

SELF-DETERMINATION, BALOCHISTAN AND THE FUTURE OF GLOBAL PEACE

Debu Chowdhury, Research Scholar, North Eastern Hill University, Shillong

Dr. Arun Kumar Singh, Assistant Professor, Department of Law, NEHU,
Shillong

ABSTRACT

The British colonized and divided Balochistan into parts, which end up merging into Persia in the west in 1871, northern parts were occupied by Afghanistan in 1893, and the semi-independent eastern parts were re-occupied by Pakistan after a short independent tenure of only 227 days. Resource-rich Balochistan is now being plagued by sectarian violence, Islamist militant attacks, and insurgency leading to thousands of casualties. Their culture destroyed, their language banned in schools, and acid being thrown on young Baloch girls for attending schools. They are minority in their own homeland. The aim of this paper is to present the horrendous situation faced by the Baloch people and to discuss whether they deserve a right to self determination and self government.

Key words : Balochistan, self-determination, colonization, decolonization, self government

INTRODUCTION

Centuries before the arrival of Islam in the 7th Century, parts of Balochistan was ruled by an Indo-Scythian dynasty called the Paratarajas¹. The present province of Balochistan is bordered by Afghanistan to the north and north-west, Iran to the south-west, Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (earlier NWFP) and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas to the north-east. To the south lies the Arabian Sea. It is situated in a river valley near the Bolan Pass, which has been used as the route of choice from the coast to Central Asia, entering through Afghanistan's Kandahar region.

Balochistan as a nation-state was formed in 1410. Mir Chakar Khan Rind, a close aide of the Timurid ruler Humayun, became the first Sirdar of Afghan and Pakistani

¹ Sakas are referred to as Indo-Scythians who migrated to India during 2nd century BC to 4th century AD.

Balochistan in the 15th century, and was later succeeded by the Khanate of Kalat, who owed allegiance to the Mughal Empire. Nader Shah won the allegiance of the rulers of eastern Balochistan, but later ceded Kalhora, one of the Sindh territories of Sibi-Kachi to the Khanate of Kalat.² After the fall of the Durrani Empire in 1823, most of the area eventually reverted back to local Baloch control and four Princely States namely Makran, Kharan, Las Bela and Kalat were recognised and reinforced into Balochistan. After the occupation of Balochistan by the British in 1839, its northern part was awarded to Afghanistan, western Balochistān was conquered by Iran in the 19th century and its boundary was finally fixed in 1872.³ In 1876, Robert Sandeman negotiated the Treaty of Kalat, which brought the Khan's territories, including Kharan, Makran, and Las Bela, under British protection even though they remained independent Princely states.⁴ After the Second Anglo-Afghan War ended with the *Treaty of Gandamak*⁵ in May 1879, the Afghan Amir ceded the districts of Quetta, Pishin, Harnai, Sibi and Thal Chotiali to British control. On 1 April 1883, the British took control of the Bolan Pass, south-east of Quetta, from the Khan of Kalat. In 1887, small additional areas of Balochistan were declared British territory.⁶ In 1893, Sir Mortimer Durand negotiated an agreement with the Amir of Afghanistan, Abdur Rahman Khan, to fix the *Durand Line*⁷ running from Chitral to Balochistan as the boundary between Afghanistan and British India. When British decided to leave India, they declared on August 11, 1947 through All India Radio (AIR) and newspapers that parts of Balochistan under the British are free,⁸ leading the Baloch state of Kalat declaring its independence.

Mir Ghaus Baksh Bizenjo, the then President of the Kalat State National Party, who later became the governor of Balochistan, had been to Delhi to meet and plead the case of

²Balochistan, Pakistan available at https://wikivisually.com/wiki/Balochistan%2C_Pakistan

See also https://www.maria-online.us/travel/article.php?lg=en&q=Balochistan,_Pakistan visited on Feb 26, 2020

³The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, Baloch People available at <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Baloch> visited on June 2, 2019

⁴Naseer Dashti, *The Baloch and Balochistan: A Historical Account from the Beginning to the Fall of the Baloch State* 247 (Trafford Publishing, Canada, Edtn/ 2012)

⁵ It was signed on 26th May, 1879 between King Mohammad Yakub Khan of Afghanistan and Sir Louis Cavagnari of British Government of India at Gandamak, about 70 miles east of Kabul.

