

Overview Of Balochistan As A Place Of Global Interest

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Abstract

This paper seeks to critically examine the significance of Balochistan as a geopolitical and geographical reserve that attracts attention from around the world. The largest province in Pakistan, with a total size of 350,000 square kilometers and a population of barely 0.7 million, is Balochistan. Between 24°32'N and 60°70'E is the province. The length of the coast is roughly 770 kilometers. The province's eastern, central, and northern regions are home to high mountains, some of which rise above 2,300 meters (7,000 feet), while the lowlands are located at about 1,500 meters above sea level. The Sulaiman range, Toba-Kakar-Kakar Khurasan range, and Central Brahui range are some of the high mountains. By creating a historic marine passageway that is exploited as a source of current trading, it attracted substantial interest from international powers and became crucial for world trade in many aspects. The study will also go into Balochistan's overview as a key geostrategic region and a global center of interest. Finally, the article will offer a quick overview and thorough study of the dynamics of Balochistan in Pakistan and around the world. The goals of foreign states are to increase their economic might in order to gain world dominance by holding the lion's share of the planet's energy resources. As a result, expanding their control over global energy resources, energy transit corridors, and important land and sea commerce ties is now essential, and Balochistan has become the epicenter of these efforts.

KeyWords: Balochistan, Global Politics, Energy Resources, Geo Political Utilizations, Economic Interests.

Introduction:

The paper explains the geostrategic importance of Balochistan and underlines its economic difficulty in terms of the dearth of human resources, physical infrastructure, economic autonomy, productivity among others.

The study will examine why the relationship between Balochistan and Pakistan has soured and why the former has failed to include the latter in the federation while maintaining a friendly connection. Furthermore, it's critical to be aware that Balochistan continues to be the most underdeveloped and economically

backward region in Pakistan despite having abundant resources and endowments. Despite its enormous strategic importance and economic potential, Balochistan is characterised by extreme poverty, a lack of development, and a wide gap between itself and other provinces in terms of every social and economic indicator. Additionally, the province is caught in a vicious cycle of ethnic and sectarian conflict, nationalist insurgency, and poverty.

On August 14th, 1947, Balochistan joined Pakistan. In 1972, it is granted province status.

Balochistan has a significant geographic significance due to its location, which links the Iranian plateau with South East Asia, the Central Asian States, and its extensive coastline on the Arabian Sea. By utilising its comparative advantage, investing in and developing its human resources, and connecting it to the national market for products and services, Balochistan provides an exemplary example of inclusive development. It combats poverty and regional income disparities. Proactive, deliberate initiatives can counteract the institutional limitations that have left the province at a disadvantage.

The least populous province in Pakistan, Balochistan is the largest in terms of area. The Province makes up 34.7 million hectares, or nearly 44%, of the total land area of the nation. Its population in 1998 was estimated at 6, 511,000. Geographically, Balochistan is enclosed between longitudes 60 52' east to 24 54' north latitude and 70 17' east to 32 6' north latitude. (Balochistan Census Report, 2001:58) The region of Balochistan is mountainous and arid. Iran, Afghanistan, and the Arabian Sea, including the strategically significant port of Gwadar on the Makran Coast controlling the approach to the Strait of Hormuz, are its external borders. Balochistan shares a 1,002 km border with Afghanistan and a 900 km border with Iran (Sial and Basit, 2010:5). In the past, Sistan o Baluchestan province in Iran's southernmost portion made up its western section. Balochistan in Pakistan made up the eastern portion, while Afghanistan's Helmand region occupied the northwest. Its southern border was established by the Gulf of Oman. It shares common borders with all three of Pakistan's other provinces: Punjab in the far north-east, Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA) in the north, North West Frontier Province (NWFP) and Sindh in east.

The crucial factor in establishing the importance of this region is Balochistan's geographic location, which makes it a sensitive region of Pakistan. The Indian Ocean has already attained high significance in the eyes of international powers by developing fierce

competition for securing and dominating its sea routes, which are now essential for the enormous global trade and energy shipment. Balochistan is situated at the potential marine passage in the Indian Ocean of the Eastern, Central, and Western divisions of Asia. It is directly impacted by international geopolitics because of its placement in the centre of Central, Western Southern, and South-Western Asia. Balochistan, which spans nearly the whole Pakistani coast of the Arabian Marine high value sea port, developed with Chinese backing at Gwadar Balochistan, is extremely close to the oil lanes of the Persian Gulf and shares a border with Iran and Afghanistan. (2012):117 (Mazhar, Javaid, and Goraya) Balochistan has always had an impact on regional, governmental, and global affairs. Iran and Afghanistan are two highly important strategic neighbours of Balochistan.

