

VOLUME 31, ISSUES 1 & 2, JANUARY - JUNE, 2024

ISSN 0972-5563

---

# Journal of Peace Studies

---

ISSN 0972-5563

Journal of Peace Studies

VOLUME 31, ISSUES 1 & 2, JANUARY - JUNE, 2024



---

PUBLISHED BY INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR PEACE STUDIES

# Journal of Peace Studies

## C O N T E N T S

From the Editors' Desk 1

### ARTICLES

Re-Envisioning China,  
Reorienting India *Shraddha Rishi &  
Ajay Kumar Mishra* 3

Can Culture Act as a 'Unifying Tool'  
in South Asia? *Raee Sahu* 18

Shimglina Customary Conflict  
Resolution Mechanism for Rural  
Land Disputes in Ethiopia:  
The Practice and Challenges *Asmare Shetahun Alemneh* 37

Containing Baloch Nationalism in  
Pakistan: Approaches and Challenges *Ahmad Reza Taheri &  
Yaser Kahrazeh* 57

### OPINION

National Report by China  
in the 45th UPR Session: Hiding  
More than it Reveals *Ankita Sanyal* 78

Widening Gulf between  
Pakistan and AJK *Nazir Ahmad Mir* 100

### BOOK REVIEW

Shadows at Noon By *Joya Chatterji* *Harsh Pandey* 109

Religious Organisations in  
Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia  
by *Carole Rakodi* *Anita Behuria* 112

---

# Journal of Peace Studies

---

**FOUNDING EDITOR**

LATE PROF. RIYAZ PUNJABI

**ADVISORY BOARD**

T. K. OOMMEN  
SALEEM KIDWAI  
RENÉ WADLOW

**EDITORIAL BOARD**

G BALACHANDRAN  
NOOR A. BABA  
AJAY DARSHAN BEHERA  
ADIL RASHEED

**EDITOR (HONY)**

ASHOK BEHURIA

**CONSULTING EDITOR (HONY)**

SMRUTI S. PATTANAIAK

**ASST. EDITORS**

PRATEEK JOSHI  
WASEEM MALLA

**DESIGN**

BRINDA DATTA

**PRINTED & PUBLISHED BY**

SHEIKH KHALID JEhangIR

International Centre for Peace Studies

Office Address:

157/9, Block 4, Second Floor, Kishangarh,

Vasant Kunj, New Delhi-1110070

Regd. Address:

C-11 Jangpura Extension

New Delhi – 110 014

Tel: (91-11) 49989230, +91-9810317972

<http://www.icpsnet.org>

Emails: [cpsndjps@gmail.com](mailto:cpsndjps@gmail.com);

[jps@icpsnet.org](mailto:jps@icpsnet.org)

**Printed at:**

A.M. Offsetters  
Kotla Mubarakpur, New Delhi  
PIN– 110 003, TEL: 2463 2395

**OVERSEAS BRANCH****UNITED KINGDOM**

14 QUERCETUM CLOSE  
HP198JN, AYLESBURY  
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

**SUBSCRIPTION****In India**

Single Copy: Rs. 150.00

Annual

(Individual) Rs. 600.00

(Institutional) Rs. 1200.00

**Overseas (Air Mail)**

Single Copy: US\$ 7.50

UK£4.50

Annual: US\$ 45.00

---

# Containing Baloch Nationalism in Pakistan: Approaches and Challenges

---

**Ahmad Reza Taheri &  
Yaser Kahraze\***

## Abstract

*The Baloch nationalists believe that accession of Balochistan to Pakistan in March 1948 was done by force and so the people of Balochistan must strive to free their land from the clutches of Pakistan. On the other hand, Pakistan considers Baloch resistance a threat to its sovereignty and territorial integrity. Hence, it has resorted to various measures political, economic, socio-religious and military to contain Baloch nationalism. Instead of producing the desired results, the iron-hand approach adopted by Pakistan has backfired and complicated the situation on the ground. The emergence of Baloch ethno-nationalism has posed a formidable challenge for the Pakistani state. If Pakistan continues with such approach, there could be serious repercussions for it in future. The present paper is based on a field study comprising direct observations, face to face interviews, and personal communications. It consists of two parts. The first part deals with Pakistans approaches in containing Baloch nationalism whereas the second part focuses on the challenges confronting the state.*

**Keywords:** Baloch, Ethnic Nationalism, Pakistan, Economic, Socio-religious, Military, Approaches, Challenges.



## Introduction

Despite the fact that the instrument of accession was signed by Mir Yar Ahmad Khan (Khan of Kalat), the then Khan of Kalat<sup>1</sup>, both the houses of the Kalat State and the

tribal elders were against it. In other words, for the Baloch, this was a accession by force. The terms of accession offered some degree of autonomy and stipulated that except for defence, external affairs, and communication, all other issues would be under the jurisdiction of

*\*Dr. Ahmad Reza Taheri and Dr. Yaser Kahraze are Assistant Professors in the Department of Political Science, Islamic Azad University, Zahedan Branch, Iran.*

Kalat. But this was not fulfilled, and later, the Baloch considered it a hypocritical move that added to the anger of tribal elders which culminated in a fierce armed struggle between Baloch nationalists and Pakistan's military. From the very beginning, force and deception has been used indiscriminately by Pakistan against the Baloch. In 1948, Pakistan army invited the Baloch tribal chiefs for negotiations and when around 300 Baloch descended from mountains for talks, they were arrested and jailed. Around ten years after accession (in 1958), when the Baloch rose in revolt after Pakistan army arrested the Khan of Kalat on the pretext that there was a conspiracy against the state, they were deceptively offered amnesty but most of those who surrendered were arrested again leading to abiding hatred and distrust among the Baloch people against Pakistan across generations.

