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OB-73

Current Affairs (Mock-Exam I) 30/4/25

PART - II

Q 3

BLA attack on train in Bolan shows how dangerous the organization has become. Critically evaluate the reasons for the revival of separatist insurgency in Balochistan and give policy precommendations.

The recent hijacking of the Jaffar Express by the BLA (Baloch Liberation Army) on 11th March 2025 underscores the escalating threat posed by separatist insurgents in Balochistan. This incident, involving over 300 hostages and resulting in multiple fatalities, marks a significant escalation in the tactics employed by the BLA, indicating a shift towards more audacious and high-profile operations.

□ The Jaffar Express Hijacking : A Watershed Moment

- 11 March 2025
(Bolan District, Balochistan)
- BLA hijacked the Jaffar Express (detonated explosives on the tracks and took 300 passengers hostages).

Casualties

- At least 30 passengers killed, including 18 security personnel



33 militants neutralized during the rescue operation

Demands

- Release of Baloch political prisoners within 48 hours.



Outcome

- Pakistani forces successfully rescued over 300 hostages.
- The incident led to heightened security measures across the nation's railway systems

■ Reasons for the Revival of Separatist Insurgency in Balochistan :

The separatist insurgency in Balochistan is not a new phenomenon, but its recent intensification is a result of a complex interplay of long-standing grievances and contemporary developments.

1. Historical Grievances and Marginalization
 - i. Resource Exploitation: Balochistan, despite its wealth in natural resources, remains underdeveloped. The local population

has long accused the federal government of exploiting the province's resources without equitable reinvestment.

- ii. **Political Disenfranchisement**: The Baloch community has faced systematic political marginalization, with limited representation in federal institutions, fueling sentiments of alienation and injustice.

2. Economic Deprivation

- i. **Poverty levels**: Balochistan is Pakistan's most impoverished province, with approximately 70% of the population classified as multidimensionally poor.

This economic disparity exacerbates grievances and provides fertile ground for insurgent recruitment.

3. Human Rights Violations

- i. **Enforced Disappearances**: Reports of enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings by security forces have intensified mistrust between the Baloch population and the state, further fueling the insurgency.

4. External Influences

Foreign Support : Pakistan has accused neighboring countries of supporting Baloch insurgents, providing them with resources and training, thereby internationalizing the conflict.

□ POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

To address the multifaceted challenges in Balochistan, a comprehensive and inclusive approach is essential.

1. Political Engagement and Inclusion

- i- **Dialogue Initiatives** : The government should prioritize direct and unconditional negotiations with all Baloch stakeholders, including political parties, tribal elders, and even representatives of insurgent groups willing to renounce violence.

This dialogue should address core issues of political autonomy, resource sharing, constitutional rights, and historical grievances within the framework of the Pakistani state.

Confidence-building measures, such as releasing political prisoners and

addressing the issue of enforced disappearances through a truth and reconciliation process, are crucial for creating a conducive environment for talks.

1. Political Representation

Ensure equitable representation of Baloch individuals in federal institutions to foster a sense of inclusion and ownership.

2. Economic Development

i. **Resource Sharing** : Implement transparent mechanisms for revenue sharing from natural resources, ensuring that a fair portion benefits the local population.

ii. **Infrastructure Investment** : Prioritize infrastructure development in Balochistan to stimulate economic growth and improve living standards.

3. Human Rights and Justice

i. **Accountability Measures** : Establish independent bodies to investigate allegations of human rights abuses, ensuring accountability and justice.

- ii. **Legal Reforms**: Strengthen legal frameworks to protect civil liberties and prevent abuses by security forces.

4. **Security Sector Reforms**

- i. **Community Policing**: Promote community policing initiatives to build trust between law enforcement and ~~large~~ local communities

- ii. **Training and Oversight**: Provide human rights training for security personnel and establish oversight mechanisms to monitor their conduct.

5. **Counter-Narratives and Media Engagement**

- i. **Public Awareness Campaigns**: Launch campaigns to counter extremist narratives and promote messages of unity and development.

- ii. **Media Access**: Facilitate access to media in Balochistan to ensure accurate reporting and representation of local issues.

□ Conclusion

The resurgence of separatist insurgency in Balochistan is a complex issue rooted in historical grievances, economic disparities, and political marginalization. The recent BLA attack on the Jaffar Express serves as a stark reminder of the urgent need for a holistic approach that combines political dialogue, economic development, human rights protections and security sector reforms.

Addressing these challenges is not only crucial for the stability of Balochistan but also for the broader national security and unity of Pakistan.