China, India, and other Asian nations have a rapidly growing demand for energy, hence it is imperative that they expand their influence over global energy resources, energy transit corridors, and important land and sea commerce routes. Balochistan has grown to be the centre of international geopolitical manipulation in this area for this reason. China, Iran, India, and Pakistan's economies will all be impacted by the redrawing of borders in the name of Greater Balochistan. The United States has frequently emphasised Balochistan's geopolitical and strategic importance. They have also promoted and backed the idea of a free Balochistan, which they believe would best safeguard US geopolitical and strategic advantages. Controlling the growing Chinese presence in Balochistan is the main goal. Since China is an economic competitor of the US, its presence in Balochistan is detrimental to the US's long-term economic and geopolitical interests. Chinese soldiers may use the Gwadar port as their maritime base. Which is fantastic news for the US. China's influence and control over the Indian Ocean, which is close to the Strait of Hormuz and a conduit for the sale of oil from the Gulf States, would undoubtedly

provide severe challenges for the US in preserving its monopoly in the area.

The natural resources of the Indian Ocean and Antarctica would be directly under Russian control and pressure if Russia had influence in Balochistan. Fish caught in the Indian Ocean, and in especially the Arabian Sea, which accounts for over one-third of all fish caught, will be carried to the Central Asian Republics via land easily, quickly, and more cheaply. (Ahmad, 1992: 256) The fastest access to the world's largest undeveloped mineral resources, which are found in Antarctica, will be provided by Balochistan to Russia. (2012) (Mazhar et al., 119). These future scenarios that could give Russia economic stability are all connected to Balochistan.

Balochistan is the only Province of Pakistan which shares direct border with Iran. The geographical location of Balochistan plays a very significant role in shaping the relations between Pakistan and Iran in the socio-cultural and economic perspectives.

The Pakistani seaport of Gwadar, built with Chinese aid, is located roughly 70 kilometres away from Chabahar. Both of these ports are fierce rivals because they were built in the same area with similar goals. The difference between the two is that Gwadar port is struggling with a number of problems, including the unstable security situation in Balochistan and the absence of adequate infrastructure for connecting to major roadways. Due to the project's delayed and ongoing development, it is not moving forward. While there isn't a similar situation developing quickly in Chabahar that has successfully captured China's interest. China is not the only country putting emphasis on Chabahar Port over Gwadar as the regional trade and commercial hub; Iran, Afghanistan, and India are also doing the same. Outside of the Strait of Hormuz, in Iran's Free Economic and Industrial Zone, is the Chabahar seaport. This port not only connects it to Afghanistan and Central Asia but is also away from the passage of significant sea-traffic in the Persian Gulf seas. In order to connect with Central Asian States, a road and rail

communication line is also being built between Chabahar and Herat. Simply to avoid using the Pakistani route to travel to Iran, Afghanistan, and Central Asian States, India is significantly interested in developing this harbour. 146 (Hussain, 2015)

In order to counter China's expanding influence in the Indian Ocean, Persian Gulf, and Arabian Sea, India is likewise working to secure oil corridors. Thus, Iran was selected by India as a strategic and economic ally. India has made significant financial investments in the building and development of the Chabahar port in Iran. The Chabahar port in Sistan-Baluchistan, which will enable Indian economic activity with Afghanistan and Central Asia through roads and rail linkages, is already under construction by Iran. Chinese engagement in Pakistan's Gwadar and Indian influence in Iran's Chabahar have led to heightened risk of conflict over the region's natural and economic resources, as well as economic competition and strategic rivalry between India, Pakistan, and China.

The escalating rivalry between China and India is detrimental to relations between Pakistan and Iran. Geo-strategic and economic competitiveness are primarily fueled by Gwadar and Chabahar. The increasing Indian presence in the Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea has mostly frightened China. In addition, China's long-standing strategic and economic goals in the region have reason to be seriously concerned about the development and warmth of Indo-US relations since the conclusion of US-India civilian nuclear cooperation and mutual aid between India and Iran in Afghanistan and Central Asia. (Khan, 2013: 79-80)

In order to control Pakistan and balance off the rise of China as a regional force, India is forging strong ties with Iran and Afghanistan, two of Pakistan's neighbours. China is the only country that has a realistic chance of competing with and stifling India's hegemony and supremacy in the region. Given that India's fleet is bigger than Pakistan's, Pakistan needs Chinese assistance and collaboration in the Port of Gwadar to

overtake India, which is best for both China and Pakistan. China may maintain a close eye on Indian approach and emergence in the Indian Ocean, Arabian Sea, and Persian Gulf through the Gwadar (Khan 2013).

