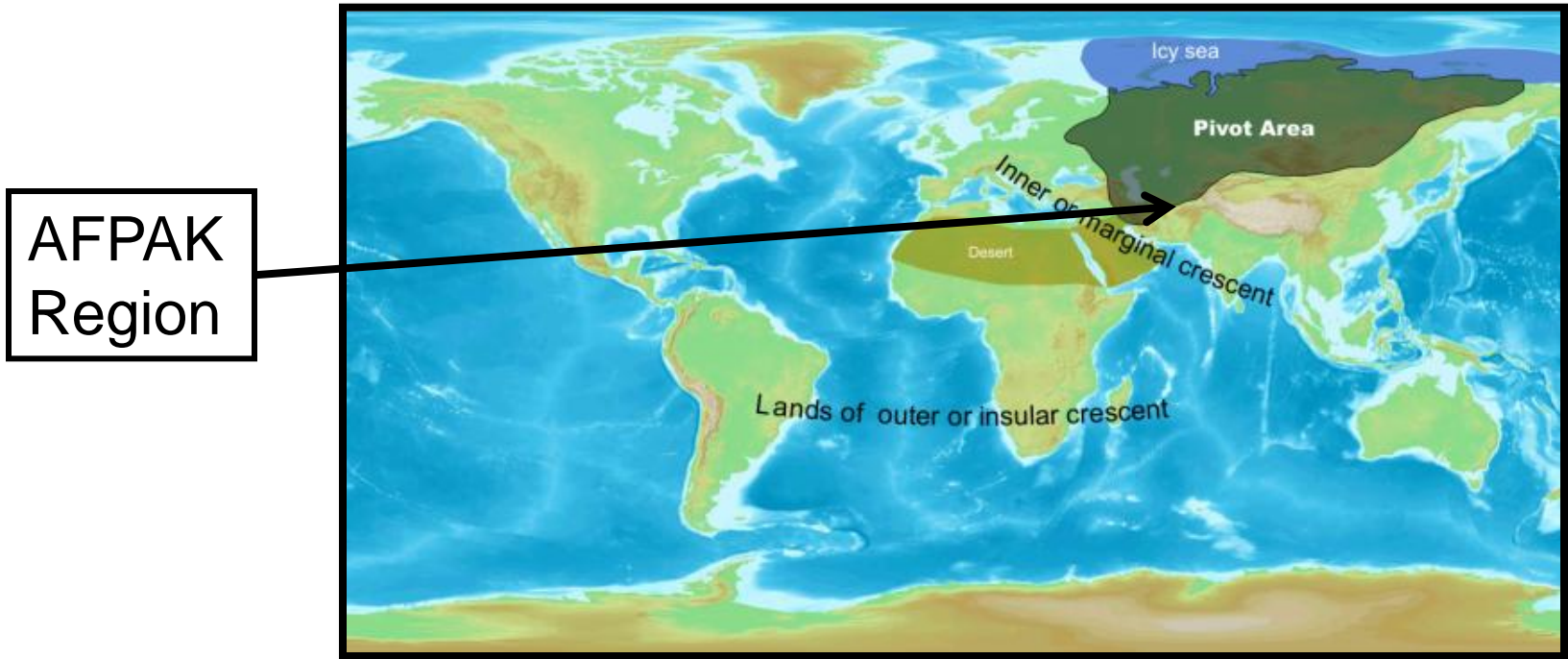
MacKinder's "Heartland" Theory

- 1919: MacKinder proposes "Heartland" theory to Royal Geographic Society
- According to Mackinder, the Earth's land surface was divisible into:
 - **World-Island:** Interlinked continents of Europe, Asia, and Africa (most populous and richest)
 - **Offshore islands:** British Isles and the islands of Japan
 - **Outlying islands:** Continents of North America, South America, and Australia
 - **Heartland:** Center of the world island, stretching from the Volga to the Yangtze and from the Himalayas to the Arctic





The Eurasian Heartland and AFPAK



"Who rules Eurasia commands the Heartland;
who rules the Heartland commands the World-Island;
who rules the World-Island controls the world "

