

## **Counterinsurgency in Balochistan in the Long View**

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### **Abstract**

The security situation in Balochistan has been critical over the past two decades. The separatist movement (insurgency) initiated by Baloch tribal Sardars keeps the Pakistan Armed forces engaged in a prolonged operation. The Army and the para-military forces (FC, Levis) were originally deployed in Balochistan for the maintenance of law and order. The forces presence, however, in the due course of time, began to undermine the interests of local political leaders as well as of other state's institutions. The pre-dominant role of the army along with intelligence agencies has restricted the role of the civil administration and human rights activists in the province. On the other hand, some external forces have been interfering to exploit the insurgency in Balochistan. The trust deficit between the state of Pakistan and the Baloch tribesmen has mostly resulted in creating tension on the power relations between the center and the province. The tensed relations between the province and the center are prone to conspiracy theories. Particularly the Baloch Nationalists are very much concerned about the alleged misuse of state authority by the para-military forces.

### **Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Balochistan: Its Legitimacy and Legal Status in Global Perspective**

#### **Introduction**

According to Steven Metz, "Insurgency has existed as long as people have used violence to resist states and empires but its strategic significance has ebbed and flowed throughout history (Rich & Duyvesteyn, 2012)." A numbers of factors contribute to the growth of insurgency. In our own time, social media for instance has become a powerful tool for propagating an insurgent movement. Through social media powerful propaganda campaign can be launched, which can attract large following. Thus interconnectedness and IT data innovation afford new strategies, which have for instance been successfully deployed lately in the Middle-East. Similarly, in Iraq, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and Pakistan

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insurgent groups have also used these and a number of other strategies in the course of their insurgency movements.

Balochistan has experienced a number of violent insurgencies since early 1970s. So far; the state has managed to bring the situation under control through negotiations or by deploying its troops from time to time. Historically speaking, the law and order situation in the province has been a daunting challenge for the fledging state of Pakistan. Balochistan has witnessed at least five back-to-back insurgencies and situations of unrest since independence. Poor handling, coupled with non-institutionalized approach by successive governments was the main driver of unrest (Mirza, 2013). The state had to counter these insurgencies to safeguard against erosion of territorial sovereignty. This article focuses on different aspects of insurgencies and counterinsurgency operations in Balochistan. The article is divided in four parts.

#### **A. What is an Insurgency?**

Insurgency is an organized rebellion aimed at overthrowing a constituted government through the use of subversion and armed conflict. In the conventional form of insurgency, separatists confront the state. An ethnic group or those suffering from socio-economic or religio-political challenges usually launch such a separatist movement. Over time the alienated segment turns violent and resists the state authority. The state calls its armed forces to suppress the alienated segment engaged in running a separatist movement.

There may be a disagreement in assessing the kind and gauging the magnitude of insurgencies around the world. Therefore, a number of definitions are presented to clarify the term. The official definitions of insurgency used by Western nations are based in broader political conceptualization. They normally define insurgency as a kind of war executed by insurrectionists in quest of political targets, often to snatch state power and become the state (and thus achieve the license to carry out violence). According to a study conducted by David Gompert and John Gordon, insurgency is 'war by other means' consisted of 'organized campaigns to bring down existing government by a combination of force and mass support and approval (Gompert & Gordon, 2008). This definition also pervades and reflects official thinking in the West.

It is pertinent to mention that insurgency and freedom fight are two different terminologies. Freedom fight or struggle to get freedom from the clutches of an occupied force is justified and recognized by the world community, while insurgency is mostly suppressed as a right of the concerned state. However, voices of concern and support for insurgents are often raised by rival states. They even sponsor terror and insurgency to achieve their strategic and political objectives.

The mainstream conceptualization presents insurgency as a fierce contest for mass following in a political arena. According to a research analysis supporting the British school of thought regarding counterinsurgency, deep down any counterinsurgency (COIN) drive lies one fundamental necessity that the population of the concerned land should entertain the idea or feeling or expectation that the government presents better opportunities than do insurgents (Crawshaw, 2009). As befits the Western tradition, it was all a matter of rational choice and optimizing out-comes, reflecting the idea that politics, like economy, should reflect a moderated but open market scheme. The French have the doctrine that states that triumph in counterinsurgency is possible through the strong backup of the population. Trinquier asserts that such an unconditional and over-whelming support is only ideal, but it has never been enjoyed by any government (Trinquier, 2006).