The present paper analyzes the measures taken by Pakistan to contain Baloch nationalism from time to time and discusses the continuing challenges being faced by Pakistan. However, before dealing with the approaches and challenges, it is pertinent to discuss the Baloch demographic profile, their historical background, and a provide descriptive account of Baloch armed

resistance over the years for provincial autonomy or self-governance.

### **Baloch in Pakistan: A Demographic Profile**

Balochistan is situated in southwestern Pakistan, bounded on the east by Sindh, on the south by the Arabian Sea, on the northeast by Punjab, on the north by Afghanistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and on the west by Iran. It is the largest province of Pakistan which covers about 43 percent of the country's land area (Census Report, 1984. p.1). Despite its huge size, Balochistan is the least populous region of Pakistan. While exact figures for the Baloch population living in Pakistan are not available<sup>2</sup>, according to a reliable source, there are 54.7 per cent Baloch and 29 per cent Pashtun in Balochistan (P.I.P.S, 2009, p. 20). According to some estimates, regular flow of refugees from Afghanistan, because of the long-running conflict there for the last four decades, the Pashtuns equal the Baloch numerically in recent years (Interview, Pashtun & Baloch merchants, 2021). As of 2022, some of the Baloch interviewed by the author would put the population of Baloch in Pakistan between 6 to 8 million (Interview, Baloch activists, March 2022). The Baloch nationalists

believe that the Pakistani authorities have deliberately underestimated or ignored the figure for Baloch population, because of political and strategic reasons. Therefore, there is a discrepancy between unofficial estimations and official census.<sup>3</sup>

### **Baloch Nationalism: A Review**

Balochistan's history goes far beyond the partition of India and formation of Pakistan. Over the centuries, the Baloch have developed a distinct identity and enjoyed a certain degree of autonomy, even during colonial rule in the subcontinent. They have fought numerous battles against invaders from outside from the forces of Alexander the Great to the British colonialists and have maintained relative autonomy, and even independence. The Baloch nationalists express a strong sense of pride in their past for having defended and preserved their identity against adversaries.<sup>4</sup> Baloch nationalism is older than the Pakistani nationalism. One can trace the origins of Baloch nationalism in the 1920s when Reza Shah Pahlavi made an attempt to incorporate the area into Iran in 1928. According to Inayat Baloch, a group of young nationalists under the leadership of Yousef Ali Magasi and Abdul Aziz

Kurd secretly established the first Baloch political party way back in 1933 known as the Society for Unity of Balochistan (SUB).<sup>5</sup> In 1935, SUB began to operate openly by adopting the name of Kalat National Party (KNP), which sought to promote the goal of establishing a united and independent Balochistan after the British departure with tacit approval of the last Kalat ruler (Ahmad Yar Khan) (Hosseini, 2000, p. 188). Thus, as the date for British withdrawal was came closer, the KNP and other nationalist groups joined the Khan of Kalat to seek independence of Balochistan. The Khan also objected to Government of India Act 1935, which treated Kalat at par with other princely state of India. He invoked the treaty of 1876, which committed Britain to respect the "independence of Kalat" and to protect its territories against external aggression.<sup>6</sup> Through his legal advisors—I.I. Chundrigar, Sir Sultan Ahmed, Sardar B.K. Menon, Sir Walter Monkton, and Mohammad Ali Jinnah the Khan argued with the British that like Nepal, Kalat too maintained its treaty relations with Whitehall (London).<sup>7</sup>

Three months prior to the partition in 1947, Jinnah, as legal advisor of Kalat, made an attempt to negotiate with the British for an independent Balochistan. A joint communique

was issued on 11 August 1947 in which Pakistan recognised Kalat as an independent state.<sup>8</sup> However, the then Viceroy Lord Mountbatten refused to recognise the same. Instead, he argued that the Treaties of 1854 and 1876 do not lead to the inference that Kalat was an independent state.<sup>9</sup> As the recognition by the British did not come through, the Khan of Kalat declared independence of Kalat on 15 August 1947, day after the creation of Pakistan. However, he offered Pakistan special relations in defence, foreign affairs, and communication. The case for independence was articulated by many Baloch in different ways including Mir Ghaus Bux Bizenjo, then an assembly member from KNP who defended the independence of Balochistan in a *Diwan* meeting of December 1947 (Allahbakhsh, 1957, p. 43). But Pakistan opposed the “independence of Balochistan” and through various means and mechanism sought to amalgamate it. Realizing the gravity of the situation, the Khan instructed the Commander-in-Chief of the Khanate’s forces, Brigadier General Purves, to reorganize the forces and arrange for arms and ammunition. In December 1947, General Purves approached the Commonwealth Relations Office and the Ministry of

Supply in London for arms and ammunition but, failed because the British refused to supply any arms or ammunition to the Khanate without Pakistan’s approval (Breseeg, 2001, p. 250). In the meantime, the Khan desperately requested the Indian authorities and the Afghan King for help, but with no success (Ragam, 2000, p. 34). The government of Pakistan was threatening to use force to achieve the accession of Balochistan (Ziring, 1980, p 160). Sensing trouble, the Khan signed the treaty of accession on 27 March 1948 and in April 1948, the Pakistani army marched on Kalat, forcing the Khan to accept the incorporation of his state into Pakistan. With its weak socio-economic and political structure, Kalat collapsed in the face of Pakistan’s relatively strong economic infrastructure and its modern civil and military institutions, inherited from the British (Hosseini, 2000, p. 191). This event can be regarded as the most important development in the history of Balochistan, which has led the Baloch nationalists/ separatists to continue their struggle for self-governance.