⁶Peter R. Blood, *Pakistan: A Country Study* 20 (Diane Publishing, Place, edn., 1996)

⁷ The Durand Line was a frontier boundary established in the Hindu Kush in 1893 running through the tribal lands between Afghanistan and British India. Sir Mortimer Durand is said to have induced Abdor Rahman Khan, amir of Afghanistan, to settle the boundary dispute after the 2nd Anglo-Afghan War. The area was inhabited by various Pashtun tribes.

⁸Naela Quadri Baloch, "Balochistan suffers Pak genocide ... Kashmir India's part, not us ... Pak will collapse minus us ... Balochs appeal to Modi" *Times of India*, May 2, 2016

Balochistan to then Congress President Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and seek India's support for an independent Balochistan. As per Nehru-Mountbatten meeting of 3rd June 1947⁹ Mountbatten had personally met Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan on 5 June 1947, but denied the independence option. According to Vikram Sood, former Research & Analysis Wing (RAW) Chief, the Khan of Kalat wanted to be treated at par with Nepal and in fact also tried a deal with London on the lines that the UK had with Oman.¹⁰ According to the reports of Simon Commission, Jinnah conspired and offered his service as a lawyer and had promised that Balochistan would not be coerced to join either India or Pakistan knowing fully well that Balochistan was divided into several parts, and therefore not in a position to consolidate and fight Pakistan. Immediately after Pakistan came into being, feelers were sent to the government of Balochistan coercing them to join Pakistan, because they were Muslims. A bill was subsequently presented in the Baloch Parliament, which was rejected by both the houses.¹¹ According to Human Rights defender Waseem Altaf in *Viewpoint: "On orders emanating from Mr Jinnah, Balochistan was forcibly annexed to Pakistan on 28th March 1948, when on 27th March 1948, Lt Colonel Gulzar of the 7th Baluch Regiment under GOC Major General Mohammad Akbar Khan invaded the Khanate of Kalat. General Akbar escorted the Khan of Kalat to Karachi and forced him to sign on the instrument of accession while Pakistan Navy's destroyers reached Pasni and Jiwani,"*¹² and Kalat finally acceded to Pakistan on March 28, 1948.

There are reports that Kalat was trying to strike a deal with India to avoid Pakistani occupation, and according to a London-based think-tank Foreign Policy Center (FPC) on March 27, 1948 VP Menon, the then secretary in the Ministry of States held a press conference aired by AIR where he revealed that the Khan of Kalat was refused Indian accession of Balochistan. While the Pakistan Army occupied Kalat, New Delhi remained engrossed with Kashmir and Hyderabad failing to see the strategic significance of a sovereign Balochistan.

⁹ Vishal Kale, Do Baloch people want to join India or form a new nation Baluchistan? *available at* <https://www.quora.com/Do-Baloch-people-want-to-join-India-or-form-a-new-nation-Baluchistan> visited on Feb 26, 2019

¹⁰ Hakim Baloch, Did Nehru reject Baloch ruler's accession request? *available at* <https://www.dailyo.in/politics/nehru-baloch-conflict-india-pakistan-army-kashmir-british/story/1/2825.html> visited on Feb 26, 2019

¹¹ Supra 4

¹² Supra 10

BALUCHISTAN : THE PAINFUL SAGA HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

The Baluch people are one of the many stateless and divided nations in the contemporary world. In a Baluch perspective, it is the illegal occupation of their land without their consent. The Baluch have never accepted the bifurcation and subsequent annexation of their nation by Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan. The present Iranian State is the continuation of the Persian Empire with the addition of fanatical Shia Islamic ideology, which seeks complete elimination of other mythological and religious beliefs, and elimination of any national or ethnic identity.¹³ Any debate on Baluch nationalism has been declared un-Islamic and treasonable.¹⁴ In order to justify the inhuman brutalities perpetrated by the Iranian state and the attempts on the eradication of the characteristics of a Baluch national identity, the Iranian public are forced to believe that the Baluch in Iran pose serious threats to the national security of the state. Baluchi has not been recognized as the national language of the Baluch but as a dialect of the Farsi language. Baluchi is banned as a medium of instruction, writing and publishing. Baluch mothers are forced to adopt Persian names for their babies in Iran.¹⁵

