

Beradar, Pakistan, and the Afghan Taliban: What Gives?

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Summary

The recent arrests of several high profile Afghan Taliban leaders by Pakistan have raised expectations that Islamabad's longstanding support for the "Quetta *shura*" may at last be waning. The arrests have prompted the view that Pakistan has indeed changed its traditional strategy of protecting the Afghan Taliban leadership. Unfortunately, the realities are less encouraging. A closer look at the recent arrests suggests that:

- The seizure of Mullah Beradar and some others was prompted by U.S. intelligence initiatives, was entirely fortuitous, and certainly *not* part of any premeditated detention plan by Pakistan.
- Although several other arrests have taken place entirely on Pakistani initiative, some of these detentions involve low-level al-Qaeda associates, whose arrests are consistent with Islamabad's standing policy of aiding the United States.
- Of the remaining Afghan Taliban leaders arrested independently by Islamabad, many are either not particularly significant or represent a housecleaning by Pakistan's military intelligence.

As a result, the Afghan Taliban's leadership in Pakistan is certainly not decimated. Nor do Pakistan's actions constitute the "sea change" in its behavior, as some observers have argued. Instead, they represent a recalibration of Pakistan's evolving policy: rather than supporting the declared U.S. goal of defeating the Taliban, the recent arrests exemplify a Pakistani effort to seize control over the process of negotiations and reconciliation that its military leaders believe is both imminent and inevitable in the Afghan conflict. And it is emphatically motivated by the conviction that India, not the Afghan Taliban, is the main enemy to be neutralized in the Afghan endgame.

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Introduction

Over a month ago, the *New York Times* broke the dramatic news that Mullah Abdul Ghani Beradar Akhund, the Afghan Taliban's second-in-command and the head of its military committee, was apprehended in Karachi in a secret joint operation by Pakistani and U.S. intelligence operatives. Initial reports about the arrest were confusing, but the news was certainly welcome: the arrest was the first detention of a *rahbari shura* (leadership council) member since the arrest of Mullah Obaidullah Akhund in 2007, and this operation was apparently led by Pakistan's military intelligence agency, the Directorate, Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI).¹ The ISI traditionally played a key role in protecting the fugitive Afghan Taliban leadership in Pakistan and for this reason, its role in this operation raised questions about whether Islamabad's longstanding strategies toward New Delhi and Kabul were at last changing. Beradar's surprise arrest was quickly followed by a wave of other detentions: Maulavi Abdul Kabir, the former Taliban governor of Nangarhar and the eastern provinces and also a member of the *rahbari shura*, was picked up a few weeks later, and within a month the *Christian Science Monitor* was reporting that "nearly half of the Afghanistan Taliban's leadership" had been arrested by the ISI, "dealing what could be a crucial blow to the insurgent movement."²

Pakistan's sudden cooperation in targeting the Afghan Taliban's core leadership—after almost a decade of feigning ignorance about the *shura*'s presence within the country—surprised many and raised expectations in Washington that Islamabad's decision signaled a quiet but decisive shift in Pakistan's geostrategic policy. Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Senator John Kerry argued that the Beradar operation represented "a new level of cooperation"³ between Pakistan and the United States. Bruce Reidel, the convener of President Barack Obama's task force on Afghanistan and Pakistan, was more expansive: speaking to the *New York Times*, he asserted that Islamabad's action regarding Beradar constituted a "sea change in Pakistani behavior,"⁴ also claiming subsequently that it "was not a one off or an accident, but a turning point in Pakistan's policy towards the Taliban."⁵ David Ignatius, writing in the *Washington Post*, reported that many White House officials held similar views, some even maintaining that Pakistan's latest decisions constituted a "strategic recalibration"⁶ of the U.S.–Pakistan relationship to include renewed cooperation on counterterrorism. And White House press secretary Robert Gibbs even offered a reason why when he declared that Islamabad's newly rejuvenated effort against the Afghan Taliban *shura* is rooted in "the recognition on the Pakistani military side that extremists in their country posed not simply a threat to us, but an existential threat to them."⁷

Making Sense of the Arrests

Were the above claims true, it would be great news indeed, not only for the United States and Afghanistan, but also for Pakistan's long-term political prospects. But is it? And does Pakistan's recent targeting of the Afghan Taliban truly represent a "turning point" in how it views the value of this insurgency? The answers to these questions are vital, particularly as the United States commits to sustained military operations in Afghanistan. If Islamabad has in fact changed course and put an end to the state-supported sanctuary that had benefited the Taliban, the impediments to the insurgency's success increase considerably.