### **Baloch Armed Resistance for Provincial Autonomy**

The annexation of Balochistan into Pakistan provoked the first rebellion by the Khan’s brother, Prince Abdul

Karim in 1948. He rejected accession to Pakistan and demanded fresh negotiations over the issue. The revolt under his leadership continued for a brief period until his arrest in July 1948. He was sentenced in November 1948 to ten years of rigorous imprisonment and a fine of 5000 rupees.

In October 1955, Pakistan announced the One Unit Plan (OUP) amalgamating all four western Pakistani provinces into one unit to offset the numerical majority of the Bengalis in East Pakistan. Baloch nationalists interpreted it as an assault on their territorial and cultural identity. Pakistani authorities alleged that the Khan was plotting against Pakistan and arrested him on 7 October 1958. The second Baloch rebellion began as a response to this in less than a decade. The armed resistance, like in 1948, began from the Jhalawan area under the leadership of nonagenarian Nauroz Khan Zehri. Pakistan offered negotiations and it is said that Nauroz Khan and his men were offered amnesty in the name of Quran. However, as soon as they surrendered, they were put behind the bars. While Nauroz was spared on account of his age, some of his main followers were executed. This incident of Pakistani deceit rings in the Baloch consciousness even today.

The third wave of armed resistance against federal government of Pakistan continued in the 1960s (especially from 1963) when a group of Baloch nationalists headed by Sher Mohammad Marri (a strategist of irregular warfare) backed the Baloch demand for the withdrawal of the Pakistani army from Balochistan, cancellation of the One Unit Plan, and the restoration of Balochistan as a unified province. After almost nine-year-long guerrilla war of attrition that ended in 1969, Field Marshal Ayub Khan (head of the military government) agreed to withdraw the One Unit Plan and establish a unified Balochistan province; thus making cease-fire with the Baloch nationalists.<sup>10</sup>

Later on, in the 1970s, the Balochistan government found itself in conflict with the federal government over the scope and extent of the autonomy for Balochistan. As a result, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto dismissed the Balochistan government, charging its leaders with violations of their constitutional authority and arresting Mir Ghaus Bux Bizenjo, Attaullah Mengal, and Khair Bakhsh Marri which provoked another armed confrontation (1973-77) between the Baloch and the Pakistani state. As the reports suggest, this war involved more than 80,000 Pakistani troops and 5,300



Baloch guerrillas that resulted in heavy civilian causality.<sup>11</sup>

With the military takeover in October 1999, by General Pervez Musharraf, Balochistan again plunged into a state of violent confrontation with Islamabad. The construction of military cantonments and mega development projects like the Gwadar Port caused resentment among the Baloch nationalist forces. From 2000, Baloch militants started attacking Pakistan security forces. The Marri tribesmen led by Balach Marri were at the forefront of this fifth wave of resistance. Armed attacks started against the state forces in particularly Kohlu district and spread out in all directions. They were soon joined by the Bugtis, while the two nationalist parties, the National Party and the Balochistan National Party mobilized the public opinion against the Musharraf regime. A rocket attack on President Musharraf during his visit to Kohlu town in December 2005 elicited a severe response from the military government which killed Nawab Akbar Bugti in August 2006 (P.I.P.S, 2009. p.20), adding fuel to the fire.

As a matter of fact, foreign investment, especially coming from China, in Gwadar has enraged the Baloch nationalists who argue that such developments are intended to

further push the Baloch into the margins of the poverty (Personal communications, April 2021). According to a local expert interviewed by the author, the Baloch people believe strongly that the ongoing developments in Gwadar have not benefited the locals (M. Suleiman, 2023)<sup>12</sup>. The most recent sign of hatred with foreign investment, for example, was the suicide attack (2022)<sup>13</sup> of a Baloch educated woman who killed a number of Chinese in Karachi. The armed resistance, more or less, continues to exist between the agitated Baloch nationalists and the Pakistan's military forces, mainly because of the Baloch struggle for provincial autonomy. The fifth wave of Baloch resistance continues till date and it is likely to continue unlike in the past, mainly because it has a far wider popular base today than ever before and it is being led by an educated middle class. The political and military elites of Pakistan have found it difficult to coopt the new generation of Baloch rebels like they used to do when the Baloch movement was led by the Sardars.

### **Dealing with Baloch Nationalism: Federal Government's Measures**

The federal government of Pakistan has taken a number of

measures to neutralize militant Baloch nationalism which could be classified into three different categories: economic, socio-religious, and military.

***Economic Approach:  
Extract and Exploit***

The economy of Balochistan is mainly based on the production of natural gas, coal and other minerals. It provides for 40 percent of the country's natural gas and has an estimated 19 trillion cubic-feet of gas reserves and 6 trillion barrels of oil reserves (Zulfiqar, 2007). It is said that while gas was discovered in Balochistan in the 1950s, it was largely supplied to Karachi and Punjab, with Quetta (capital of Balochistan) only receiving access to these local resources in the 1980s (*Daily Balochistan Express*, 2016). However, a report shows that natural gas was provided only to army cantonments in Balochistan, and as of 2014, 59 percent of the urban population in Balochistan did not have access to this resource. As of January 2020, the Sui Southern Gas Company which supplies gas to Sindh and Balochistan reported the shortfall of gas at nearly 40 percent (Shahid, 2020). According to research by Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS), the federal government earns PKR 95 billion

every year from Balochistan's gas. In return, the province gets PKR 6 billion. The Baloch nationalists demand that the centre owes the province PKR 600 billion in gas revenues arrears (PIPS 2009, p. 9). The natural resources of Balochistan have become a source of contention between the Centre and the Baloch people.