The conflict between the major powers has traditionally persisted in regard to Afghanistan. The majority of Afghanistan is still in a state of conflict and is still undergoing nation-building, therefore there is no functioning form of economy there. Instead, it relies on a small amount of agriculture, which cannot provide the basic food needs of Afghans, forcing them to rely on food aid from abroad. (Shah, 2007:65). The Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-Iran (TAPI) pipeline project is a major hope for aiding in the recovery of the Afghan economy as it has the potential to bring in over \$300 million in royalties to the nation and other foreign investments in the project could significantly help stabilize and revive the Afghan economy through the renovation of other infrastructure. The Karachi port used to handle Afghan transit traffic, but the Gwadar port is now a better option. Afghanistan has acknowledged the value of Gwadar as a route to wealth and has also pledged support for the expansion of the Gwadar port. (The Dawn, August 5, 2003)

Internal Opportunities in Baluchistan:

- (i) Perform a structural analysis in Quetta and classify SMEs by size and industry.
- (ii) Evaluate the current business and investment climate and pinpoint the main institutional, financial, and legal restrictions.
- (iii) Offer a technical analysis of the industry and its problems.
- (iv) Provide support as required to the team leader and BER task managers.
- (v) Evaluate the growth potential of Balochistan's key towns and cities.
- (vi) In particular, Chaman, Gwadar, Pasni, or other urban centers that can profit from regional development and

integration with the provincial economy, should be evaluated as prospective growth locations for urban development. Assess the socioeconomic impact of urban growth and migration on the provincial economy.

- (vii) Recommend policies for provincial urbanization, to support urban development and complement regional economic development.
- (viii) Provide a technical report on the sector and its issues.
- (ix) Assist the team leader and BER task managers as needed.
- (x) Prepare a technical report on Balochistan's public finances, updating the financial management analysis of the province.
- (xi) Prepare a macro analysis of fiscal trends in Balochistan over the last decade, with a breakdown of revenue and heads of expenditure.
- (xii) Recommend policies for resource mobilization and efficacy of expenditures, to create fiscal space for development expenditure.
- (xiii) Prepare a policy matrix and participate in missions as required to ensure incorporation of actions to improve fiscal and financial management by addressing issues identified in (i) above.
- (xiv) Provide a technical report on the sector and its issues.
- (xv) Assist the team leader and BER task managers as needed.

Important Horizons of Balochistan:

Balochistan provides numerous critical possibilities that still need to be explored. The general issue being maintained to this day by both our older and younger generations is the Baloch separatist movement. Unfortunately, no consideration had ever been made by the researchers or analysts to investigate and identify the root reasons of this protracted

anguish. If we encounter regular people from Punjab, Sindh, or KPK, they will be griping about Baloch's unsuitable and unnecessary behaviour toward the Pakistani government. Before providing a severe or hard narrative, this needs to be investigated.

This province hasn't received equal rights since the creation of Pakistan. Tribal rulers played their cards well because to the lack of development and infrastructure. Baloch people, who were previously uninformed of their legal obligations, are today pawns in the hands of tribal chiefs and hostile nations. Without denying the truth, India's pivotal role in the war of 1971 in separating Pakistan through propaganda and by intensifying and amplifying anti-Pakistan activity in the former East Pakistan cannot be denied. However, the 1970s insurgency is still remembered today in Pakistan as a result of our government's foolish management of it. Baluchistan's story is developing more or less similarly to East Pakistan's.

However, as people's interest in Baluchistan grew, the number of players also grew. In addition to political objectives, India's meddling in Balochistan's affairs is motivated by a variety of strategic objectives. India has a vested interest in an insecure Pakistan. Other than that, the enormous mineral and gold resources of Baluchistan are now known to the entire world. Losing Baluchistan would cause Pakistan to lose both its natural resources and a portion of its territory that is strategically significant. International scholars provided the justification for this claim, arguing that the Middle East's significant oil deposits drew the US and Europe to the area to engage in their dirty politics. The Middle East is currently experiencing events as a result of attempts to seize its substantial oil reserves. But the pursuit of democracy is a tool for invading these governments. The monarchies and dictatorships in the Middle East, according to the West, have deprived their citizens of their right to self-determination. They are interfering in these states to bring about peace in the name of human intervention to reestablish this belief.