The US government defines insurgency as 'the organized use of subversion and vehemence by a front or movement that attempt to overturn or impel change of a ruling body or government (US Army, 2009). Australian doctrine defines it as an "organized, violent and politically prompted activity carried out by a rebel, insurgent or separatist group and keeps on for a long period of time that typically employ subversion, insurrection and terrorism, in a bid to bring about change within a state (Australian Army, 2008). The Indian military defines insurgency more specifically adding something which is not mentioned by others. It describes insurgency with a different perspective or the Indian might have regionalized or contextualized the definition of insurgency. According to the Indian definition insurgency is a coordinated armed combat initiated and executed by a section of local people or ethnic group against their State. Moreover, such armed combat is usually launched and continued with foreign help and funding

(Indian Army, 2004). In the context of Balochistan, the Indian version of the definition of insurgency is quite significant for a number of reasons. The crisis of Balochistan is not clear in their understanding and handling of the issues with their neighboring countries. India is very relevant in the discussion on insurgency and COIN as it is directly and indirectly interested in Balochistan. Moreover, India also seeks justifications for a number of separatist movements going on in it.

On the other hand, while fighting insurgency in Balochistan for decades, Pakistan does not have a counterinsurgency doctrine (Major, Iqbal. 2009). Markey for instance says, "The Pakistan army is poorly structured, equipped and trained for counterinsurgency (Markey, D. 2008)." In conventional war boundaries are usually violated, but insurgency on the other hand often results in opening new frontiers and borders. Insurgency is a trouble inside; it is fought inside by insiders both from inside and outside with foreign support. Insurgency is devastating due to its piercing nature. It erodes the state from within. This is the most horrible and catastrophic characteristic of insurgency. The commonly accepted assessment and formulation of insurgency, pertaining to the Western political concepts, portrays a number of premises, which will certainly help in understanding the insurgency in Balochistan province. Some of the important assumptions are as under:

- a. Insurgents require mass support, as they are weaker than the state.
- b. Insurgents target the state and use violence to divide the existing state and create a new state by establishing their writ in some regions.
- c. Insurgency is carried out by some alienated and down-trodden people of the state. Such elements are eager to achieve their political objectives at any cost, even outside the present political and legal system (Rich & Duyvesteyn, 2012).

The first provincial government in Balochistan was not permitted to work due to mistrust of the central government. After dismissing the provincial government, the central government apprehended all the major Baloch and Pakhtun leaders under treason charges and tried them in special courts. In the words of Selig Harrison, "such high handedness provoked the first major

Baloch insurrection that lasted about four years taking a heavy toll of the Baloch guerrillas and the Pakistan Army (Harrison, 1978).”

Besides analyzing its different aspects, it is significant to assess the status of current spate of insurgency in Balochistan. Two schools of thought prevail about the nature and level of the present uprising in Balochistan. According to the first school of thought, in the words of Amir Mateen, it is a savage rebellion (violent anarchism) rather than traditional revolt (classical insurgency). It holds that the current separatist movement lacks charismatic leadership on the one hand and on the other hand infightings among the Baloch tribes are damaging their cause. The Baloch revolt in 1958 was led by Nawab Nauroz Khan, who was much venerated by his supporters. Also, the second revolt from 1963-69 was led by Sher Muhammad Marri. The *Parari* guerrilla movement of the 1970s was driven by Nawab Khair Bux Marri, who carried the support of outstanding Baloch leaders like Sher Muhammad Marri, Nawab Akbar Bugti, and Sardar Ataullah Mengal. The present insurgency is different from the past ones. The exile leadership is busy in conspiracies. For instance, Nawab Akbar Bugti's grandson Brahamdagh Bugti is hiding away in Afghanistan, while Baloch Nationalist leader Khair Bux Marri's son Harbiyar Marri is residing in London (Mateen, 2010).

The second school of thought calls the rebellion as a sign of the legitimate cause of disappointed Baloch population, which has the potential and support of young educated middle class. They think that the support for the Baloch cause is expanding rapidly. Defenders of this view trust that baffled and unemployed youthful Baloch, who feel generally denied, left out and ignored, are joining the agitators and separatists regardless of tribal divisions and internal rifts (Sial & Basit, 2010).

## **B. Counterinsurgency by the State**

Counterinsurgency in simple words means an armed action taken by a state or government to defeat insurgency (insurrection/separatist movement). It is all about a policy employed to tackle or handle insurgency. It is also a kind of pacification or mollification to incline the separatists or insurgents. It can be a treaty to cease hostilities through use of force besides employing some peaceful means. It is a counter act by the state to

thwart insurgents. It is a strategy to antagonize activities of separatists or insurgents. U.S military's first post-Vietnam counterinsurgency developed a different school of thought regarding insurgency. They perceived insurgency as a coordinated, armed political campaign whose aim may be capturing of power through subversive coup and change of the sitting regime (US Manual, 1990).