The Pakistani rulers have been using Islam and military prowess to integrate Baluchistan and in the process has become the epi-center and breeding ground of religious fanaticism, sectarianism, and international terrorism.¹⁶ Pakistan has created local al-Qaida and ISIS groups in Baluchistan, namely Lashkar-e-Khorasan, Jundallah, Tehreek-e-Islam, Tehreek-e-Nifaz-e-Shariat-e-Mohammad, the way it created al-Shams and al-Badr in Bangladesh to massacre Bangladeshi nationalists. These groups are mostly non-Baluch and after killing Baluch people, they go back to Pakistani barracks.¹⁷ Pakistan's war against Baluchistan is strengthening the position of the Taliban, who have exploited the unstable, strife-ridden situation to establish bases and terrorise the often more liberal and secular Baluch people. The Pakistani military tolerates the Taliban as a second force to crush the Baluch people and weaken their struggle for independence. In other words, the Taliban are being used as a proxy force by Islamabad in its war against Baluchistan.¹⁸ Violation of basic human rights of the Baluch includes extra judicial killings of the Baluch by the army,

¹³Samad Baluch, "The Baluch Right of Self Determination and the Global Peace" *The Baluch*, June 10, 2009

¹⁴Hassan Hamdam, "Self-Determination and the Baluch National Question" *Baluchistan Times*, July 10, 2017

¹⁵Ibid

¹⁶Supra 13

¹⁷Supra 8

¹⁸ Peter Tatchell, "Right To Self-Determination For Baluch People" *Center for Security Studies* available at <http://www.css.ethz.ch/en/services/digital-library/articles/article.html/115564/> visited on Feb 26, 2019

paramilitary and state intelligence agencies. Harassment, kidnapping and inhuman torture of the law abiding peaceful Baloch political activists and intellectuals have been a permanent feature of the state. Promises of military de-escalation are contradicted by continued army incursions and air strikes, which have resulted in nearly 3000 civilian casualties including peaceful Baloch protesters. A 2006 report by the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan documented arbitrary arrests and detention, torture, extra-judicial and summary executions, disappearances and the use of excessive and indiscriminate violence by Pakistan's police, military and intelligence forces. These findings have been corroborated by Amnesty International.¹⁹ Indeed, the Pakistani government has admitted that in 2009 over 1,000 Baloch people seized by its security forces disappeared mysteriously. Pakistani security forces are accused of illegally detaining 19,000 men, women and children in Balochistan. Many of them have been raped and killed. These crimes against humanity are still happening in Balochistan.²⁰ Typical tortures include being hung upside down, sleep deprivation, electric shocks and cigarette burns. To cover up its human rights abuses, Islamabad restricts media access to Balochistan and refuses to allow the UN and international aid agencies to provide humanitarian assistance to most parts of the region. Pakistan has blanketed the country with military garrisons to suppress the people. In recent years, there has been a 62% increase in police stations and a 100% increase in paramilitary checkpoints.²¹ The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) is urging the complete demilitarisation of the rebel province of Balochistan, as a precondition for a negotiated political settlement to end six decades of economic neglect, ethnic persecution and military repression by successive governments in Islamabad.

The province is increasingly becoming a nexus of sectarian outfits. Afghan and Pakistani Taliban (Tehrik-e-Taliban Balochistan), al-Qaeda, Lashkar-e-Janghvi, Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan, Imamia Student Organization, and Sipah-e-Muhammad are said to have established presences in the province.²² Militants from the defunct Jaish-e-Mohammad, Harakat-ul-Mujadeen and Harakat Jihad-e-Islami militants are joining the twice banned Sipah-e-Sahaba, providing ground support to Lashkar-e-Janghvi terrorists. The Imamia Student Organization, have killed some 700 Hazaras²³ between 1998 and 2009,²⁴ including

¹⁹Ibid

²⁰Ibid

²¹Ibid

²²Muhammed Amir Rana, "The Growing Nexus: Ethnic/Sectarian Violence Is Expected to Continue to Be a Long Term Challenge," *News*, July 29, 2012

²³The Hazaras are a Persian speaking Shia minority that lives in both Pakistan and Afghanistan.