Unfortunately, the realities are less encouraging—at least on the issue of whether Pakistan is in fact changing course *strategically* with regard to the Afghan Taliban. First, one must evaluate the facts surrounding the arrests. Although the arrest of Mullah Beradar was in fact a joint operation conducted by the ISI and U.S. intelligence, there is little doubt now that Beradar's Pakistani captors had no idea that he was among the individuals apprehended at the Karachi *madrassa* at the time of his capture. Although the operation itself was initiated in response to a U.S. tip, it is as yet unclear whether even U.S. intelligence officials knew for a fact that Beradar would be present at this location when the operation began.⁸ That the ISI partnered in the operation and physically made the arrest itself is not surprising, given that the United States has no legal authority to apprehend, detain, or interrogate anyone in Pakistan. In fact, joint ISI-CIA seizures of terrorism targets in Pakistan invariably take this form: U.S. sources provide critical data about the suspect and the ISI directorates that liaise with U.S. intelligence then collaborate to complete the arrest.⁹

Weeks after the event, enough information has now surfaced to suggest that the Pakistanis held Beradar for some time before even realizing his identity.¹⁰ Because U.S. intelligence assets were deeply involved throughout in this operation, albeit in ways respectful of Pakistani sensitivities, it would have been difficult for the ISI to simply release Beradar after he was discovered.¹¹ (This has occurred in several other instances when individuals too embarrassing to detain have simply been released quietly by their ISI captors.) The news leaks of his capture soon after he was identified in custody made it even more difficult for the ISI (and its more shadowy directorates) to simply "lose" him surreptitiously.

Whatever else may be at issue, Beradar's arrest was certainly *not* part of any premeditated detention plan by the ISI—and as such cannot be counted as evidence of any dramatic change of course by Pakistan, or at least one that involves conclusively turning its back on the *rahbari shura*. As if to make this point plain, the ISI did two other things even as Beradar's detention in Pakistani custody was underway. First, it continued to release other Taliban leaders who managed to get inadvertently caught in other counterterrorism dragnets elsewhere in Pakistan.¹² And, second, it began to warn key Taliban

protectees about the enhanced counterterrorism sweeps underway, pushing some operatives even further underground while warning others to exercise better operational security, given the mishaps that had just befallen Beradar through his (and his cohort's) careless communications.¹³

Key Arrests in Pakistan in 2010

1. **Mullah Abdul Ghani Beradar** - Second-in-command of the Afghan Taliban
2. **Maulavi Abdul Kabir** - Commander of Taliban fighters in eastern Afghanistan and former Taliban governor of Nangarhar province
3. **Mullah Abdul Qayoum Zakir** - Former Guantanamo Bay detainee
4. **Mullah Muhammad Hassan** - Former Taliban minister
5. **Mullah Ahmed Jan Akhunzada** - Former Taliban governor of Zabul
6. **Mullah Abdul Raouf** - Taliban leader in northeastern Afghanistan
7. **Agha Jan Mohtasim** - Former Taliban finance minister
8. **Mullah Abdul Salam** - Taliban 'shadow governor' of Kunduz
9. **Mullah Mir Mohammed** - Taliban 'shadow governor' of Baghlan
10. **Mullah Muhammad Younis (a.k.a. Akhunzada Popalzai)** – Former Taliban police chief in Kabul
11. **Ameer Muawiya** - Osama bin Laden associate in charge of foreign al-Qaeda militants in Pakistan's border areas
12. **Abu Hamza** - Former Afghan army commander in Helmand province during Taliban rule
13. **Abu Riyad al Zarqawi** - Liaison with Chechen and Tajik militants in Pakistan's border area
14. **Abdolmalek Rigi** - Jundallah leader
15. **Chota Usman (aka Iliyas)** - Taliban commander accused of operating a Taliban court in the Mohmand Agency
16. **Umar Abdul Rehman** - Taliban operative
17. **Abu Yahya Mujahdeen al-Adam** – al-Qaeda operative