--- Sir Halford MacKinder, 1919



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Pakistan: Why It Matters

- World's Only predominately Muslim Nuclear state
 - 80-100 Nuclear WMDs w/ 1,500-mile range
 - Proliferation / Black Market
- Ties to Taliban, AQ, and other militant groups
 - Sanctuary (Kashmir, Waziristan)
 - Early warning, logistical support, and funding
- Many interests counter to U.S., AFG, and Regional Stability





Pakistan's Interests, Goals, and Policies

- Counterbalance influence of India and U.S.
- Promote Pakistan and PRC interests (esp. Central Asia)
- Maintain “Strategic Depth” in AFG
- Counter / Deter
Pakistan Taliban and
anti-gov't militants
- Counter / Deter
Baluchi separatists



PM Gilani, President Karzai, Afghan Foreign Minister Spanta and Pak Army Chief Kayani meet in Islamabad, 13 May 2009 (AFP)



Challenges in AFG-PAK Relations

- Past / ongoing difficulties inhibit new strategic relationship
 - Secure border / fight militancy and drugs
 - Promote trade, commercial and energy interests
- **Pakistan claims** Afghanistan used by India to foment trouble (esp. in Baluchistan and FATA)
- **Afghanistan accuses** Pakistan of intervention and using Taliban as proxy for PAK regional policy



A view shared by Afghanistan and U.S.-led Coalition



PAK(MIL) National Security Priorities

■ Two Focused Priorities

- Defend Against India
- Maintain integrity and viability of Pakistani state

The Main Means

- Conventional Formations
- WMD Weapons (NBC)
- Irregular Militias

■ Eight Principle Ways

- Maintain strategic partnerships: Security and Economic
- Constrain Indian quest for regional hegemony
- Deter Indian Aggression
- Prevent encirclement from/by the “West”
- Seek international recognition of borders
- Suppress Internal Unrest
- Assure responsible governance



Pakistan Strategic Perspective: India is the Existential Threat



PAKMIL Irregular Militias (aka Militant Proxies)

- **Most offensive (and active) means** in PAK security triumvirate
- **Several dozen Islamist “militia” groups** --- members from 10/1000s (trained / active) to 100/1000s (available)
- **Common traits:** Anti-Hindu, Pro-Sunni, Pro-Pakistan
- **Focus:** Indian Kashmir, AFG, S. Asia, Sectarian Strife

Locus of Control:



ISID and PAKMIL Senior Leaders (Active and Retired)



Iran: Why It Matters

- World's only absolutist theocracy
 - Seeks global recognition and regional dominance
- May possess Nuclear WMDs
 - Defies Nonproliferation treaty
 - Political will to use against U.S. and allies
- Seeks to destabilize AFG and region to assert influence
 - Training and logistical support to militant and terrorist organizations