In many important areas of the world, politics are in play. There are numerous instances of human rights breaches worldwide. However, the world community does not care about infringement of human rights. Only states with abundant resources are invaded by nations like the US, Russia, and others. The same is true of Balochistan.

Due to its greatest reserves of copper and gold, Baluchistan has, thankfully or regrettably, been the focus of interest on a global scale. Other than that, it is traversed by numerous oil and gas pipelines. Pakistan's interests are particularly volatile in this region. The biggest problem with it is its volatility, which needs a methodical correction. A hastily created policy could have terrible consequences. To create a climate of peace and stability in this area, a methodical, step-by-step approach is required. Additionally, Baluchistan needs to form relationships with the surrounding countries that share its borders because stability can only be achieved if its borders are properly maintained and controlled. Iran is a significant player in our foreign policy, which is made even more significant by the knowledge that the success of numerous international pipelines depends heavily on our relations with Iran.

India, another bordering nation, is making the most of the circumstance. In addition to enhancing the security situation in Baluchistan, Pakistan must adopt wise policies as this will open the door for improved, unhindered commerce growth.

The economic interests of Pakistan have mostly been harmed by these gridlocks. We may benefit in many ways by bettering our ties with Iran. It will first help Baluchistan flourish and its security condition would be improved. Second, it will encourage confidence-building measures between Pakistan's government and Balochs, allowing Pakistan to begin building its long-promised pipelines through Iran. India is interested in the advantages of TAPI and IPI to quench its desire for energy resources. India has resumed many insurgent activities in

Baluchistan while keeping an eye on its abundant oil and gas resources and aiming to destabilise and cripple Pakistan by severing Baluchistan from Pakistan. India's clandestine activities are no longer kept secret. It is now widely known that Indian agents have claimed to be destroying Baluchistan through suicide bombings and enabling the movement of small guns over international boundaries.

Conclusion

Balochistan is extremely significant for virtually the entire world due to its geographic location and abundant mineral and energy resources, and it is particularly of interest to regional and international political actors including the US, India, former Soviet Union, UAE, and Afghanistan. All of these nations share a shared interest in this area, and their geopolitical and strategic interests are strongly favoured by an independent Balochistan.

According to estimates, the Gwadar port serves as the hub of a commercial and energy route to and from China and the Central Asian Republics. China holds the legal claim to Gwadar because it made significant financial and technological investments in the project. A coastal roadway between Gwadar and Karachi has also received funding from China. The Saindak gold and copper mining project in Balochistan also involves China. China and India have participated in a number of trade agreements for their mutual benefit, yet there has always been economic competition and rivalry between the two nations. India might not want Gwadar port development to be profitable for both China and Pakistan. The US's participation is also considered as a component of the "Great Power game" that has emerged in Central Asia following the collapse of the Soviet Union. It is widely believed that the US wants to compete with China and Iran by controlling the oil supply routes from the Middle East and Central Asian States, and in order to accomplish this goal, the US is using its Greater Middle East plan to dismantle the major Muslim states and redraw the region's

borders in order to suit its own political and economic interests. According to speculation, US and British intelligence services are aiding Baloch militants in their efforts to sabotage the Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline project and prevent the Gwadar port from opening up as a result of Chinese involvement, both of which would pose a serious threat to US oil and naval interests in the Gulf.

A persistent insurgency in Balochistan is becoming a serious threat to Pakistan's progress and reputation since it threatens to divide the country into several ethnic groupings now that it has the status of a separatist movement. In addition to Afghanistan, India, and the United States, the Baluchistan demand, the armed conflict, and the separatist movement all have an economic and strategic impact on Iran, the United Arab Emirates, China, and Central Asia. The economic, political, and strategic landscape of South and Southwest Asia would undergo significant changes as a result of this predicament. Furthermore, Pakistan's position on the world stage is becoming more complicated and vulnerable due to pressure from countries like India, Iran, China, Afghanistan, and Central Asia. Through pipelines, ports, and roadways, these nations are connected to Balochistan through their key energy and economic interests.

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