However, the U.S amended their counterinsurgency doctrine during Iraq War. The doctrine of U.S Army's counterinsurgency written in response to the conflict in Iraq was: Political power is the central issue in insurgencies and counterinsurgencies; each side aims to get the people to accept its governance or authority as legitimate (US Manual, 2006). It is state's countermove or counter strike against the rebels. It is a counter attack to push insurgents backward. Fighting insurgency is a herculean job. It is like performing a surgery where margin for error is zero. A small negligence can cause death or impotency to the entire body. Similarly, while fighting insurgency, any single step in wrong direction can become devastating for the state.

Pakistan's counterinsurgency in Balochistan has so many flaws. The military establishment and the civilian government lack co-ordination and the will to resolve the issue of Balochistan through peaceful means. Poor counterinsurgency measures taken by law enforcing agencies with hardly any co-ordination between military establishment and civil bureaucracy have yielded no good results so far. The anti-terrorism and counterinsurgency measures adopted cast no significant impact on the separatists. Rather they have stiffened their resolve to fight the state by employing a number of modern means of sabotage and destruction.

Counterinsurgency is different from fighting a war against an enemy. It is basically a question of organizational form. After 9/11, the U.S and its allies came to the conclusion that the enemy they face is not a unitary sovereign nation-state, but rather a network (Negri, 2004). All wars today tend to be net wars (Negri, 2004). In counterinsurgency strategy the main problem is the doubt factor and suspicion of outlaws and loyal ones. It is practically very hard if not impossible to segregate peace-loving citizens from insurgents who are not different from them in their language, race and other civic or social behaviors. It requires accurate intelligence and

authentic information to counter the ill wishes of state enemies. By state enemies it does not mean solely the tribal, nationalists, Baloch leadership or even the Baloch insurgents. There are non-state actors who exploit the situation and entice the people to violence. While a war is imposed generally from outside, insurgency is a violent act of insiders. In Balochistan, the people are generally not happy with the centralized policies of the state and as a disagreement they have launched a separatist movement. The state at the same time is making all out efforts to safeguard the integrity of the country and resist the insurgents. So counterinsurgency is that form of strategy in which the uprising of indigenous people is dealt with state force.

Around the world, the state not only has an extensive substantial advantage over all other social forces in its capacity for violence, it also is the only social actor whose use of violence is legal and lawful (Negri, 2004). To subdue insurgents, law enforcement agencies cut their supply line and restrict their activities, and make them loyal to the state, by acknowledging writ of the state through the use of all possible means. A war is fought against an enemy outside while to counter an insurgency, an attempt is made to suppress the rebellion or separatist movement inside. Dialogues and reconciliatory efforts usually fail are however followed by use of force or full-fledge military operation. This is a grave mistake repeated by both civil and military regimes in Balochistan. One may disagree to the use of force and state violence, yet some sort of justification is explored to legitimize it. A renowned architect of modern social science Max Weber considers state as a human community that claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of force within a given territory (Iqbal, 2015). This concept regarding legitimacy of violence and force by the state is supported by Steven Metz with initiation of reforms for the well-being of the people. According to his understanding: "In a broader concept of legitimizing the state violence, counterinsurgency must deal both with insurgents directly through military and police actions and undertake reform to hold the population together (Rich & Duyvesteyn, 2012)".

Here comes the tricky situation one need to ask whether there is some legality for violence committed by the state. Exploitation instead of welfare of the people is the basic flaw, which is not addressed properly. The states as well as insurgents are aware of

this reality and both are trying to convince each other. It has become the matter of expecting and not accepting the other. In this sense counterinsurgency is more complicated than war because the state has not only to carry out operations but also to reform. It is in fact a damage control. It is to stop the war and de-escalate tension. Counterinsurgency does not issue anyone the permit to kill. It is primarily the misuse of state authority and misinterpretation of the very term. It is not a war of course, but requires more careful observation and attention than a war. In modern age, the dynamics of war has completely changed. Countries are neither conquered nor captured; their resources are grabbed and drained away. The war in Balochistan is also a war of resources. The rival states use insurgency as a tool to destabilize fragile states. Thus according to Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt, even in asymmetrical warfare or conflict, complete dominance is not possible. All that can be achieved is a provisional and limited maintenance of control and order that must constantly be policed and preserved. Weak states cannot afford to subdue insurgency affectively as it is a full time job (Negri, 2004).

The main objective to counter any insurgent movement is to reconcile or cleanse the society of outlaws working on separatist agenda. It is like a surgical operation. A careful action is taken against the miscreants but unfortunately even a cautious action in fighting insurgency often proves counter-productive in a number of ways. The state, to keep its people united, revisits its counterinsurgency strategy, which is exploited by insurgents and it deteriorates the situation rapidly. So tactically, war is different from counterinsurgency. It is usually fought against a declared enemy, employing state's armed forces, having the license to kill and inflict heavy losses on rival states. But for fighting insurgency, the state has limited power to exercise and quite a few options to pursue.