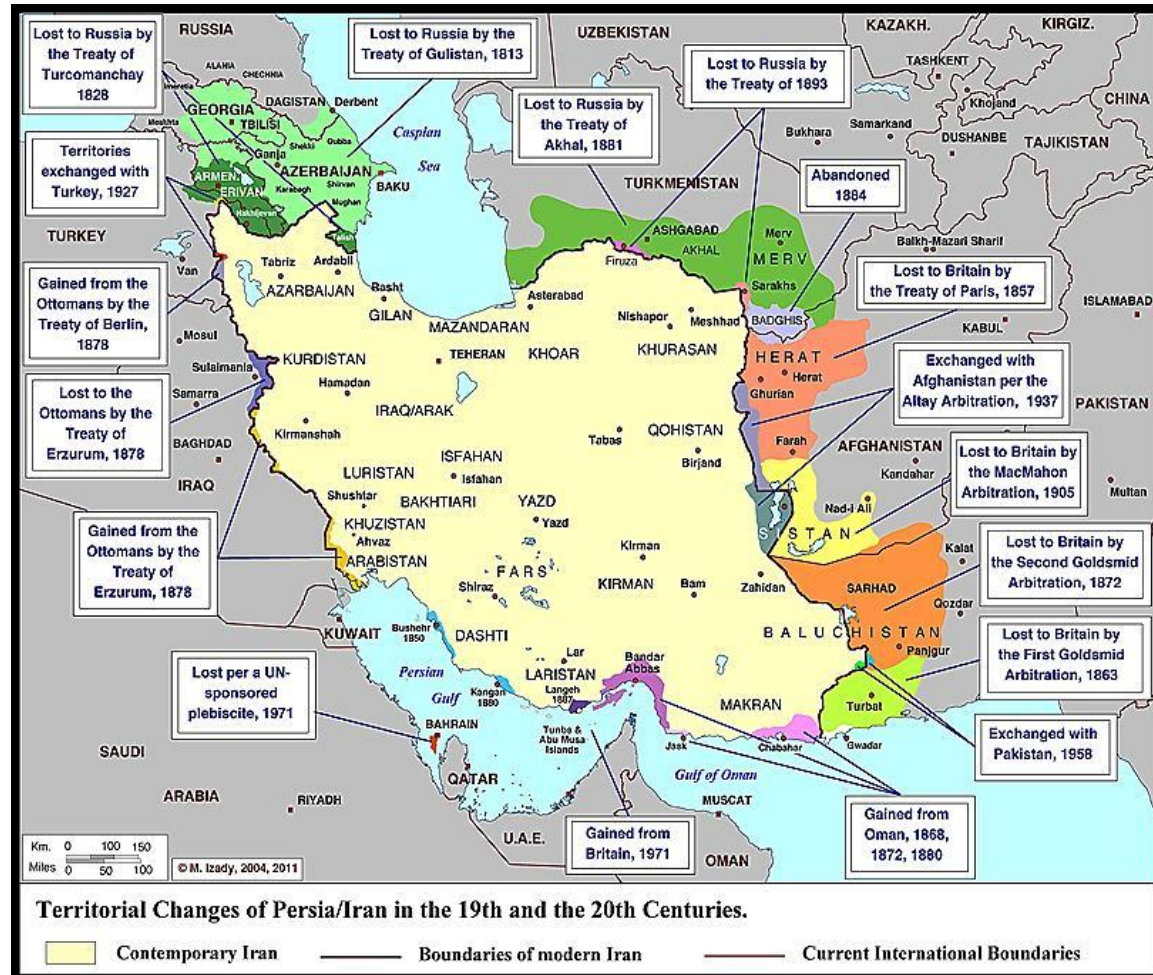


Iran: Territories Lost and Gained

- Once controlled parts of modern:
 - Afghanistan
 - Turkmenistan
 - Baluchistan
 - Iraq and Bahrain
 - Caucasus