But don't these actions run counter to all the other arrests of Afghan Taliban leaders by the ISI? Indeed they do—and therein lies a tale. To be sure, the Pakistani intelligence services apprehended several other individuals in the aftermath of Beradar's seizure, although some of these arrests have yet to be confirmed independently. The earliest such detentions, however, including the two Afghan Taliban "shadow governors," were not products of any Pakistani initiative. Rather, they resulted from information secured through Beradar's interrogation, which was kept secret for as long as possible because, as one news report put it, "American officials ... were determined to roll up as much of the Taliban's leadership as they could."¹⁴ This questioning, initially conducted by the ISI, was closely monitored by the United States, and even though U.S. intelligence was denied physical access to him at the very beginning, grilling Beradar nonetheless yielded fruit because, odd as it may

seem at first sight, some ISI directorates are actually more cooperative with their U.S. counterparts on counterterrorism matters than some others.

Several subsequent arrests, however, took place entirely on Pakistani initiative, but there may be less here than meets the eye. For example, although the international press has widely trumpeted the notion that half of the Taliban's "top" leadership is now behind bars, these claims are grounded largely on either Pakistani claims or poor information about the composition of the *rahbari shura* and the structure of its relationships with the four regional *shuras* and their subordinate formations. Even a cursory survey of those Taliban leaders detained by Pakistan since mid-February shows that besides Mullah Abdul Ghani Beradar Akhund and Maulavi Abdul Kabir, none of the other captives are likely members of the *rahbari shura*. Two of the individuals arrested, Mullah Abdul Salam and Mullah Mohammad, are Taliban "shadow governors" who, however impressive these titles sound, are neither involved in formulating Taliban strategy or directing its military operations against coalition forces in Afghanistan. Shadow governors in the Taliban structure are essentially "enforcers." They are responsible principally for meting out the harsh justice that is the Taliban trademark in the areas under its control, rather than making strategic decisions or planning military activities against the coalition. Thus the arrest of the two shadow governors is less significant from a political and an operational point of view than it appears.

Of the remaining fifteen-odd detainees, the most interesting captures are those who might be problematic for Pakistan's evolving national strategy toward Afghanistan. At least two of the individuals arrested, Mullah Abdul Rauf Aliza and Mullah Ahmed Jan Akhundzada, are Durrani Pashtuns who, besides being members of the same tribal confederation as President Hamid Karzai, arguably were potential threats to the Gilzai Pashtun leadership of the ISI's key protégé, the Afghan Taliban's *emir* Mullah Mohammed Omar. These men also are among the more moderate voices within the Taliban and reputedly have been supporters of Mullah Beradar's efforts to explore Karzai's overtures at reconciliation.¹⁵ As Thomas Johnson and Chris Mason have acidly concluded, these particular arrests do not signify particularly transformative actions on the part of Pakistan. Rather, as they put it, "the Quetta *Shura* has used the ISI, its loyal and steadfast patron, to take out its trash. Those few mullahs suspected of being amenable to discussions with the infidel enemy and thus ideologically impure have now been removed from the jihad. This is not cooperation against the Taliban by an allied state; it is collusion with the Taliban by an enemy state."¹⁶ The remaining detainees are low-level al-Qaeda associates whose arrest by the Pakistanis is quite consistent with Islamabad's longstanding policy of aiding the United States to target al-Qaeda in the settled areas of Pakistan, even as it protects the senior *shura* of the Afghan Taliban simultaneously.

On balance, therefore, the recent arrests in Pakistan do not signify Islamabad's turn against the Afghan Taliban leadership writ large, only a turn