Insurgents use terror as a tool to achieve economic and political objectives. Instead of dialogue and resolving conflict through peaceful means, violence is promoted and an atmosphere of fear is created to force the state to bow before the perpetrators of violence and enemies of peace. It merits mentioning here that violence and force are used as a tool to handle insurgency by the state or counterinsurgency by rebels. There is confusion about resistance. Rival parties question the legitimacy and legality of each other's use

of force. Actually, it is their offensive and defensive strategy, depending upon who is more powerful and effective, the state or the separatists. From state's perspective, separatists usually resist state's policies by carrying out terrorist activities to force the state to accept their demands. On the other hand, to establish its writ, the state uses force to compel separatists to surrender. The insurgents in Balochistan are no match to Pakistan's LEAs in number and strength. They use violence and terror wherever they find a loophole in security. Sabotage, bomb blasts, and targeting government buildings have been their main weapon. Balochistan is nearly half of Pakistan's total territorial area covering 44% of the country's area, but is home to only 5% of the country's population. Its population density is only 19 per square kilometer against the national average of 166 (ADB Report, 2005), that makes it almost impossible for the security forces to patrol such a wild stretch of land containing arid mountains and deserts, ideal for asymmetrical warfare (Negri, 2004).

In Balochistan, the Pakistani state uses power, which is resisted by the rebels. Thus we observe a kind of mixed relation between the resisting forces and the perpetrators or oppressors and oppressed. Both change their position as often as one initiates a new move and the other retaliates. So we can say that resistance cannot be attributed only to separatists or rebels, the state also have to resist violent acts and vice versa. Here we arrive at a distinct point, insurgency is resisted by the state while counterinsurgency by the rebels. Both resist each other and we discover that 'resistance' is an evasive action or strategy to avert the harmful effect of the initiator. Thus we can say resistance is a challenge to the state authority and also a tool to establish it. Insurgency and counterinsurgency are both broad terms. Resistance is the key element and challenge for the Pakistani state and insurgents.

Likewise, insurgency is not a civil war because insurgency is an organized struggle while there is lack of coordination and the goals are not set in a civil war. The intensity and magnitude of a civil war is no doubt greater than insurgency, and it is more horrible and devastating in nature. Insurgency is a threat to disintegration while a civil war is the start of the same. The civil war may spread throughout the country while insurgency is mostly limited to a specific district or province like the insurgency in Balochistan. The

state's military forces counter any move by insurgents by adopting a specific strategy while a civil war is a violent situation. For example, there was a civil war in Afghanistan for some years that ended in 1996 with the rise of the Taliban to power. However, the U.S with the help of its allies toppled the Taliban in 2001 in the aftermath of 9/11. Since then, the state of Afghanistan is facing the Taliban insurgency with ineffective tools to counter them.

As already stated, there is difference between civil war and insurgency. But according to experts in war studies, military think-tanks, scholars and government officials, both insurgency and civil war are interwoven. A civil war is just a fierce clash inside a country—warring groups share citizenship. There is often asymmetry between the groups; the weaker may depend on a system of revolt. Regularly they do as such in light of the fact that they do not have the ability to go for conventional war. But a rebellion is not diagnostically different from a civil war. As a strategy, rebellion is employed by a frail association against a power structure and the associations which command it (Rich & Duyvesteyn, 2012).

### **C. The impact of insurgency/counterinsurgency on security situation in Balochistan**

Violence is endemic in Balochistan. Sporadic terror incidents discourage politicians and masses to come in the mainstream. Besides abductions and forced disappearances of Baloch activists and civilians, target killing is used as a tactic to infuse terror in the people. It is even harder to put blame on a particular insurgent group as we cannot deny the role of state agencies. Target killing is adopted by all the actors involved in Balochistan. About 20 separatists were assassinated near Turbat laborers' camp by unknown shooters on April 11, 2015. Turbat killing is a tragic incident in which the local nationalist leadership was kidnapped and brutally killed. Later their bullet-riddled bodies were found. Resultantly, the finding of Baloch leaders' corpses triggered public violence and prolonged strikes, protests, and civil resistance and agitation across Balochistan incited Baloch to violence ("Riots as Baloch chiefs found dead", 2009). This is not the only incidence of violence and terror. Such attacks are carried out with succession and often the state appears helpless to maintain law and order in

the province (Iqbal, 2015). Thus security has become one of the major problems of the province.