- Lost Herat in 1856-57 Anglo-Persian War

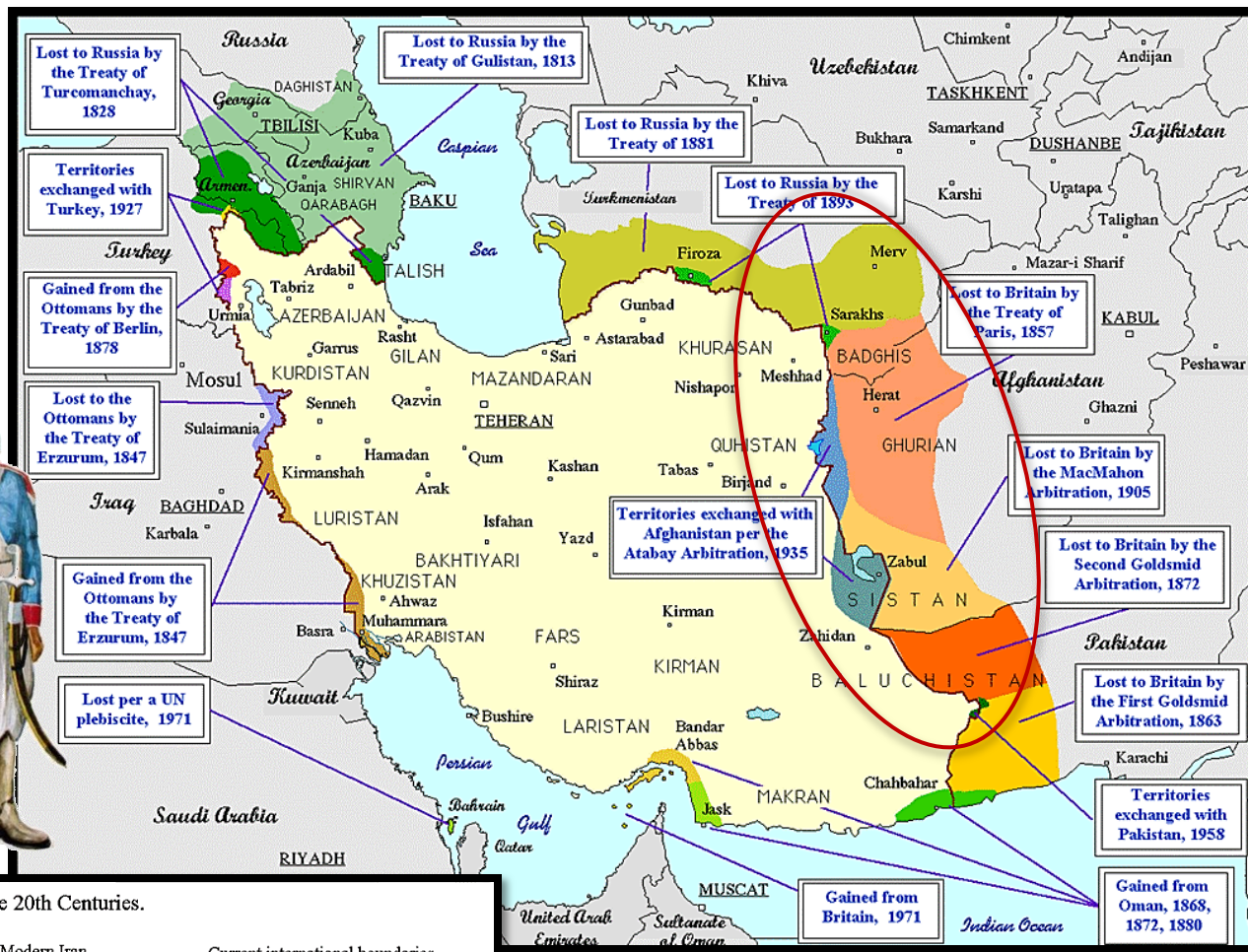
- Cultural influence from Iraq to India





Iran: Territorial Changes (1800 - 1900s)

Qajar Imperial Persian Coat of Arms 1907 - 1925





Iran's Interests, Goals, and Policies

- Seeks stable but weak AFG free of US influence
 - Training and logistical support to militant and terrorist organizations
 - Maintain awareness of and pressure on U.S.-NATO forces
- Active role in reconstruction, esp. infrastructure
- Active in Counternarcotics
- Maintain religious / cultural ties with Shi'a communities
- Alignment with India
 - Chah Bahar Port Development
 - Zaranj-Delaram Road Project





Iran

- **A history of influence in the region**
 - Once controlled parts of modern-day western Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Baluchistan (as well as Iraq, Bahrain, Caucasus)
 - Lost Herat in the Anglo-Persian War in 1856/7

- **Ties to Shi'a co-religionist in Afghanistan**
 - Historical and cultural linkages to Tajik communities
 - Supported the Northern Alliance against the Taliban
 - Hosted perhaps 2 million refugees during the 1990s



Iran and Afghanistan

- **Iran's objectives**
 - Expand influence in Afghanistan
 - Put pressure on the United States and NATO
 - Decrease the flow of drugs from Afghanistan

- **Iran's strategy**
 - Support the Afghan government
 - Hedge by funding Taliban groups: QST, HQN, and HIG
 - Contribute to road, rail, energy infrastructure
 - Retain long-standing linkages with Tajiks
 - Subsidize charities and expand patronage networks



Iran and Pakistan

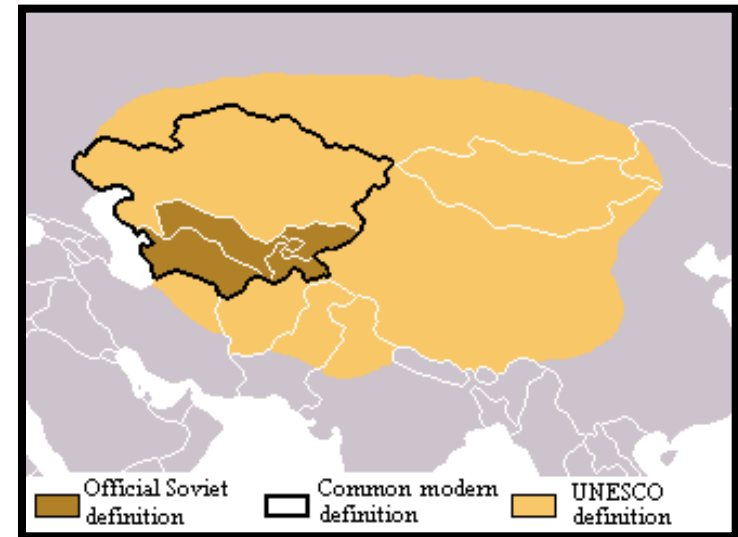
- “Frenemies” with Pakistan
 - Closer ties before the Iranian Revolution
- Mutual mistrust over sectarian-related issues
 - 1980s-90s: Relations hit extreme low during Sunni-Shi’a sectarian violence in Pakistan
- Pakistan wary of Iran’s relationship with India
- Engagement continues on trade and energy issues
- Both countries concerned about Baluch separatism