the chairman of the Hazara Democratic Party in January 2009. On September 20, 2011, twenty Shia pilgrims travelling to Iran were shot dead in front of their families in Mastung; three days later, three Hazara men were killed outside Quetta; and on October 4, thirteen Hazaras were dragged off a bus and shot dead. The trend continued unabated in 2012.²⁵ Lashkar-e-Janghvi has also killed Baloch nationalist leaders, such as Habib Jalib Baloch. On April 3, 2009, three political activists, including Ghulam Mohammed Baloch, President of the Baloch National Movement, were abducted and killed even after being released by the Anti-Terrorist Court.²⁶ Some 90 Shias were killed in Quetta in January 2013. The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) had verified 198 cases of enforced disappearances in Balochistan between January 2000 and May 12, 2012 and that 57 bodies of missing persons had been found in Balochistan in 2012 alone.²⁷ Most of these disappearances had been perpetrated by Pakistan's intelligence agencies and the Frontier Corps, often acting in conjunction with the local police.²⁸ As Pakistan and China has signed the CPEC agreement, human rights violations turned into ethnic cleansing and now genocide.²⁹

CULTURAL&DEMOGRAPHIC IMPERIALISM

Alien cultural traditions are being imposed at the expense of traditional Baloch social values, and their socio-cultural and political systems are being destroyed or corrupted in a systematic and organized way. Punjabi supremacists in Islamabad have dictated Urdu to be the compulsory language of instruction in Baloch Educational Institutions.³⁰ Large number of religious schools are being funded by Islamabad, with a view to imposing harsher, more narrow-minded interpretation of Islamic fundamentalism.³¹ The introduction of religious narrow-mindedness and fundamentalism is being seen as an attempt to replace the secular and democratic identity of Balochistan. There aren't any separate school for girls, and Pakistani

²⁴ Editorial, "Pakistan Hazaras Targeted Campaign of Ethnic Communal Killings," *World Socialist*, May 22, 2012.

Also see Editorial, "The Growing Nexus," *Friday Times*, August 3, 2012

²⁵ Huma Yusuf, "Sectarian Violence: Pakistan's Greatest Security Threat?" NOREF Report, July 2012

²⁶ Saleem Shahid, "Furore in Balochistan Over Killing of Nationalist Leaders," *Dawn*, April 10, 2009.

It should be noted that Ghulam Baloch was involved in the negotiation for the release of John Solecki, Director of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' Quetta office.

²⁷ Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, *Hopes, Fears and Alienation in Balochistan*, Month, Year 59–71

²⁸ Human Rights Watch, "We Can Torture, Kill, or Keep You for Years" Month, Year 26

²⁹ Supra 8

³⁰ Supra 18

³¹ Ibid

groups throw acid on Baloch girls if they go to school.³² Balochistan has the lowest literacy rate, and the lowest school enrolment ratio, educational attainment index and health index compared to other provinces. The military dictator Parvez Musharraf reconstituted the Council of Islamic Ideology³³, established the Hudood Laws, and introduced a system of Sharia Courts entrusted with ensuring that the existing laws conformed to Islam. Islamization brought the arrival of Islamic scholars, the establishment of madrassas, and the revision of school curricula in accordance to Islamic law.³⁴

Islamabad has a settler scheme to colonise Balochistan. It is encouraging Punjabis, the largest and dominant ethnic group in Pakistan, to move to the region with the aim to make the Baloch people a minority in their own homeland, as it happened to the Native Americans in the US, and the Aboriginal people in Australia. The Urdu and Punjabi speaking Pakistanis are being settled through state sponsored settlement scheme to bring demographic changes in Balochistan, Sindh and NWFP. This goal has already been achieved in major cities like Quetta, where colonist settlers now predominate. The past few decades have witnessed a massive acceleration in the rate at which the Baloch have been deprived of their lands and livelihoods by imposed development programs.³⁵ Balochi speakers are a majority in only four out of 30 districts—Kharan, Makhran, Sibi, and Shagai. Even in the birthplace of Baloch nationalism, the Khanate of Kalat, Brohi is the dominant language.