As security has become a general phenomenon, crossing a security check-post is always a risky exercise. It is sometimes even terrifying especially in a conflict zone like Balochistan. The people have to go through snap-checking. A long queue of vehicles sometimes comes to a standstill while most often move with the snail-pace. Situations like this cause huge amount of stress and the people in most areas of Balochistan suffer from mental and psychological problems due to the sense of insecurity in the security zones. Thus tension builds at check posts and the local people scorn the security forces on duty and vice versa. This tense situation is multiplied many fold when the military convoys arrive or pass from different routes. The movement of the people is halted and the traffic is brought virtually to wheel-jam position and not a single person is allowed to move. It has been observed that such convoys appear in morning when school-going kids are in a hurry to reach their institutions in time. The office-going and other workers badly suffer due to their movement. This practice is not liked by the people as it is not only a source of inconvenience to them but it also badly affects them because they are somehow bound to comply with the orders of security forces. Unfortunately, the harsh attitude of military and para-military troops on duty at different check-posts and crossing points, irritate the local population and thus result in hatred. Sometimes in case of emergency, like taking a patient or an injured to a hospital, the local people are not permitted to go. The troops on duty are bound to carry out the orders of their commander. Naturally, by ignoring the very concern and tradition of the local people, the security forces fail to win support of the people. Thus a scenario of mistrust and even confrontation between the forces and the local people further complicate and spoil the situation in the security zone of Balochistan.

We have two contrasting views of the conflict in Balochistan province. The state, the military establishment of Pakistan and some centralist advocates on the one hand, and the separatists, insurgents, and the Baloch nationalist leadership on the other. Working on such a complex problem is always laborious and dangerous where the sentiments of the people are match-up with national interests. Certainly, the insurrection and insurgency in

Balochistan province is multifarious and more complicated than other insurgencies around the world. The Baloch grudge and strong resentment to resist the state of Pakistan is out of bounds. Their major demands and concerns are continued military presence in the province, political isolation of Baloch, economic underdevelopment of the people of the province and natural resource exploitation. Conversely, the state argues that the conflict is perpetuated by the Baloch tribal Sardars who shun government's overtures to develop and integrate Balochistan in order to maintain their own grip on power (Murtha, 2011).

There is insurgency in Balochistan but all the Baloch are not insurgents. The Baloch society, regardless of under development and alienation, is fragmented and divided in its attitude and political understanding. In such a diverse and complicated situation, the state is fighting on dual mode at the same field. Fighting the separatists and reconciling the deprived segments of Balochistan province simultaneously, has drawn a line dividing them in Baloch nationalists (separatists) and Baloch moderates (centrists).

Moreover, the Nationalists of Balochistan are categorized in three basic groups of Conservatives (centralists), Radicals (hardliners) and Guerrillas (insurgents). They have been divided into different categories according to their role in the ongoing insurgency in the province. Conservatives are those nationalist political parties who are demanding provincial autonomy for Balochistan and are attempting to safeguard Baloch rights over its assets. They include, for example, National Party (NP), Balochistan National party Mengal (BNPM) and *Jamhoori Watan* Party (JWP). The group of Radical Baloch nationalists consists of those parties working for Balochistan independence through peaceful resistance. This group includes for example, Baloch Republican Party (BRP), Baloch National Movement (BNM), Baloch *Khawateen* Panel (BKP) and Baloch *Watan* Movement (BWM). The last category is of Guerrillas/insurgents, who are battling for freedom of Balochistan. This group incorporates different little and extensive wings, for example, Baloch Liberation Army (BLA), Baloch Liberation Front (BLF), Baloch Republican Army (BRA), United Baloch Army (UBA) and the *Lashkar-e-Balochistan* (LeB) (Amir, A. 2009). This clear division among Baloch movements has neither helped the cause of nationalism nor the plan of government to remove grievances of the

masses. The separatists oppose development, which is pivotal for improving the life standard of the Baloch. At the same time, the state of Pakistan cannot pursue a unified policy to be implemented in Balochistan. Any step taken to address the problems of the people is responded by violence and destruction.

The BLA has been the main force spearheading insurgency in Balochistan (Bansal, 2010). Insurgency started from day one when Balochistan was declared a part of Pakistan. The annexation of Kalat state to Pakistan and Khanate of Kalat were open confrontation. Since then the province has been afflicted by insurgency ("The tribes arise", 2005). The state of Kalat created the dispute. The first insurgency broke out in March 1948 by Prince Karim. He deserted to Afghanistan and started activities against Pakistan with the purpose to project the case of Kalat independence. However, the nascent insurgency dried down in few months. The second insurgency erupted in late fifties, which was chiefly focused on the establishment of 'One Unit'. It was restricted to Kohlu, Khuzdar, and Kalat districts. The second insurgency is known as Jhalawan disturbance (Kundi, 2008). As per Ahmad Iqbal's observations, "Poor handling of Sardar Nauroz Khan and his family by the government laid the seeds of lack of trust in Balochi people towards the Federation of Pakistan. The uneasy peace lasted for a brief period and the decade of sixties again found Balochistan gripped into the third insurgency (Ahmad, 1992)."

