



Balochistan Conference 2011

Focusing on:

- Balochistan's Case and prospects
- Human Right Violations in Balochistan
- Baloch IDPs and disappearances
- Baloch Target killings and genocide
- BALUCHISTAN: The geostrategic importance for Peace and Security in South Asia

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Taking Stock of the Baloch Struggle and the Way Forward

The struggle of the Baloch people has entered a very critical stage. It is a point of no return. The Baloch people have “nothing to lose but their chains”; they have no alternative but to fight to death to protect their freedom, their very being. The years of hobnobbing with the Pakistan state, which weakened the movement, have taught the Balochs that they have to keep fighting for their independence rather than resign themselves to lead their lives in misery and indignity. They have to fight it to the end, to the last Balochs.

The movements for freedom around the world have shown that no amount of force can subjugate a nation which comes together with a singular determination to throw off the yoke cast on it by others. The Baloch have been on the wrong side of history for centuries, but now there is an opportunity beckoning them in the horizon. They have to seize it.

The tale of Pakistani oppression and the step-motherly treatment meted out to the Baloch people under illegal occupation is all too well known. Pakistan state has been much worse than the colonial British administration in its way of dealing with the Baloch people. It has resorted to all kinds of illegal and illicit means to keep the Baloch land under its control. The Baloch people have hardly mattered to the Pakistani state. It has tried to wean away the Baloch leadership through force or allurements of money and privileges from time to time. The people of Balochistan have stood away from such negotiations. They have participated in the elections under pressure and with the hope that the Baloch leadership would take a courageous stance on the question of independence. But they have been betrayed time and again.

But the current phase of Baloch movement for independence has been markedly different. The Baloch middle class has asserted itself. A new generation of leadership has emerged which has no stake in the Pakistani state system. It is wedded to the idea of complete independence. The tribal Sardars are now willing to be led by rather than lead the people. They have read the writing on the wall. It is for independence, Azaadi, as they call it.

There are several strategies at work by the Pakistani state to dilute the spirit of Baloch people. The Balochistan package, the 18th Amendment, the Seventh NFC Award, and the Benazir Income Support Scheme being implemented in Balochistan are lollipops/inducements to wean us away from our struggle. Moreover, the people need to look at the list of missing persons from Balochistan whose numbers are increasing on a daily basis. This is the real face of Pakistani state. It uses and understands no language other than the language of force. It has used the appeal of Islam to obfuscate the Baloch identity. Mushrooming of madrassas in Balochistan in last one decade points to this fact. The Pakistani state is seeking to lull our senses with heavy doses of Islam. Fanaticism is unknown amongst the Baloch people. They are Baloch first and Baloch last. Islam is only one of the facets of Baloch identity. This has to be emphasized and the slow process of descent to extremism needs to be arrested.

The collective aspiration of the people for independence is our strength. We have to do everything possible to turn their dreams into reality. There are several groups working towards this end. Some of them are coordinating their activities, some of them are not. Wisdom consists in getting our acts together and coming together under one platform. We must draw lessons from freedom movements in other parts of the world. United we stand, divided we fall. We must at the same time isolate persons, groups and outfits working with the Pakistani state to give us a bad name. We must evolve a common policy in our struggle for independence. We must discuss our differences openly and iron them out. We have a world to gain and nothing to lose in the bargain.

The situation of our fellow Baloch brethren in the neighboring countries is also quite appalling. They are under brutal repression in Iran and a forgotten lot wallowing in misery and poverty in Afghanistan. Freedom for the Baloch people in Pakistan cannot be seen as an isolated act. We will have to work closely with our brethren in the neighbouring areas and come together to raise the banner of freedom and liberty for all Baloch in the region. The struggle in Pakistan is a means to that end.

The Baloch leaders need to convince the world that a free and independent Balochistan will ensure peace in the region. It will end the adventurist strategy of Pakistan in the region and cut it to its size. Pakistan has nurtured jihadis and Islamic militants over the years and used them profitably against the international community so far. But a second secession by the Baloch will bring Pakistan to its senses and also act as a pressure point on Iran and contain the Islamist tide unleashed by both. Such an independent country will definitely emerge as a lone example of moderation and tolerance in the community of nations. A neutral and secular Balochistan can offer a platform for liberal and democratic voices and contribute to regional and international peace.

Against this backdrop, on behalf of the Council for Independent Balochistan, Baloch Society of North America (BSO-NA), is proposing to organize a **one-day** conference in Washington DC, USA, where all groups must gather and chalk out their future plans and programs. The issues that we will discuss include:

1. Clear articulation of the Baloch points of view in a planned and coordinated manner.
2. The differences in our approach need to be isolated and discussed in an uninhibited manner.
3. Close coordination of activities and agendas will need clear emphasis.
4. Containing the jihadi and radical forces must be discussed in detail.
5. Discover ways of appealing to international community and ascertaining their cooperation.
6. Raise international awareness on the situation in Balochistan in a concerted manner.
7. Appeal to friendly countries for help and guidance in conducting our movement.
8. Draw up an action plan for future based on consensus.

BSO-NA seeks the kind help and support of all people dedicated to the principle of freedom and liberty.

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Baloch Society of North America (BSO-NA) is a non-profit organization working to highlight the plights of Baloch people and human right abuses by Pakistan and Iran in Pakistani and Iranian occupied Balochistan