ECONOMIC IMPERIALISM

The province is rich in natural resources like oil, gas, copper and gold. Unchecked resource exploitation and ruthless plunder of natural wealth by Pakistan in the name of development poses grave and irreversible threats to their economic existence.³⁶ Despite its huge mineral wealth, Balochistan is the poorest region of Pakistan. Since the mid-1970s the province's share of Pakistan's GDP has dropped from 4.9 to 3.7%³⁷ and as of 2007 it had the highest poverty rate with high infant and maternal mortality rate, and the lowest literacy rate

³²Supra 8

³³ Council of Islamic Ideology is a consultative body set up for the sole purpose of formulating a more Islamic system of government

³⁴Frederic Grare, "Balochistan: The State vs Nation" *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace* (2013) available at <https://carnegieendowment.org/2013/04/11/balochistan-state-versus-nation-pub-51488> visited on June 4, 2019

³⁵Supra 13

³⁶Supra 13

³⁷Rajshree Jetly, "Resurgence of the Baluch Movement in Pakistan: Emerging Perspectives and Challenges" in Rajshree Jetly (ed.) *Pakistan in Regional and Global Politics* 215 (New York: Routledge, 2009)

in the country.³⁸ Much of the population is malnourished, illiterate and semi-destitute; living in squalid housing with nearly 80% population having no access to electricity, natural gas or clean drinking water. According to the Asian Human Rights Commission's 2009 report 88% population of Balochistan is below poverty line. The 39-point Balochistan Package introduced in November 2009 promising release of political workers, their return from exiles, investigations into missing persons, judicial inquiries, economic packages and creation of some 16,000 jobs in the province, were never implemented and all faded into smoke. By December 2009 all major stakeholders in the Baloch nationalist movement were convinced that self determination was the only way out.

FREEDOM MOVEMENTS

When Pakistan attacked Balochistan, it was neither a kingdom, nor monarchy. It already had boundaries, a Parliament- having House of Commons and House of Lords, a Constitution and Rule of Law. The forcefully signing of the Instrument of Accession by Ahmad Yar Khan, led his brothers, Princes Agha Abdul Karim Baloch and Muhammad Rahim to revolt against Pakistan in July 1948.³⁹

The Baloch resistance against Sassanid, Arab invaders, Afghan plunderers, Qachar and Pehlavi dynasties of Iran were a manifestation of their endeavours for retaining their sovereign national identity, dignity and honour. Since the collapse of the organized resistance against the Iranian occupation in 1928, the Baloch in Iranian held territory have been resisting the occupation through political mobilization and low intensity armed movements. The people of Balochistan fought the British for over 150 years, and the Pakistani federal state on four occasions-in 1948, 1958, 1962, and 1973–1977. The contemporary conflict of the Baloch with Iran and Pakistan which is causing tremendous misery is based on the Baloch desire of regaining their sovereign status, and reunification of their divided land.⁴⁰ What once started with Sher Mohammed Marri under the Baloch People's Liberation Front in 1962, extended far beyond Marri territory, and by July 1963, 22 nationalist camps had been established.⁴¹ Today, the Baloch movement is led by the educated middle class and a great

³⁸Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden, Baloch, Sanaullah, "The Baloch Conflict: Towards a Lasting Peace," *Pakistan Security Research Unit*, No. 7 (March 2007)

³⁹ Roger D. Long, Roger, Gurharpal Singh, et.al. *State and Nation-Building in Pakistan: Beyond Islam and Security* 82 (Routledge, New York, 2016)

⁴⁰Supra 14

⁴¹Selig Harrison, "In Afghanistan's Shadow: Baluch Nationalism and Soviet Temptations" (*Carnegie Endowment for International Peace* (Washington, D.C., 1981), 30

number of Baloch nationalist leaders now come from the urban districts of Kech, Panjgur, Gwadar, than from Quetta, Khuzdar, Turbat, Kharan, and Lasbela. The Baloch Liberation Army, Baloch Liberation Front and Baloch Republican Army are fighting for an independent secular democratic republic, but Pakistan has designated them as terrorists organisations. The Baloch national resistance whether armed or political is their struggle for human rights, honour, identity and national salvation, which controls their destiny - economically, politically, socially, and culturally. A Baloch freedom fighter is the most honourable person in their society. It is deep-rooted. Men, women, school going children- all are part of the struggle. Their bedtime stories, folklore, songs all are of freedom. Their criterion for honour is to fight for freedom.⁴² The future of Balochistan must be decided by the Baloch people.⁴³