Dera Bugti was an addition to the list of already insurgency-hit districts of Kohlu, Kalat, and Khuzdar. Tribal chiefs like Ghaus Bakhsh Bizenjo, Atta Ullah Mengal, Khair Bakhsh Marri, and Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti were charged of supporting Nauroz Khan. The main cause of third insurgency in Balochistan was the arrest and removal of Baloch tribal chiefs. The government of Pakistan gave general amnesty and the breakup of One Unit Scheme proved a sigh of relief. Balochistan enjoyed a short period of peace. In 1972 Baloch nationalist government was installed in the province. According to Mansoor Kundi, "The state's inability to find lasting solution to the provincial problems took Balochistan into its fourth insurgency in 1973, which lasted for four years. Commencing in 2005 today the unfortunate province is confronting fifth cycle of unrest (Kundi, 2008)."

The insurgency in Balochistan is different from insurgency in Iraq, Palestine or Afghanistan. Yet it is not unique in the world. It is an ethno-national movement, which has sparked security threats in the province. At the same time, the people of Balochistan have been badly affected by the overall grave law and order situation. The tussle between the insurgents and armed forces has resulted in attitudinal and psychological problems in Baloch. The insurrection in Balochistan and the ever-increasing cruel reaction of armed forces and FC have profoundly radicalized the local people (Akhtar, 2012).

The geographic location of Balochistan, combined with the presence of history old tribal system, and accession encouraged the separatists and terrorists to challenge the writ of the state. Such a scenario strengthened the mindset of separatists in Balochistan to engage in armed conflict with the state forces. As disputes often lead to conflicts, Balochistan's accession to Pakistan was controversial and disputed. Today, after years of political and armed struggle for their rights, they have hardly any say in the affairs of the state. Due to their poor representation in all federal and provincial institutions, they feel alienated. The launching of mega developmental projects without any prior consultation with the Baloch leadership has further strengthened their sense of deprivation and alienation. The people of Balochistan suffer a deep sense of insecurity and marginalization. The separatists have been treading along a thorny path of insurgency, which has resulted in insecurity for the peaceful citizen. The sense of insecurity has severely damaged the socio-economic conditions of the people of Balochistan, which is also denting the government's efforts to bring Balochistan at par with the rest of other provinces of Pakistan. In Balochistan, the state could not establish its authority. The security issue has been magnified by insurgency, extremism, target killing, suicide bombing, forced disappearances, Talibanization, sectarian and ethnic violence in Balochistan. According to one observer, "The decade long insurgency recently turned into a battle ground for politically motivated attacks on religious sects with banned outfit Lashkar-e-Jhangvi allegedly targeting the Shia and Hazara communities throughout the embattled province (Gishkori, 2012)."

The state of Pakistan is looked upon as a usurper and treated like an enemy by both the insurgents and those devoured of their

civil rights in Balochistan. Though a good number of their socio-economic problems and political representation has been addressed by the introduction of a comprehensive relief package with the name *Aaghaaz-e-Haqooq-e-Balochistan* (Balochistan-package, 2009), the 18th Constitutional Amendment by the state of Pakistan and the 7th National Finance Commission (NFC) Award, yet they are not convinced to trust the state. The aim behind these initiatives was to remove the sense of alienation among the Baloch and also to put a halt to the growing radicalization of the Baloch. These developments have certainly helped in diminishing tension in the province and a significant decrease has been observed in violence and terrorist activities.

The tribal leadership of Balochistan is exploitative and uses the issue for their personal interests. They have failed to present the case of the Baloch in a proper way at a proper forum. They have politicized the issue and they have been engaged in attaining political mileage whenever any opportunity comes their way. The political leadership in Balochistan also resists the state whenever their economic interests are in danger. Their national interest as Pakistani is yet to come into existence. The separatists in Balochistan, according to their understanding, rely heavily on their natural resources. They prefer to withdraw from federation to have control of natural wealth of the province and utilize it for the betterment of the people of Balochistan. Perhaps voicing this understanding, Baloch politician and the former governor, Mir Ghaus Bizenjo famously claimed that Balochistan did not need Pakistan, but Pakistan needed Balochistan (Siddiqi, 2012).