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Defining “Central Asia”

- Broadly / historically: Caspian Sea to Central China; Southern Russia to Northern Pakistan
- Also known as “Inner Asia”
- Today: Five former Soviet republics of...
 - Kazakhstan
 - Kyrgyzstan
 - Tajikistan
 - Turkmenistan
 - Uzbekistan





Central Asia: Interests, Goals, and Policies

- Deter / Halt Islamist militant “contagion” and narcotics trafficking
 - Marginalize capability/influence of IMU/IJU
 - Less concerned for stability and security in AFG / PAK
- Resolve water-sharing issues with AFG
- Balance tug-of-war between U.S. and Russia (while ensuring aid and investment from both)
- Expand economic ties and in energy production capabilities (oil, natural gas, rare earth minerals)





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India: Why It Matters

- Historical ties with Afghanistan and Pakistan
- Largest regional contributor to Afghan development
- Animosity and distrust with Pakistan defines the region
- Almost 160M Muslims living in India
- Desires a pre-eminent role in regional dynamics





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India's Interests, Goals, and Policies



- **Goals**
 - Seeks recognition as great power and dominant nation in South Asia / Indian Ocean
 - Wants decisive role in regional security
 - Prevention of developments which undermine its strategic interests in region and abroad

- **Interests in AFPAK**
 - Gateway / Corridor to Central Asian Markets and Beyond
 - Prevent / Deter proliferation of Islamist militancy (esp. groups trained/supported by PAK)

Note: India is the largest regional donor to Afghanistan



Russia : Why It Matters

- History in the region from Great Game to Soviet states to invasion of Afghanistan
- Views Central Asia as its sphere of influence
- Significant problem with Afghan narcotics





Russia's Interests, Goals, and Policies

- Wants recognition as Great Power
- Protect Central Asian economic and political interests
- Curtail Islamic extremism
- Slow the flood of drugs
- Counter or limit U.S. presence

Afghanistan is extremely wary of Russian interests and activities because of their history and the resulting animus.

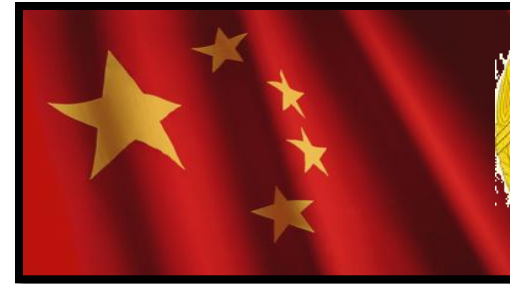


**Russian Pres. Medvedev
meets with Karzai, 2008**



China (PRC): Why It Matters

- Largest private development investor in AFG
- Seeks to exploit natural resources to feed markets at home.
- Fears the development of Islamic extremism in its Western provinces





PRC's Interests, Goals, and Policies

- Financial support and investment
- Halt spread of Islamic extremism
- Limit/contain the West's influence in Asian sphere
- Aligning with Pakistan as a balance to India's growing influence
 - Gwadar Port development



Chinese Pres. Hu Jintao and Pres. Hamid Karzai, during a welcoming ceremony in Beijing, Apr 2011 (AFP)



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Gulf States: Why They Matter