INTERNATIONAL LAW ON SELF-DETERMINATION & ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES

Many distinct peoples or nations in the world suffered the misfortune of being divided up between one or more post-colonial states, not on the basis of cultural and historical reasons, but by the sheer whims and interests of the European imperial and colonial forces. The inequality in the structure of power in multi-nation states causes political unrest and the situation intensifies when a state refuses to implement internationally recognized rules and human right values. When the social contract is violated and the state fails to accommodate the grievances, and when other peaceful means are exhausted, the affected people according to Locke has every right to overthrow the government, demand self-government either through autonomy or a separate state, which they are entitled to have under international law. The right to self-determination is a fundamental principle of international law and is inseparable from human rights, which have become partners in various international declarations and covenants, like the International Human Rights Covenant of 1966, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The right to self-determination has also been recognized in other international and regional human rights instruments such as Part VII of the Helsinki Final Act 1975 and Article 20 of the African Charter of Human and Peoples' Rights, 1981 as well as the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Territories and Peoples. The subjection, domination and exploitation of people constitutes a

⁴² Supra 8

⁴³ Supra 18

denial of fundamental human rights, and is contrary to Charter of the United Nations and is an impediment to the promotion of world peace and co-operation.⁴⁴

Iran and Pakistan have ignored repeated pleas from international humanitarian organizations to stop brutalities on the pretext of state sovereignty. The principle of state sovereignty must no longer be a license to abuse the constitutional entitlements of a people and its legal rights; as it does not allow the state to resort to the unilateral use of force in dealing with the political demands of a national entity. States no longer remain legitimate when they threaten the lives of a significant portions of their population by a policy of ethnic or religious persecution, and/or exhibit institutional racism, that deprives a substantial proportion of the population of basic economic and political rights.⁴⁵ The United Nation General Assembly Resolution 2625(1970) Para, 1 (3) and Para 5 demands that the States do not oppress their citizens, which is reiterated in Article 1 of International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and also in the compliance provisions of Articles 40 and 41.⁴⁶ In recent decades, many decisions of the International Court of Justice are becoming beacon of hope for subjugated nations especially in Africa and Asia. Its decision displayed a conception of self-determination as a substantive right that accrues to peoples, or at least to non-self-governing territories, which those peoples or territories might wish to see enforced. Its declaration on 22 July 2010, known as Advisory Opinion on Kosovo paved the road for the peaceful settlement of international disputes. There are other examples where the national questions were resolved through the application of right to self-determination like, Bangladesh, East Timor, South Sudan, and Eritrea.⁴⁷ The UN Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples states that the subjection of peoples to alien subjugation, domination and exploitation constitutes a denial of fundamental human rights, and is contrary to the Charter of the United Nations and is an impediment to the promotion of world peace and co-operation. Without giving the right to self determination to the Baloch, it is hard to make and maintain peace in the South and Central Asia.⁴⁸

The Baloch struggle for the right of self determination by implication has impacts on regional and global peace. The growing armed resistance of the Baloch in Iran and Pakistan may be the cause of inter-state conflicts in near future causing regional and global insecurity. It is a bubbling cauldron of ethnic, sectarian, secessionist and militant violence, threatening to

⁴⁴Supra 14

⁴⁵ Allen Buchanan, “ Theories of Secession” 26 *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 50 (1997)

⁴⁶ Supra 14

⁴⁷Ibid

⁴⁸Supra 13

boil over at any time.⁴⁹ According to Afghan officials in Helmand province, Pakistan, Iran and Russia were supporting Taliban in an effort to undermine the US mission and the growing ISIS threat.⁵⁰ A power vacuum emerging as a result of the systematic weakening or destruction of all social structures capable of containing the rise of radicalism creates a potentially explosive situation that abuts the most vulnerable provinces of Afghanistan: Helmand and Kandahar. As Ahmed Rashid noted in his book *Taliban*, Iran and the Central Asian Republics suspect Pakistan and Saudi Arabia behind the Afghan-Pashtun fundamentalism in Iran, which exposes Iran's border to a three-pronged attack by drug traffickers, Sunni extremists, and Baloch separatists. Law and order in the province continues to deteriorate at an especially alarming pace. The Pakistani military has failed to control the nationalist movement, despite conducting targeted assassinations, kidnappings and designating the nationalist organisations as terrorist groups. The Pakistani security establishment seems to have decided to eliminate the very idea of Baloch nationalism, even in its most innocuous forms.⁵¹

A small group of US Congressmen, minority Afghan leaders, Baloch nationalists came up with a revolutionary alternative Af-Pak Policy⁵², and called for supporting the interests of the Northern Alliance and Baloch nationalists, even against the sovereign interests of Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan. The Taliban's incorporation into Afghanistan's political system was a greater risk than the partition of Afghanistan. The alternative Southwest Asian Policy of the US garnered increased attention especially after the Berlin Mandate,⁵³ the US Congressional hearing on Balochistan, and the introduction of the Balochistan Self-Determination Bill⁵⁴ before the US Congress. An independent Balochistan extending from Karachi to the Strait of Hormuz would provide a long-term security guarantee

⁴⁹Naveed Hussain, "Fiddling While Balochistan Burns," *Express Tribune*, August 15, 2012.