A major development took place just before the general election when Sardar Akhtar Mengal returned to Pakistan on 25th of March, 2013. Thus terminating his four-year self-imposed exile he ensured to participate in election. In other words, he gave his consent to address the issue of Balochistan through peaceful means under democratic dispensation. It was a bold gesture and strong message to insurgents who were involved in armed resistance against the state. He thus rejected the insurgents' brand of solution to the crisis in Balochistan. As the entire insurgent and separatist leadership in the province and abroad are against the parliamentary politics, it was indeed a bold step taken by Sardar Akhtar Mengal, the head of BNP (M) to participate in the general election. Thus he endorsed his

resolve and belief in parliamentary politics. Describing the perplexity of situation where the state is on the one side and the insurgents on the other, both are equally unfavorable options. According to Akhtar Mengal, “The Baloch militants consider me a traitor while the security establishment also treats me as an enemy. I’m being targeted by both (“Akhtar Mengal returns to Pakistan”, 2013). Interestingly, when he was asked about his role to mediate between the insurgents and the state, he regretfully said, “Both [Baloch insurgents and security establishment] speak through the barrel of the gun. They cannot understand my language (“Akhtar Mengal returns to Pakistan”, 2013).

The insurgents as well as the tribal leaders in Balochistan perceive development in any sector as a threat to their tribal interests. They oppose development in their area on the pretext of exploitation of their resources by the state. Actually they exploit the loyalties of Baloch and use them against the state as a buffer. The tribal elders are mostly busy in propagating their own version of nationalism based on different tribes and ethnicities in Balochistan. In the garb of their personal vendetta, the tribal chiefs have been promoting Baloch nationalism and ethos to provide enough fuel to the ongoing insurgency in Balochistan. The Baloch leadership has succeeded to inspire the youth to a great extent. According to Adeel Khan’s understanding, youth has come to the forefront. “In the past, the movement leadership was in the hands of tribal leaders but in current situation the leadership is shifted to the urban educated middle class (Khan, 2009)”. With drastic changes in social conditions and political awareness among Baloch, the youth has certainly come to the rescue of insurgent movement and considered cutting edge in the fight for the Baloch cause. Insurgency in Balochistan province is not in the hands of tribal Sardars anymore. It is efficaciously steered and directed by bourgeoisie; literate but frustrated youth mainly gathered in the mountainous areas of Awaran, Panjgur, Gwadar and Turbat districts (Khosa, 2015). There seems to be little support in the province, beyond the Bugti tribe, for the current insurgency in Balochistan province (“Who’s Who in Balochistan”, 2011).

There are some inner breaks and ideological contrasts among Baloch Nationalist parties. For example, Mengal tribe leader Ataulah Mengal and his son Akhtar Mengal have confidence in main

stream politics, deny viciousness, and work inside the framework of the federation of Pakistan. While Nawab Khair Bux Marri, champions the cause for a different country for the Baloch. Unexpectedly, Marri's son, Changez, is in Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) and has faith in mainstream and national-level politics. Similarly, the decedents of Nawab Akbar Bugti are having a split along political lines. His grandson Brahamdagh Bugti struggles for a different country for the Baloch through brutal means, while Akbar Bugti's offspring Talal and Aali have faith in parliamentary dispensation. Both Talal and Aali head their own particular groups of *Jamhoori Watan* Party. A few analysts are of the view that Baloch nationalists can be classified into nationalist discourses. They are conservatives, hardliners and extremists (Sial & Basit, 2010).

#### **D. Pakistan's counterinsurgency strategy in Balochistan province**

Counterinsurgency is a full time mission. Temporary measures cannot work to overcome an insurgency or separatism for good. Baloch insurgency is spread over a period of decades with exception of few years of comparative peace. No lasting peace could be established due to ill-measured and ill-drafted policies of state towards Balochistan. To date, the Pakistani state's essential counterinsurgency strategy has been military force. The Pakistan armed forces have conducted five military operations in Balochistan in previous six decades to suppress the rebellion, but hardly able to root it out (Tariq, 2013). Guarding the national interest is the supreme obligation of military forces, but poor strategies have earned them a bad reputation. Adeel Khan's for instance says, "The military has earned the dubious distinction of being an army that keeps trying to conquer its own people (Khan, 2009)". No policy is flawless. There is always disagreement and the people are not satisfied with the policies of the state. Insurgency gives birth to a series of conspiracy theories, which add fuel to the fire. To counter such theories, the state comes up with the projects to improve the socio-economic conditions of the people. According to Khuram Iqbal, "Pakistan's counter-insurgency strategy in Balochistan involves economic development, and the use of force. Government invested heavily in term of economic activities and job creation while clamping down on all forms of dissent (Iqbal, 2008). In spite

of strong resistance from the insurgents, the state implemented its policies of development to improve living standard of the people. Along with the economic uplift of the province, Pakistan has adopted an “iron-hand” policy to deal with the Baloch miscreants that has achieved considerable results (Iqbal, 2008).