- Saudi Arabia
 - Support to AFG and Pakistan going back to Mujahideen era and before
 - Strong promoter of Wahabbism
 - Diplomatic ties and credibility with the Taliban
 - Maintains a robust, but quiet, security relationship with Pakistan
- UAE
 - Serve as a fundraising hub for Taliban and sectarian groups in South Asia
 - Is a prominent investors in Pakistan and Afghanistan
 - Is a major transit point for licit and illicit trade
 - A significant destination for migrant labor





Gulf States' Interests, Goals, and Policies

- Saudi Arabia: Maintain cultural/religious ties/influence
 - Build/maintain diplomatic influence
 - Continue relationships with militaries and intel services
 - Limit/counter-balance Iranian influence
- UAE: Limit/counter-balance Iranian influence
 - Maintain position as regional center for banking and trade

- 
- Bilateral ties in AFPAK reinforced by Islamic identity, solidarity, and patronage:
 - Afghans have heroic VIP status (since Anti-Soviet Jihad)
 - Pakistan's relationship much stronger due to Nuclear WMD prestige and common foreign policy goals



Regional Challenges and Opportunities

Challenges

- Multiple competing alliances/allegiances
- Nuclear WMDs raise stakes for miscalculation
- Competing religious/sectarian interests makes the competition incredibly personal

Opportunities

- Energy and natural resources
- International attention/resources
- Ethnic ties, overlapping interests



Key Lessons

- **Afghanistan remains a prize in Great Game**
- **Competing regional interests = aid and instability**
- **US goal of strong and stable Afghanistan benefits no regional player**
 - Iran and Pakistan benefit from weak but stable Afghanistan
 - COIN contradicts some nations' interests
- **No regional player contributes troops**

**“When everyone is dead the Great Game is finished. Not before.”
-- Rudyard Kipling, *Kim* (1901)**

QUESTIONS?



Afghanistan-Pakistan Regional Expertise Training Program

This briefing is classified

UNCLASSIFIED

Derived from: Multiple Sources



Recommended Reading

Directorate for Human Capital

The Wars of Afghanistan: Messianic Terrorism, Tribal Conflicts, and the Failures of the Great Powers by Peter Tomsen (Public Affairs, 2011)

Descent into Chaos: The U.S. and the Disaster in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Central Asia by Ahmed Rashid (Penguin, 2009)

The Dust of Empire: The Race for Mastery in The Asian Heartland by Karl Ernest Meyer (Public Affairs, 2004)

The New Great Game: Blood and Oil in Central Asia by Lutz Kleveman (Grove Press, 2004)

Postmodern Imperialism: Geopolitics and the Great Games by Eric Walberg (Clarity Press, 2001)

The Great Game: The Struggle for Empire in Central Asia by Peter Hopkirk (Kodansha Globe, 1992)



Afghanistan: Converging / Diverging Objectives

	Strong Support
	Marginal Support
	Indifference
	Weak Opposition
	Strong Opposition

	GIROA	Taliban	Legal Opposition	U.S.	Europe (EU)	Pakistan	India	Iran	Russia	China
NATO Withdrawal										
Combatting Terrorism										
Nonalignment										
Non-interference										
Security Assistance										
International Economic Aid										



Afghanistan: Converging / Diverging Objectives

	GIRoA	Taliban	Legal Opposition	U.S.	Europe (EU)	Pakistan	India	Iran	Russia	China
Counter-narcotics				Marginal Support	Strong Support	Marginal Support	Strong Opposition	Strong Support	Strong Support	Strong Support
Reconciliation	Marginal Support	Strong Opposition	Strong Opposition	Strong Support	Strong Support	Weak Opposition	Weak Opposition	Marginal Support	Strong Support	Strong Support
Power sharing	Marginal Support	Strong Support	Strong Opposition	Weak Opposition	Indifference	Strong Support	Strong Opposition	Strong Support	Marginal Support	Weak Opposition
Islam and Shari'ah Law	Weak Opposition	Strong Support	Strong Opposition	Weak Opposition	Marginal Support	Strong Support	Weak Opposition	Marginal Support	Weak Opposition	Indifference
Insurgency	Weak Opposition	Strong Support	Strong Opposition	Strong Opposition	Strong Opposition	Strong Support	Strong Opposition	Marginal Support	Strong Opposition	Strong Opposition

Source: Adapted from Page 54, Aspen European Strategy Forum "Sustainable Strategies for Afghanistan and the Region After 2014"

 Indicates ideological differences between core and fringe