Apart from the natural resources, there are other issues of strategic significance. The port of Gwadar can be taken as an example. Because of its economic privilege, according to a report, there are three thousand properties under construction over ten million square feet of land in Gwadar (Harris, 2019). The India-Iran-Central Asia gas pipeline passing through Balochistan which so far has not been finalized due to continuing India-Pakistan tensions and trans-regional issues also highlights the importance of Balochistan in the economic context. Drug trafficking also has also become a lucrative source of income for many Baloch and non-Baloch mafias (Personal communications & observations, 1997-2022). It is through Balochistan that drugs are transported to Iran and then to Europe.

In any case, the economic importance of Balochistan has made

it attractive for Pakistan and therefore, the ruling elite of the country has deemed it necessary exert influence by all means over the region to protect its territorial integrity. Put differently, the Pakistan's policies in Balochistan can be interpreted as an "economic approach" to contain Baloch nationalism. As far as the question of development of Balochistan is concerned, for example, Pakistan seeks to develop Balochistan to strengthen the national economy at the cost of the Baloch.

While overwhelming majority of Baloch are suffering from economic backward-ness, Pakistan is exploiting resources of their province to the advantage of other provinces, especially Punjab and Sindh. A Baloch expert believes that the federal government has paid more attention to other regions of Pakistan, such as Sindh and Punjab while it has deliberately ignored the development of Balochistan and it has always sought to keep Balochistan in poverty so that the Baloch would be busy securing their bare existence and would not devote much time and energy to claim their independence (Interview, G. Khanzai, July 11, 2018). Some outside scholars are of the opinion that the so-called signs of development in Balochistan, such as the road-building, were not constructed for the

benefit of Baloch rather it has facilitated the easy presence of army to keep a close watch over much of Balochistan (Harrison, 1981).

Another aspect of the issue is the settlement of non-natives in the province to marginalise the Baloch community. The Baloch consider certain economic projects, like the one in Gwadar, as having been designed deliberately to attract the influx of non-natives into Balochistan. The Gwadar Port Authority predicts that if the projects in Gwadar go well, the existing population of eighty-five thousand people will increase to more than five hundred thousand by 2024 (Harris, 2019).

According to the Baloch narrative, China plans to settle nearly five hundred thousand Chinses in Gwadar port which will have serious repercussions on the national, economic and political rights of the Baloch (Chaudhury, 2019). This clearly conveys that a large number of the residents in Gwadar will be non-Baloch. The migration of Pashtuns and Punjabis to Balochistan, especially in Quetta, which has caused the non-Baloch to have greater share in the economy and trade of Balochistan, is another issue that bothers the Baloch a lot. According to a U.N. High

Commissioner for Refugees report, more than four hundred thousand Afghan refugees, mostly Pashtuns, have remained in Balochistan since 2010 (Global Report, 2012).

The Baloch fear such demographic changes, because it leaves a negative impact on their lives. With the entry of other social groups who may be more skilled than the Baloch, the share of Baloch in different sectors of the economy is expected to decrease further. These developments at times have resulted in tension with the Pashtuns. Of course, it should be reminded that in the past the British had divided the Pashtun-inhabited areas and annexed a part of it to Balochistan. In the course of time, this has enhanced the role of Pashtuns in the economy of Balochistan. Today, many Pashtuns, especially in Quetta, own as much property as the Baloch do. According to Pakistani sources, Baloch smugglers and drug-traffickers have a role to play in Baloch armed resistance. A report has stated that Pakistani officials believe that money earned from smuggling (especially drugs) has financed the Baloch insurgents (International Crisis Group, 2006).

As has been discussed above, the economic importance of Balochistan has led the federal government of Pakistan to adopt a strategy to

marginalize the Baloch in the economic sector. Therefore, even if it is presumed that that in every society economic reforms lead to progress in the private sector of the economy and generation of wealth. Such prosperity often leads to progressive change in social, cultural and political domains. Since ethnic Baloch are marginalized in the economic sector, progressive change in the social and political fields is less likely to occur.

### ***Socio-religious Approach: Use of religion and Ethnicity***

The Baloch and Pashtun are the two major ethnic groups in Balochistan.<sup>14</sup> The penetration of religious extremism within the Pashtun community has, to some extent, diverted the attention of the state away from the Baloch nationalist movement. Cases of religious extremism has significantly increased in Balochistan with Quetta having largest share of such cases. Analysts believe that religious extremism has gathered momentum in Balochistan over the decades. Although the Baloch have been historically secular in outlook, growing religious extremism in Balochistan in recent years has changed the character of Baloch society since the mid-1970s. Balochistan and Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa share a border with Afghanistan where erstwhile Afghan Mujahideen have taken refuge. At the time of Zia-ul-Haq (1977-88) when religious extremism entered Pakistan, Balochistan was not that much affected. However, with the arrival of Afghan refugees in Quetta and elsewhere in Balochistan, religious elements gradually brought with them jihadist sentiments (Notezai, 2017).

Pakistan has taken advantage of this situation. As a matter of fact, some Pakistani officials have discussed the role of government in promoting religious extremism. In his book, Pervez Musharraf, for example, explains in details about the Pakistan's role in the growth of religious extremism.<sup>15</sup> Thus, one can argue that the Pakistani military is primarily responsible for facilitating sectarian violence in the Baloch community by supporting hardline religious groups (Hasan, 2012). In other words, it can be argued that religious extremism in Balochistan has helped the federal government to contain Baloch nationalism by adopting a socio-religious approach.