When facing asymmetrical and low-level armed resistance, which occupies a grey area between war and peace, the military experts suggest a “grey” scheme or plan of action that mixes military and civilian components. Military might in itself is not sufficient to tackle insurgency. It should be supplemented by political, economic, social, ideological and psychological control: bio-power (Negri, 2004). In their master piece work in war studies, “Multitude: War & Democracy in the age of Empire”, Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt bring to limelight the significance of Guerrilla warfare and its impact as a powerful tool in insurgency. Narrating the nature of Guerrilla structure they write, “Guerrilla organizations tend to develop polycentric forms of command and horizontal forms of communication, in which small groups or sectors can communicate independently with many other groups. The Guerrilla army is therefore not a single body but something more a kin to a pack of wolves, or numerous wolf packs that counterinsurgency forces have to hunt down (Negri, 2004).”As mentioned earlier, all wars today have become network wars. The guerrilla structure suggests a polycentric network, with numerous centered clusters. The distributed model of insurgency is full-grid network, in which there is no centre and all hubs can operate directly with all others. In situation like this, the Guerrilla armed force resemble a pack of wolves and the appropriated system may be envisioned like a swarm of honey bees an apparently nebulous variety that can strike at a solitary point from all sides or spread in all directions in order to end up practically invisible (Negri, 2004).

In early 2000's local students in Balochistan protested against developmental projects. The state responded with forceful approach. It began to suppress the protest by force and even resorted to killing individuals. The students claimed that the state had betrayed the people that the individuals who could challenge the writ of the state, or have the capacity to change the mind of Baloch people against the state are on the hit list (Masood, S. 2015). After 2013 general election in Pakistan, the government of Muslim

League-Nawaz designed a political strategy for Balochistan by supporting Baloch Middle Class political parties. The local legislators saw this policy of the government as positive in the overall security situation in the province. However, the Pakistani state from the beginning of issue has employed the coercive attitude to flush out Baloch nationalism (Masood, S. 2015). During 2013-14 the armed forces were blamed for using the kill-and-dump policy, illegal abductions, coercion and FC-led security operations against miscreants and rebels. However, their strategy changed in 2015. The former army commander, Lt- Gen Nasser Janjua, employed stick and carrot policy to deal with security hazards in the province (Khosa, 2015). There are two state-friendly narratives available. The first is that all violence in Balochistan is a foreign conspiracy. Therefore, what is required is greater show of force. The second says that the people have died in the conflict and that this must end, and reconciliation is made possible by providing a few thousand jobs. Both these approaches denote the state's stick and carrot approach. However, it is believed that carrots will work because the Baloch tribal leaders who have no support amongst common people primarily push the insurgency (Siddiqi, A. 2011). According to the current commander of Southern Command Lt. Gen. Aamir Riaz, the military wishes to see Balochistan as a peaceful and economically stable province moving the path of progress and prosperity (Khosa, 2015). This is a statement reflecting the policy of military towards the lingering state of uncertainty in Balochistan. The state seems to have reassessed its strategy of use of force in the province and prefers to engage the dissenting Baloch in negotiations. At the minimum, it is clear that a counterinsurgency can no longer rely on negative techniques, such as the assassination of rebel leaders and mass arrests, but must also create "positive" techniques. A counterinsurgency, in other words, must not destroy the environment of insurgency, but rather create and control the environment. Traditional, centralized, hierarchical military structure cannot implement such an articulated counterinsurgency strategy. It takes a network to fight a network—diamond cuts diamond (Negri, 2004). The military regime of General Pervez Musharraf addressed the issue of unrest in Balochistan, in the making of which it had a central role, with a three set of strategies—centralized development, counterinsurgency, and cooptation of

moderate Baloch leaders and their integration into provincial and national power system (Rais, 2012).

### **Conclusions**

The security situation in Balochistan is threatening. No doubt, insurgency has been the hallmark of Balochistan turmoil for decades. There are a number of reasons for this unrest and violence. In the present scenario, insurgency is at the least not the biggest problem confronting the state. However, Pakistan has to formulate its counterinsurgency policy to combat this violence and terrorism in Balochistan. Enemies of the state are set to use Balochistan as a hotbed of sectarian violence to harm its interests. The insurgency, however, is at its ebb. Failure to flush out insurgency completely is considered as a major flaw in Pakistan's counterinsurgency policy. Pakistan has to modernize its intelligence and surveillance considerably. The political leadership should be facilitated to bring the angry Baloch leaders back to table. They should be given the decision-making power and authority to convince the insurgents.

The armed forces and especially the FC must work to improve its image in Balochistan. The armed forces of Pakistan are highly professional and capable of dealing with all sorts of combating challenges. Nonetheless, there is lack of coordination among different institutions and stakeholders regarding Balochistan. Inconsistency in policies of both the civil and military establishments has deepened the sense of alienation among the Baloch tribesmen. It is high time to revisit state policy towards the angry Baloch and serious and constructive measures must be initiated to end the violence in Balochistan on the one hand and on the other hand, the fruits of development and prosperity should reach every Baloch tribesman.

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