against some of its members, as it has done intermittently before. In the most important cases, the arrests now touted as evidence of a “sea change” in Pakistani behavior happen to be fundamentally accidental and, in some instances, unavoidable consequences of initially fortuitous events. The seizures that seem to have been entirely a product of Islamabad’s initiative appear to be either self-serving or the continued targeting of acknowledged adversaries such as al-Qaeda. The purported shift in Pakistan’s approach to the Afghan Taliban, then, turns out to be less a change in its national strategy than a recalibration—and certainly not of the kind that some American officials imagine or hope for. The fact that the most significant captures in Pakistan were inadvertent and the less noteworthy ones intended to clean house while simultaneously signaling Islamabad’s continuing centrality for success in Afghanistan suggests that the reorientation is not intended to bring Pakistan closer to the declared U.S. goal of defeating the Taliban but, rather, to better reposition Islamabad in what it believes is now the endgame in Afghanistan. As Carlotta Gall and Souad Mekhennet summarized succinctly, “Pakistan’s arrest of the top Taliban military commander may be a tactical victory for the United States, but it is also potentially a strategic coup for Pakistan.... Pakistan has removed a key Taliban commander, enhanced cooperation with the United States, and ensured a place for itself when parties explore a negotiated end to the Afghan war.”¹⁷

Pakistan’s Policy Calculus

A genuine transformation in Pakistan’s strategy toward the Afghan Taliban would involve two components: first, an acceptance of the notion that the Taliban, and not India, represents the biggest threat to success in Afghanistan; second, and flowing from that foundational principle, a willingness to sacrifice the *rahbari shura* in order to help defeat the insurgency so that the current U.S. stabilization effort in Afghanistan might succeed. Nothing in Pakistan’s current actions suggests an acceptance of these two elements. To the contrary, the recent captures seem little more than a Pakistani response to the belief that because an early American exit from Afghanistan is inevitable, Islamabad must do everything within its power to inject itself ever more vigorously into the strategic direction of the insurgency. The urgency for such forceful intervention is driven by the conviction that if a “reconciliation” with the Taliban is to define the termination of the Afghan conflict, Pakistan must not find itself, as its officials now tell Western interlocutors, “standing in the wrong corner”¹⁸ when the music finally stops.

This concern has in fact become central to Islamabad’s calculations since President Obama’s December 1, 2009, speech on U.S. strategy in Afghanistan. Prior to that address, Pakistani defense and intelligence officials were coming around to the possibility that the United States would remain militarily involved in Afghanistan over the long term. Obama’s December speech, however, with its formal enunciation of a July 2011 deadline for beginning the drawdown of American forces, put paid to those expectations. All of a

sudden, Pakistani security managers had to reckon with the possibility that the United States would once again precipitously depart Afghanistan, leaving their hated rival, India, in an established position of privileged access in Kabul. All taken together, New Delhi's substantial reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan, the consistently high support among Afghans for India's development contributions, and the warm relationship India enjoys with the Karzai regime unnerve Islamabad and arouse fears that a withdrawing United States will leave behind a hostile Indian presence on its western borders and increased threats in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas and in Balochistan. Further, the emerging certainty in Islamabad that the Afghan conflict will end not through a political-military victory that brings the Taliban to the negotiating table on coalition terms but through a "reconciliation" process has only strengthened the Pakistani conviction that it cannot afford to lose out in Afghanistan at the tail end, when it had done a remarkably good job thus far of protecting its interests by keeping the Afghan Taliban's *shura* more or less safe and in line during the last decade of intense conflict.¹⁹

The January 2010 London conference was, in many ways, the turning point in this regard. As a result of conspicuously absent American leadership, the meeting's British hosts were able to position political reconciliation with the *shura* as the centerpiece of the Afghan endgame. This approach differs considerably from the current U.S. stance, which views any reconciliation—if it can be consummated at all—as either the culmination of political-military success in the contested areas or contingent on key conditions that the Taliban has rejected historically: renunciation of all ties with al-Qaeda; acceptance of the Afghan constitution; laying down of arms and the cessation of rebellion; and agreement to the Afghan government's oversight of the reconciliation process. Because this American position was eclipsed at London by the British drumbeat for early negotiations with the *shura* itself, the perception that the Afghan conflict was rapidly turning in the direction of reconciliation with the Taliban leadership—in order to facilitate a speedy coalition military exit from the country—began to deepen in Islamabad.²⁰ This view is undoubtedly far removed from official U.S. expectations of how the Afghan conflict is likely to evolve. Most American policy makers expect energetic counterinsurgency operations for some time to come, a U.S. military presence in Afghanistan that lasts many years, enhanced efforts at reintegrating the Taliban's rank and file (*vice* negotiating with the *shura* on the latter's terms), and a progressive strengthening of the Afghan state to ensure a relatively uneventful exit of coalition forces eventually.