Similarly, the State has also tried to take advantage of the inter-ethnic differences between the Pashtuns and the Baloch in Balochistan. Selig Harrison was of the view that realizing the danger of Baloch

nationalism, Pakistani leaders have deliberately promoted Pashtun power in Balochistan as a means of countering the Baloch power (Harrison, 1981). According to a study, the Baloch see the Pashtuns as a persistent and dominant hostile element in Balochistan's social life (Breseeg, 2001). Therefore, the Pashtun factor has been instrumental to weaken the Baloch nationalist movement. Secular Baloch nationalists see the presence of religious extremism as a threat to their own political existence.

### ***Military Approach: Use of Force***

The military approach adopted by Pakistan to contain Baloch militancy has drawn the attention of scholars and analysts far more than the economic and social approaches discussed above. The media and human rights organizations have played a crucial role in pointing out the role played by the military against the Baloch ever since Balochistan was forced to accede to Pakistan. As hinted earlier, the harsh response of the Pakistani military to genuine Baloch demands have pushed the Baloch nationalists to resort to violence. The government of Pakistan has often tried to divert attention from their own governance failures and repressive measures

## CONTAINING BALOCH NATIONALISM IN PAKISTAN: APPROACHES AND CHALLENGES

---

towards external role in the Baloch movement. Pakistani officials have often commented on the role of regional actors in backing the Baloch nationalist movement. A senior Pakistani diplomat, for example, once stated that Afghanistan and India have supported the Baloch separatists (Interview, Mahmoud Khan, 12 March 2002). The standard narrative in official circles in Pakistan is that Indian consulates in Afghanistan (Herat, Mazar-e-Sharif, Jalalabad and Kandahar) used to provide cover for Indian intelligence agencies to run covert operations against Pakistan and foment separatism in Balochistan (Bajoria, 2009, pp. 3-4).

In the 1960s and 1970s, Afghanistan had acknowledged providing covert support to the Baloch by establishing training camps in Kandahar to train Baloch militants and provide them with arms and ammunition (Sirrs, Owen, 2016). However, Indian diplomats have strongly dismissed any involvement on their part in the Baloch resistance movement (Interview, M. Sharma, 13 June 2010). Some Baloch activists also dismiss such claims of covert Indian support (M. Khanzai, personal communications, 19 February 2021). Be that as it may, in Balochistan, nationalist uprising has taken place in five

phases: in 1948, 1958–59, 1962–63, and 1973–77, as well as more or less since 2000 (Grare, 2012 & Zahid, 2013).

Pakistan's response to such uprisings and any other movement which pose as threat to the national security, has been use of indiscriminate force. The death of Karima Baloch, a female activist who died in Canada (2020)<sup>16</sup> in suspicious circumstances, is a recent incident which is claimed to have been carried out by Pakistan's intelligence (G. Khanzai, personal communications, January 06, 2021). Quite often, Pakistan has been portrayed as a state which kills or disposes of the dead bodies of Baloch nationalists without any concern about the consequences. The most important issue today hugging headlines at the international level is the rising number of enforced disappearances in Balochistan. The security forces have adopted the policy of picking up Baloch youth by force and then refusing to provide any clue about them.

In most cases, their mutilated bodies are either found lying by the wayside or not found at all. The steps taken by the government under pressure from the judiciary to enquire into such cases of disappearances have hardly succeeded in restraining

the security forces from resorting to such tactic as the conflict goes on. In fact, such excesses have provided a fillip to the Baloch movement because the resultant sense of alienation and anger has played a big role in a larger number of Baloch youth joining militancy and keeping the flame of resistance alive.

### **Challenges for Pakistan**

Although the containment approaches of Baloch nationalism discussed above appear to be working partially for Pakistan, in a large measure, it has had adverse repercussions for Pakistan.

### ***Myth that 'Provincial Autonomy' would feed secessionism***

The mindset of many Pakistani top officials is that granting provincial autonomy to the Baloch can increase their expectations over time. A Pakistani diplomat told the author that had federal government granted provincial autonomy to the Baloch, they would have placed more demands on the state; they would have asked for independence from Pakistan (Personal communications, 2019). There is some truth to this argument. The provincial government of Balochistan has often found itself in conflict with the

federal government over the scope and extent of its autonomy and in some cases it has led to armed confrontation like in 1973-77.<sup>17</sup> However, the fact remains that the autonomy granted by the state has never been negotiated with the people of Balochistan and has always come as a grant from above. Granting genuine provincial autonomy to the Baloch may help decrease the tensions. Moreover, granting provincial autonomy alone may not be sufficient. Government of Pakistan, needs to peacefully assimilate the Baloch by providing them with genuine stakes in the administration and governance. Since its inception in 1947, military operations and excessive security measures have only alienated the Baloch and fuelled militancy.

A survey organization, Gallup, holds that 79 percent of the Baloch support the idea that the people of Balochistan should have greater control over their political affairs (UK Survey, 2012). Granting political and economic concessions to the Baloch is being perceived as a restriction on the federal government's authority over Balochistan, but the issue is that Pakistan has to choose one of the two likely future scenarios an "independent Balochistan" or "provincial autonomy" for Balochistan; losing full control over

the land of Balochistan definitely will be more costly for Pakistan.

### ***Force erodes Legitimacy, Credibility***

The Sindhi, Pashtun and Baloch-Brahui population in Pakistan believe that the federal government of Pakistan has failed to legitimize its fight against Baloch nationalism (Personal observations, 1997-2022). Although the government of Pakistan has projected the Baloch as a real threat, the military approach against the Baloch has not been welcomed by many people in Pakistan (Interview with activists, March 2019). Therefore, in this regard, the question of public legitimacy remains a challenge for the federal government.