⁵⁰Adam Weinstein, "Afghanistan's Long Ignored Second Front in Balochistan" *Atlantic Council* June 1, 2017 available at <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/iransource/afghanistan-s-long-ignored-second-front-in-balochistan> visited on June 4, 2019

⁵¹Supra 34

⁵² The three main points of Obama administration's Af-Pak policy were (i) normalising relations with Pakistan's government and military; (ii) incorporating the Taliban into the current Afghan political system; and (iii) overly accommodating Iran

⁵³Eddie Walsh, "Should the US support an Independent Balochistan?" *Al Jazeera* available at <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2012/02/201222112203196390.html> visited on June 4, 2019

⁵⁴ Rana Rohrabacher (California), Louie Gohmert (Texas), and Steve King (Iowa) introduced the bill in support of Balochistan's historic right to self-determination, and advocated Constitutional reforms to make Afghanistan a federal state.

against China, Iran and Pakistan. State institutions such as the Supreme Court have been unable to convince security forces to respect the law, but they have been instrumental in drawing attention to violence and atrocities in Balochistan. The US backing out of Afghanistan may be a reason to further the cause of Balochistan. Even the Pakistanis now view the security force (not the separatists) as the biggest obstacle to national unity and stability.⁵⁵

CONCLUSION

People talk about Westphalian nation states, but nobody raised any objections when Balochistan was being occupied, because the British imperialists left the Indian subcontinent with artificially created problems, to ensure that peoples continue fighting amongst themselves. The Shia fundamentalism in the west, the Taliban terrorists in the north and the Pakistani religious fundamentalist state in the east with Baloch land imbedded by geography in the centre of what is now the most dangerous zone on this planet earth. A sovereign secular democratic Balochistan will be an oasis in the vast desert of Shia fundamentalism and Sunni terrorism⁵⁶ and a strong watching corridor in the gulf region. The demand for separate state has been changing the world for centuries and it seems that more changes are inevitable in coming years. The best way to navigate through self-determination in a peaceful manner is the path of international law which goes through the heart of human rights and dignity; therefore a clear notion and method responding to all human beings equally around the globe is essential. The right approach to a legal account that can meet the difficult task is based on universal rules of international human rights law. However, the theme of human rights in relation to self-determination of the Baloch must be considered a legal responsibility of all involved in conflicts where people having the right to be protected from abuse and sufferings.⁵⁷

For a century or so, it can be observed in the historical accounts that whenever a certain ethnic entity in a multi-national state suffered ill-treatment in the hands of the dominant majority, followed by economic, social and cultural exploitation, they reacted with a strong sentiment of nationalism, demanding the right to self-government.⁵⁸ The future status of Balochistan whether self-determination means the restoration of independence, or full

⁵⁵Supra 34

⁵⁶Supra 13

⁵⁷Supra 14

⁵⁸Ibid

regional autonomy within a federal Pakistan, is a matter for the Baloch people to decide. The Baloch people, like all people everywhere, have a right to self-determination – and the right to democracy, human rights and social justice. The people of Balochistan deserve the right of self-determination and the international community should hold a globally supervised referendum to freely and democratically determine the future of an illegally acquired Balochistan, voting for which should be limited to indigenous Baloch language speaking people across the globe and not just in Balochistan. An interim administration that respects the rights and culture of the Baloch people, that rejects fanaticism and Wahhabism should be established. If the International Community wants to fight terrorism, fundamentalism & establish stability and peace, they should support the Baloch people's right to self-determination. A sovereign secular democratic Balochistan will be a counter check for the religious fundamentalist states of Pakistan and Iran contributing to regional and world peace, security and stability. For securing a long lasting peace and security it is imperative that the unjust state boundaries should be readjusted and the divided Baloch should be united.