This is categorically not the expectation in Islamabad. Policy makers there imagine that an American departure is far more imminent than advertised and that Washington, consequently, is looking to smoothen that exit by attempting negotiations directly with the *shura* itself. Given these perceptions, the recent Pakistani arrests of some Taliban leaders represent an adjustment that is intended to serve two objectives simultaneously.

First, it signals the United States that Islamabad *can* reach the Taliban leadership as and when required, despite years of denying any knowledge of its whereabouts. No other inference is yielded by the fact that Islamabad could rapidly roll up half a dozen wanted fugitives—individuals who ostensibly could not be found for the better part of the decade—within two weeks once it put its mind to the task. By apprehending them so rapidly, Islamabad seeks to highlight its centrality to the future of American success in Afghanistan even as it subtly reinforces the importance of Washington accepting General Ashfaq Kayani’s offer of the ISI as the principal mediating conduit for all discussions on reconciliation with the *shura*.²¹ Islamabad believes that any reconciliation would require that Pakistan’s primary clients, the Ghilzai Pashtuns represented by Mullah Omar, be given a formal share of power in Kabul. This integration at the highest levels of the Afghan state would occur as part of a complex bargain wherein the Taliban promise to renounce al-Qaeda and give up their armed struggle in exchange for the exit of all coalition forces from the country.²² Whether these assurances can be enforced once NATO departs Afghanistan is another matter, but the attractiveness of such a deal from Islamabad’s point of view is obvious: by placing its clients in the seat of power in Kabul, an ISI-brokered reconciliation allows Pakistan to acquire a key role in shaping Afghanistan’s strategic direction, which above all would be conditioned by the exigencies of Pakistan’s ongoing struggle with India.

General Kayani candidly spelled out Islamabad’s aims in a rare press briefing recently by stating, “We want a strategic depth in Afghanistan.” Elaborating further, he noted that “‘strategic depth’ does not imply controlling Afghanistan,” but “if Afghanistan is peaceful, stable and friendly, we have our strategic depth because our western border is secure.... [Then,] you’re not looking both ways.”²³ This fervid struggle for strategic depth has characterized Pakistan’s policies toward Kabul since at least the time of the Soviet Union’s departure in 1989. It drove Pakistan’s efforts to support the Taliban throughout the 1990s and it has undergirded the ISI’s decision to protect Mullah Omar and his cohort since their ejection from power in December 2001. Today, as the departure of the United States from Afghanistan looms large in Islamabad’s perception, the Pakistani military anxiously seeks to control the transition in order to secure the three elements essential to strategic depth: a friendly government in Kabul (one that preferably includes Pakistan’s clients in its inner sanctum); the ejection of India from Afghanistan or, failing this, a sharply reduced Indian presence and influence; and, finally, the acquisition of preponderant influence, if not a formal veto, over Afghanistan’s strategic choices and geopolitical direction. These goals, which are important enough for Pakistan to warrant the country’s protection of the Afghan Taliban leadership for years, are still vital enough to justify the arrest of a few Taliban leaders, if such actions promise to bestow on Islamabad increased influence in shaping the final outcome in Afghanistan to its advantage.

Second, seizing some Taliban officials who do not serve Pakistan's current purposes is a signal to the Afghan Taliban's *rahbari shura* that all discussions about reconciliation with Karzai (and with the coalition more generally) must occur *solely* through Pakistani interlocutors and in a manner that is mindful of Pakistani interests. Such a reminder, even to the senior *shura*, which has long been protected by the ISI, is essential from Islamabad's point of view because this group has on many occasions declined to blindly follow Pakistan's directives or pursue Islamabad's aims when these conflicted with its own interests. Throughout the years when the Taliban have been both in and out of power, they have often behaved as unruly agents pursuing goals not favored by their principals in the ISI and the Pakistani military. Whether these pertained to the surrender of Osama bin Laden, the destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas, the strict implementation of *sharia* in Afghanistan, or the regressive attitude toward women's education, the leadership of the Afghan Taliban frequently pursued autonomous policies that undermined and caused much embarrassment to their Pakistani sponsors. Preventing a recurrence of such behavior on the issues that matter—when Islamabad judges the endgame to be underway in Afghanistan—is critical to Pakistani strategy because it could impact Pakistani efforts to limit the spread of Indian influence in Afghanistan. It will also determine whether Islamabad can resolve its own outstanding disputes with Kabul on favorable terms.