The suppression of Baloch nationalists by force has been highlighted by the media and human rights agencies all over the world, despite the media in Pakistan underplaying the issue either under pressure or out of fear that by offering such issues greater visibility they could undermine the integrative efforts of the state. The Baloch social media and the opposition residing outside Pakistan have been able to project Pakistan as a state governed by a regime and a security machinery which has violated human rights in

Balochistan. Some Baloch activists are of the opinion that many media outlets in Pakistan, directly or indirectly, are under the influence of intelligence agencies (ISI). The Baloch social media has played a role in painting Pakistan as a “terrorist state” (Personal communications, March 2018). The Baloch people and activists living in exile in Europe and North America would often protest and urge the Western states or the United Nations to intervene in the crisis of Balochistan or to stop Pakistan from committing atrocities on the Baloch people.<sup>18</sup>

For example, see, “Baloch Activists Protest in London, Asks UN to Intervene in Balochistan.” (May 20, 2022). ANI. <https://www.aninews.in/news/world/europe/baloch-activists-protest-in-london-asks-un-to-intervene-in-balochistan20220520152216/>

As far as the case of the Baloch is concerned, these sorts of maneuvers have left a bad impact on Pakistan’s reputation and will continue to dent Pakistan’s image abroad.

### ***Other Minority Ethnicities: Sympathy and Provocation***

As discussed earlier, the federal government of Pakistan has, at times, used different ethnic or religious groups to contain Baloch nationalism.



However, this is not to suggest that other ethnic groups approve of the federal government's containment approach towards the Baloch. There is an undercurrent of pro-Baloch sentiments among other minority ethnic groups in Pakistan which must not be neglected. As a matter of fact, ethnic nationalism is not prevalent among the Baloch alone. Many Pashtuns and Sindhi (if not all) hold strong ethno-nationalist feelings and do not have a fair view of the federal government. Most of the minority ethnic groups in Pakistan perceive the state as Punjabi-dominated. Therefore, they have natural sympathy for one another.

For example, the Sindhis sympathize with the Baloch when it comes to the harsh treatment of the military against the Baloch. The Baloch and the Pashtuns also empathise with each other over the issue of repressive behaviour of the federal government against any of them. The point here is to note that sympathetic feelings, social correlations and ethnic attachments which exist among different ethnicities (Baloch, Pashtun, Sindhi, and Brahui) may bring them together against the state and lead to public show of outrage against the federal government leading to civil war in the country.

### ***Transnational Actors; Instability and Threats***

The region where Pakistan and her neighbours are located must also be taken into consideration. It is a region in turmoil. Many states in the region are experiencing internal political turbulence and economic crisis. The role and influence of powerful [regional and global] actors in the affairs of the region can also not be underestimated. Once some liberal minded Afghan officials were of the opinion that the Taliban's leadership period was over and that Afghanistan was on the path to democracy (Interview, Yousefi, 13 May 2018).

With the return of Taliban to power in August 2021, the region witnessed a reactionary shift in the political system in Afghanistan and it has denied its role in cross-border armed attacks on the Pakistani security forces by Taliban groups tracing their origin to Pakistan. Iraq has also gone through interesting political shifts and turns. Many Iraqi officials never thought of emergence of an autonomous Kurdistan after the intense political turbulence they had to pass through. The role of global and regional actors in unleashing subversive forces cannot be denied. The assumption is that like Iraq

which was once forced to recognize an autonomous Kurdistan within its own borders (1991), one day Pakistan might also be forced to recognize an “autonomous Balochistan” within its own borders. The problem with Pakistan, however, is that flames of Baloch nationalism if not contained peacefully, may have *domino-effect* and intensify the ethno-nationalistic feelings of other ethnicities such as the Pashtuns and the Sindhis. Put differently, Pakistan has the potential to be torn apart if ethnic nationalism and religious fundamentalism become assertive and overpower the security forces.

### **Conclusion**

The incorporation of Balochistan into Pakistan was a deadly blow to the aspirations of the Baloch nationalists. Since then it has provoked the ethnic Baloch to fight for their right to self-determination. Some of them are for provincial autonomy, however, a significant section advocates for complete independence. In turn, Pakistan has always looked upon Baloch nationalism as an existential threat to her territorial integrity. This has led the federal government to take various measures to contain Baloch nationalism. Pakistan has sought to exploit the resources of Balochistan

without paying any heed to the genuine needs and aspirations of the native Baloch population. It has also played ethnic and religious card against the Baloch people igniting inter-ethnic Pashtun-Baloch rivalry and inter-sectarian Shia-Sunni conflict in Balochistan aimed at stifling Baloch resistance.

Among all the approaches, the military-security approach adopted by the state is the main plank of its efforts to contain Baloch ethnic assertion and the excesses committed in the name of maintenance of law and order and dealing with terrorism have sought to contain the movement by force. Although these approaches appear to be working to some extent, it looks like they are delivering a temporary victory to Pakistan. As far as the case of Baloch resistance movement is concerned, Pakistan has not been able to work on its national identity formation in a manner that would assimilate the Baloch and other minority ethnic identities. Moreover, the challenges Pakistan faces while executing its policies to contain the Baloch movement are only making matters worse. If federal government fails to reach a peaceful compromise with the Baloch nationalists, Pakistan might be soon be faced with some dire consequences such as, civil war or even disintegration. Hence, it is in

the greater interest of Pakistan to peacefully assimilate the Baluch into its state apparatus and grant them genuine provincial autonomy that would address their concerns and aspirations. ■

