

IS PEACE POSSIBLE IN BALOCHISTAN?

Outline

1- Introduction

Thesis Statement: It is commonly debated in the political discourse of Pakistan whether peace in Balochistan possible or it is unlikely to take place. However, peace in Balochistan is achievable through reconciliatory mindset. The condition of the province is not satisfactory, but reconciliation can do enough in the favor of the state.

2- Decoding the Balochistan issue

3- How peace in Balochistan is possible

- a) Addressing enforce disappearances issue to rebuild trust between province and state
- b) Political reconciliation with political actors of the province to achieve sustainable peace
- c) Management of external foothold through strengthened border management and proactive diplomacy
- d) Equitable economic development in province to make better life style
- e) Cultural recognition of Balochistan and its integration in national discourse of Pakistan
- f) Reforming security paradigm from hard to human centric approach for Balochistan

g) Intelligence based operations against the terrorists and armed insurgents to secure life and material of masses of province

4- Why peace in Balochistan is unlikely to take place

a) Hardened collective memory of Baloch society due to deep-rooted historical grievances

b) Dominance of hard power cannot allow the growth of reconciliatory environment

c) Inequitable resource distribution in Balochistan is increasing the sense of discrimination

d) Radicalization of educated youth defines the peace is unlikely to take place in province

5- Peace in Balochistan is achievable by mitigating grievances.

a) Consistent focus with eradication of issues can change the collective memory of Baloch society

b) Reconciliation does take place in hard power dominance to strengthen the consensus

c) Sense of discrimination will erode through equitable resource distribution in province

d) External foothold is the main culprit in radicalization youth and is tackleable

6- Conclusion

"The political problems cannot be solved with military means". This quote of former president of Pakistan Pervez Musharraf aptly underscores the importance of political engagement in the case of ensuring sustainable peace. Military can ensure order but the transition of it from order to broader societal peace is the domain of politics. The peace in Balochistan is also achievable through reconciliation and engagement. It is commonly debated in the political discourse of Pakistan whether peace in Balochistan possible or it is unlikely to take place. However, peace in Balochistan is achievable through reconciliatory mindset. The condition of the province is not satisfactory, but reconciliation can do enough in the favor of the state. Peace in Balochistan can be ensured by addressing enforced disappearances to rebuild trust, engagement with political actors, mitigating the external domain of the issue, equitable resource distribution, recognition of Baloch culture and its integration into national discourse, human development centric approach and IBOs to crush the terror activities. However, some people argue that the peace in Balochistan is unlikely due to deep-rooted historical grievances, hard power dominance, economic inequality and radicalization of youth in the province. These arguments do not hold water as solution of issues can eradicate grievances, reconciliation can take place in hard power environment, equitable resource allocation can be ensured and better

management of external domain of the issue can reduce the youth radicalization.

Balochistan has its roots since the inception of Pakistan. Political fragmentation and bellicosity of Baloch society along with historical mishandling of the issues by the state has compounded the issue. Due to these grievances, the state has been exercising hard power to ensure the control and the Baloch society reacting towards it with political disorganization, armed struggle and secessionist agendas.

In all this happening, the peace has been suffering in province. Layers of terrorism in Balochistan are taking place. Since the start of the 21st century, 455 peoples have been killed by the insurgents actions in Balochistan, according to the South Asian terrorism portal. In between the layers, peace flourished but it was not sustainable. This shows that the political reconciliation with political actors of Balochistan can ensure sustainable peace in resource rich province of Pakistan.

There are many options for the state of Pakistan to make peace possible in Balochistan, chief among them is the addressal of enforced disappearances in Balochistan. Enforced disappearances means the abduction of people on the basis of suspicion. Security apparatus of Pakistan is accused of enforced disappearances in Balochistan and spreading deep resentment towards state and government. To some extent, this accusation is true as a huge

number of people is disappeared without proper channel of judiciary. According to Pakistan Commission of inquiry on enforced disappearances, 10618 total cases are there in Balochistan between 2011 to 25. Thus, the fixation of the issue of disappear persons can solve issue and build trust between Balochistan and state of Pakistan.

Parallel to the issue of disappear persons, another option that can enable state to ensure peace in Balochistan is the political reconciliation between state and the Balochistan province. Political reconciliation means the dialogue with political leadership of the province to reduce fragmentation to achieve sustainable peace. Pakistan had already done reconciliations but the true implementation did not occur which resulted in continuous tensions between the Baloch society and Pakistani state. In 2006, a parliamentary committee on Balochistan issue, headed by Chaudhry Shujaat and Mushtaq Hussain Syed gave recommendations after the dialogue. Implementation of those recommendations can achieve the peace in Balochistan.

Conclusively, the most debated issue of ensuring peace in Balochistan and its difficult nature is answered as the peace is possible in the province through the state's priority of political reconciliation, economic inclusion, protection of human rights and respect of provincial autonomy. Political and social choice should also be considered by the state to reintegrate Balochistan into the mainstream Pakistan and erode the state of present Balochistan as the faultline of Pakistan.

Equitable portion of economic resources, cultural recognition of Balochistan, reformation of security paradigm and precision crush of terrorist are some traits of the framework through which the sustainable peace in Balochistan is possible. Alike nations do not wait for the point of no return, they decide timely to address the menace which is undermining their territorial integrity and the very ~~integration~~ survival. Following words of the Henry Wadsworth Longfellow describes it aptly.

"Let us, then, be up and doing, with a heart for any fate; still achieving, still pursuing, learn to labor and to wait".