From Pakistan's point of view, the stakes are simply too high. And given their significance, focusing the *shura's* attention on its vulnerabilities through a few pointed arrests would be certainly worth the sacrifice if it elicits a stronger Taliban commitment to Islamabad's interests in Afghanistan. Playing hardball in this way is not new to the ISI. But under the present circumstances it also reflects a dramatic upsurge in confidence in Islamabad.²⁴ Most Western observers, engrossed by Pakistan's increasing economic woes and its unstable internal circumstances, appear to have overlooked the self-assurance that has characterized Pakistan's strategy since the London Conference—an event that conclusively highlighted India's international isolation on the key issues of defeating the insurgency and negotiating with the Taliban. This vindication of Pakistan's advocacy of integrating the Taliban into Afghan governance structures occurred at a time when the Pakistani military too feels increasingly confident that it has, thanks to American assistance, put its most dangerous internal threat, the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, on the defensive. Its successful military operations in the troubled Federally Administered Tribal Areas now unambiguously reinforce, in Pakistan's view, Islamabad's standing as a credible ally on counterterrorism. This belief has empowered Pakistani leaders not only to demand—as Pakistan's Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi phrased it—that the United States “do more” to help Pakistan since the latter has “already done too much,”²⁵ but also to require of their Afghan Taliban clients greater concord with Islamabad's own interests.

Not surprisingly, the most recent round of Pakistani arrests appears to be accompanied by earnest internal negotiations between the movement's representatives and the ISI. Even if Islamabad's maneuverings eventually

result in a formal Taliban presence within the Afghan government, there is of course no guarantee that this regime would become a puppet of the Pakistani state. Based on past events, it is likely that such an authority would, despite being beholden to Islamabad, retain sufficient freedom of maneuver. As a further example, even the Taliban government that held power in Kabul from 1996–2001 refused to accept the legitimacy of the Durand Line, much to the chagrin of its protectors in Pakistan. Pakistan's relations with the Afghan Taliban are therefore delicate, to say the least. Yet in spite of the group's obduracy and its antediluvian worldview, Islamabad will continue to support it because that remains the best of all available options today—while concurrently attempting to discipline it in order to shape its political choices and bring it more firmly in line with Pakistan's own strategic interests. An occasional seizure of a few Taliban leaders may be just the thing to concentrate the *shura's* attention.

Conclusion

The dramatic captures of some Taliban officials by Pakistan during the last several weeks have turned out to be less significant than they first appeared. Far from presaging surrender, or the demise, of the Taliban's senior *shura*, these arrests—at least those that were not accidental—represent an effort by Islamabad to exert control over the process of negotiation and reconciliation that all Pakistani military leaders believe is both imminent and inevitable in the Afghan conflict. And it is emphatically motivated by the conviction that India, not the Afghan Taliban, represents the main enemy to be neutralized in the Afghan endgame. Given these complex impulses, the recent seizures of a few Taliban leaders by Pakistan isn't much of a turning point in Islamabad's traditional strategy after all.

Notes

¹ Mark Mazzetti and Dexter Filkins, “Secret Joint Raid Captures Taliban’s Top Commander,” *New York Times*, February 15, 2010.

² Anand Gopal, “Half of Afghanistan Taliban Leadership Arrested in Pakistan,” *Christian Science Monitor*, February 24, 2010.

³ “Capture May Be Turning Point in Taliban Fight,” CNN.com, February 16, 2010, <http://www.cnn.com/2010/WORLD/asiapcf/02/16/taliban.commander.captured/index.html>.

⁴ “Secret Joint Raid Captures Taliban’s Top Commander.”

⁵ Pir Zubair Shah and Dexter Filkins, “Pakistani Reports Capture of a Taliban Leader,” *New York Times*, February 22, 2010.

⁶ David Ignatius, “To Pakistan, Almost With Love,” *Washington Post*, March 4, 2010.