### References

- Allah Bakhsh, M. (1957). Ed. *Baluch Quomke Tarikh-ke Chand Pershian Dafter Auraq* [A Few Pages from the Official Records of the History of the Baluch National]. Quetta: Islamiyah Press.
- Baluch, Inayatullah. (1980). "The Emergence of Baluch Nationalism: 1931-47." *Pakistani Progressive*.
- Baluch, Inayatullah. (1980). "Afghanistan-Pashtunistan-Baluchistan." *Ausen Politik*, No. 3.
- Baluch, Inayatullah. (1980). "Tribal System in Baluchistan: Its Origin and Transformation into a Cruel and Reactionary System." *Politics of Pakistan* 4.
- Bajoria, Jayashree. (2009). "Indian-Afghanistan Relations." Council on Foreign Relations. <http://www.cfr.org/india/india-afghanistan-relations/P17474>
- Baluchistan: Conflicts and Players. (2009). Pak Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS).
- Baluch Activists Protest in London, Asks UN to Intervene in Baluchistan. (2022). ANI. 20 May, <https://www.aninews.in/news/world/europe/baluch-activists-protest-in-london-asks-un-to-intervene-in-baluchistan20220520152216/>
- Basit, Abdul. (July 1, 2022). "The Majeed Brigade: The Baluch Liberation Army's Suicide Squad." *Publication: Terrorism Monitor Volume: 20 Issue: 13*. <https://jamestown.org/program/the-majeed-brigade-the-baluch-liberation-armys-suicide-squad/>
- Breaseg, Taj Mohammad. (2001). *Baluch Nationalism: Its Origin and Development* (Ph.D. Thesis). University of London.

Census Report of 1981 Balochistan Province. (1984). Islamabad: Population Census Organization. Government of Pakistan.

Chaudhury, D, R. (2019). "Balochistan is Back in Spotlight after Ban against Baloch Liberation Army. *Economic Times*. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com>

Gallup survey for the UK International Official Body. (2012). <https://www.khaleejtimes.com/world/only-37-baloch-favour-independence-uk-survey>

Gare, Fredric. (2012). "Pakistan: The Resurgence of Baluch Nationalism." Carnegie Endowment for International Peace 3. [carnegieendowment.org/2006/01/26/pakistan-resurgence-of-baluch-nationalism/2160](https://carnegieendowment.org/2006/01/26/pakistan-resurgence-of-baluch-nationalism/2160)

Gas Supply to Central and Southern Balochistan. (May 2016). *Daily Balochistan Express*. <http://www.bexpress.com.pk>

Harris, Matt. (April 26, 2019). "What is Gwadar's population expected to be in the next five years?" at [www.cpicglobal.com/what-is-gwadars-population-expected-to-be-in-the-next-five-years/](http://www.cpicglobal.com/what-is-gwadars-population-expected-to-be-in-the-next-five-years/)

Harrison, Selig S. (1981). *In Afghanistan's Shadow: Baloch Nationalism and Soviet Temptations*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, New York.  
Harrison, Selig S. (1978). "Nightmare in Balochistan." *Foreign Policy* 32.

Hasan, Syed Shoaib. (2012). "Sectarian militancy thriving in Balochistan." *Dawn*. 10 June, <http://dawn.com/2012/04/11/sectarian-militancy-thriving-in-balochistan/>

Hemant, Singh. (July 22, 2020). "Balochistan Province of Pakistan: Facts on its Geography and Economy". <https://www.jagranjosh.com/general-knowledge/balochistan-province-1567507454-1>

Hosseini, Mohammad Hassan. (2000). *Iran and Its Nationalities: The case of Baloch Nationalism*. *Pakistani Adab Publications*. Karachi.

Inayat, Naila. (December 25, 2020). "Threatened with 'Christmas gift', Karima Baloch's death leaves more questions than answers." *The Print*. <https://theprint.in/opinion/letter-from-pakistan/threatened-christmas-gift-karima-baloch-death-more-questions-than-answers/573257/>

Khan Baloch, Ahmad Yar. (1975). *Inside Balochistan: A Political Autobiography of His highness Baiglar Baigi: Khan-e-Azam*. Karachi: Royal Book Co.

Musharraf, Pervez. (2006). *In the Line of Fire: A Memoir*. Simon & Schuster UK.

Notezai, M, Akbar. (January 09, 2017). "The Rise of Religious Extremism in Balochistan." <https://thediplomat.com/2017/01/the-rise-of-religious-extremism-in-balochistan/>  
"Pakistan: The Worsening Crisis in Balochistan". *International Crisis Group*. Asia Report 119. (September 14, 2006): 26.

Pakistan. UNHCR Global Report 2010. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (June 2, 2012). [www.unhcr.org/4dfdbf5215.pdf](http://www.unhcr.org/4dfdbf5215.pdf)

Ragam, Shaiih. (2000). *Shap Roch Shap (Day Night Day)*. Quetta: Balochi Publications.

Shahid. K, K. (2020). "Crippling Gas Shortage in Pakistan's Balochistan." *Asia Times*. <https://asiatimes.com>  
Shah, M Ali. (1992). *Sardari, Jirga & Local government in Balochistan*. Qasim Printers: Quetta.

Sirrs, Owen L. (2016). *Pakistan Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate: Covert Action and Internal Operations*. Routledge: London.

The World Fact book: Ethnic Groups. Central Intelligence Agency (2013). Retrieved 3 November 2014.

Zahid, Hussain. (2013). "The battle for Balochistan." *Dawn*, 25 April.

Ziring, Lawrence. (1980). *Pakistan, The Enigma of Political Development*. Wm Dawson & Sons Ltd.

Zulfiqar, Shahzada. (2007). "By deceit and force." *Herald*. Karachi.