⁷ The White House, Briefing by White House Press Secretary Robert Gibbs, February 17, 2010, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/briefing-white-house-press-secretary-robert-gibbs-21710>.

⁸ Scott Shane and Eric Schmitt, “In Pakistan Raid, Taliban Chief Was an Extra Prize,” *New York Times*, February 18, 2010.

⁹ Karin Bruillard and Karen DeYoung, “U.S.-Pakistan Cooperation Has Led to Capture of Afghan Taliban Insurgents,” *Washington Post*, February 19, 2010.

¹⁰ “In Pakistan Raid, Taliban Chief Was an Extra Prize.”

¹¹ A useful discussion about the mechanics and sensitivities of U.S.–Pakistani intelligence cooperation can be found in Mark Mazzetti and Jane Perlez, “C.I.A. and Pakistan Work Together, Warily,” *New York Times*, February 24, 2010.

¹² Thomas H. Johnson and M. Chris Mason, “Down the AfPak Rabbit Hole,” *Foreign Policy*, March 1, 2010, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/03/01/down_the_afpak_rabbit_hole.

¹³ I am grateful to B. Raman, formerly additional secretary, cabinet secretariat, government of India, for discussing Pakistan’s actions surrounding the Beradar arrest and for the history of previous ISI actions against the Afghan Taliban. The U.S. intercept of recent Taliban communications leading up to Beradar’s arrest are discussed in “U.S.-Pakistan Cooperation Has Led to Capture of Afghan Taliban Insurgents.”

¹⁴ Dexter Filkins, “In Blow to Taliban, Two More Senior Leaders Are Arrested,” *New York Times*, February 19, 2010.

¹⁵ The international press has now reported that Mullah Beradar, among others, was involved in efforts to respond to President Karzai’s overtures at negotiations. See Dean Nelson and Ben Farmer, “Hamid Karzai Held Secret Talks With Mullah Baradar in Afghanistan,” *Telegraph*, March 16, 2010; “Aide: Karzai ‘Very Angry’ at Taliban Boss’ Arrest,” *New York Times*, March 15, 2010; and “Karzai Held Secret Talks With Mullah Baradar in Afghanistan: Report,” *Nation*, March 17, 2010.

¹⁶ “Down the AfPak Rabbit Hole.”

¹⁷ Carlotta Gall and Souad Mekhennet, “Taliban Arrest May Be Crucial for Pakistanis,” *New York Times*, February 16, 2010.

¹⁸ “India, Pakistan and the Afghan army,” Reuters, March 11, 2010, <http://blogs.reuters.com/afghanistan/2010/03/11/india-pakistan-and-the-afghan-army/>.

¹⁹ Julie McCarthy, “Taliban Arrest Boosts U.S., Pakistan Effort,” Morning Edition, NPR News, February 17, 2010.

²⁰ “Taliban Likely on Karzai Agenda,” *Dawn*, March 11, 2010; Baqir Sajjad Syed and Ahmad Hassan, “Pakistan Will Be Privy to Talks With Taliban: Karzai,” *Dawn*, March 12, 2010; “Pakistan ‘ready to help’ Afghan Reconciliation: Ministry,” *Dawn*, February 4, 2010.

²¹ Jane Perlez, “Pakistan Is Said to Pursue Role in U.S.-Afghan Talks,” *New York Times*, February 9, 2010, and Ahmed Rashid, “A Deal With the Taliban?” *New York Review of Books*, vol. 57, no. 3, February 25, 2010, pp. 36–39.

²² Barnett R. Rubin and Ahmed Rashid, “From Great Game to Grand Bargain,” *Foreign Affairs*, 11/12, pp. 30–44.

²³ “Gen. Kayani Speaks—Pakistan’s War In FATA Must Have Popular Support,” *Siyasat Aur Pakistan*, February 2, 2010, <http://siyasipakistan.wordpress.com/2010/02/02/gen-kayani-speaks%E2%80%93pakistan%E2%80%99s-war-in-fata-must-have-popular-support/>.

²⁴ An insightful survey of the reasons for this confidence can be found in Syed Talat Hussain, "Pakistan's New Afghanistan Outlook," *Daily Times*, March 18, 2010.

²⁵ "US Should Also Do More: FM Qureshi," *Dawn*, March 18, 2010.

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