### Endnotes

1. Kalat was the dominant state in Balochistan under the British Indian Empire.
2. World Fact book has noted that Baloch make up nearly 3.6 percent of Pakistan's total population (Ethnic Groups. Central Intelligence Agency, 2013). A source writes, out of 12.34 million total population of Balochistan, around 52 percent are Baloch and 36 percent are Pashtuns (Singh Hemant. Balochistan Province of Pakistan: Facts on its Geography and Economy. July 22, 2020.  
<https://www.jagranjosh.com/general-knowledge/balochistan-province-1567507454-1>
3. For a calculation of the number of Baloch in Pakistan, see, Breseeg, Taj Mohammad. Baloch Nationalism: Its Origin and Development (Ph.D. Thesis). University of London (Britain - 2001). pp. 81-83.
4. For more on Baloch history, see, Hosseinbor, Mohammad Hassan. (2000). Iran and Its Nationalities: The case of Baloch Nationalism. Pakistani Adab Publications: Karachi, pp. 24-55.
5. For more information, see the followings: 1) Baloch, Inayatullah. (1980). "The Emergence of Baloch Nationalism: 1931-47." Pakistani Progressive. 2) Baloch, Inayatullah. (1980). "Afghanistan-Pashtunistan-Balochistan." Ausen Politik, No. 3, p. 300. 3) Baloch, Inayatullah. (1980). "Tribal System in Balochistan: Its Origin and Transformation into a Cruel and Reactionary System." Politics of Pakistan 4, p. 8.
6. See, Ahmad Yar Khan Baloch. (1975). Inside Balochistan: A Political Autobiography of His highness Baiglar Baigi: Khan-e-Azam. Karachi: Royal Book Co., pp. 255-96.
7. Shukla, Ashish (2018), "The Trajectory of Baloch Nationalism in Pakistan," *Journal of Asian Politics and Society*, 2 (1): 135163

8 .Ibid.

9 . Ibid.

10. See, Harrison, Selig S. In Afghanistan's Shadow: Baluch Nationalism and Soviet Temptations. Carnage Endowment for International Peace, New York, 1981, pp. 29-33.

11. For more, see, Harrison, Selig S. "Nightmare in Balochistan." Foreign Policy 32 (Fall 1978), 136-60.

12 . Maryam S. Anees (August 30, 2023). "Analyzing the Pakistan's Gender Gap Ranking". Interview by Iranian Association of West Asian Studies (IAWAS). Author.

13. A Baluch woman suicide bomber struck a van on the campus of Karachi University, killing three Chinese nationals and their local driver. The Balochistan Liberation Army's Majeed Brigade has claimed responsibility for the attack. The news was immediately published by the media around the world on 26 April 2022. This suicide is said to be carried out by Shari Baluch Alias Bramash. Such attacks by a female educated Baluch has been unprecedented so far. For more, see, "The Majeed Brigade: The Baluch Liberation Army's Suicide Squad," by Abdul Basit (July 1, 2022). Publication: Terrorism Monitor Volume: 20 Issue: 13.  
<https://jamestown.org/program/the-majeed-brigade-the-baluch-liberation-armys-suicide-squad/>

14. See, Sardari, Jirga & Local Government in Balochistan by Mahmoud Ali Shah (1992). Qasim Parinters: Quetta, pp. 4-10.

15. For more, see: Chapter 21 of In the Line of Fire: A Memoir by Pervez Musharraf (2006), the then President of Pakistan. Simon & Schuster UK.

16. Chris Alexander, the former Canadian Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, stated in a tweet: "the circumstances of Karima Baluch's death seem to be deeply suspicious." See: Naila Inayat. (December 25, 2020). "Threatened with 'Christmas gift', Karima Baluch's death leaves more questions than answers." The Print.

<https://theprint.in/opinion/letter-from-pakistan/threatened-christmas-gift-karima-baluch-death-more-questions-than-answers/573257/>

17. See, Harrison. "Nightmare in Baluchistan." (1978), 136-60.
18. For example, see, "Baluch Activists Protest in London, Asks UN to Intervene in Baluchistan." (May 20, 2022). ANI. <https://www.aninews.in/news/world/europe/baluch-activists-protest-in-london-asks-un-to-intervene-in-baluchistan20220520152216/>



---

### **Note for readers and subscribers**

*We are happy to inform you that from January 2009 we have introduced the system of peer review of articles to ensure quality of publications and improve the scholarly value of our journal. We have a renowned group of scholars and academicians associated with our Centre and they are helping us in this process. We are grateful to them for their kind support and cooperation.*

*We would request our readers and subscribers to take note of these changes and we would, as ever, encourage them to send in research articles for publication to us. The manuscripts of research papers submitted for publication should be neatly typed in double space and the length of the papers should be ideally between 3,000-5000 words including the footnotes. They should contain an abstract and a short introduction of the author. The authors should use Harvard style for their references. The articles can be sent to us in an electronic format, (Ms Word 2003 or above format) also. For detailed guidelines they may send their queries to us in the following address.*

### **Journal of Peace Studies Research Section**

**Emails: cpsndjps@gmail.com, jps@icpsnet.org**

Registered with the Registrar of Newspapers  
*RNI No. 57199/93*

---



**INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR PEACE STUDIES**

C-11, Jangpura Extension,  
New Delhi – 110 014, INDIA

Tel: (91-11) 49989230, +91-9560126157, 9810317972

Websites: <http://www.icpsnet.org> (Main),  
[www.icpsorg.com](http://www.icpsorg.com) (Kashmir chapter)

Emails: [cpsndjps@gmail.com](mailto:cpsndjps@gmail.com), [jps@icpsnet.org](mailto:jps@icpsnet.org)