

Concept Paper

Geo-Strategic Implications of Emerging Fault Lines in Pakistan

“How can you have dreams, when your neighbors have nightmares” M.F. Moonzajer

Introduction

Forum for Awareness of National Security (FANS) is organising a two-day International Conference on “**Geo-Strategic Implications of Emerging Fault Lines in Pakistan**” on Jan 18 and 19th 2020 in Jammu.

India on partition was saddled with a difficult neighbourhood, which though strategically situated at confluence of cultures has been perpetually in a state of turmoil.

Pakistan, which started its journey as confused entity with M. A. Jinnah, Shia father of nation, who barely managed to don his religion as a convenient cloak, made ‘two nation’ theory as its *raison d’être*. The narrative of Kabayali Lashkars and Razakars was introduced by the invaders in the name of Babur, Khilzi and Ghazhavi in 1947 with the launch of the slogan “*Hans ke Liya hai Pakistan, Lad ke lenge Hindustan*”. Later in 1965 the unprecedented acts of infiltration were seemingly driven by the East Pakistani forces. Pakistan took a revanchist approach playing dangerous “*Zero Sum*” game propelled by parity syndrome to pull down India at any cost. Mujahid forces in Kargil and Proxy War in J&K has continued unabated. All these episodes provide an expression of vitality & disturbances of Pakistan.

Horror story has been punctuated with inciting and supporting of rebels in North East and *Khalistan* terrorists. In keeping with our forgiving nature, new generation, obsessed with present situation in Kashmir valley has little idea of now forgotten links between erstwhile Pakistan and militant groups in India’s North Eastern states dating back to 1952. Utilising East Pakistan as staging post, sanctuary, weapons and training including Chinese assistance was funnelled to Naga militants. This misadventure continued till 90s with scope extended under complicit military rulers of Bangladesh to include many other groups, notably ULFA. The entire story has been documented by Hein G Kiessling in highly acclaimed book ‘*Faith, Unity, Discipline: The ISI of Pakistan*’.

India, in past and until recently, has been tentative, reactive and defensive and was able to grab control of strategic inter play only temporarily for brief periods during liberation of Bangladesh

and Operation Meghdoot in Siachen. This however seems to have been changing lately which is evident from Balakot surgical strikes and abrogation of Article 370. India seems to have called off nuclear bluff, discovered new strategic space below nuclear sabre rattling and even injected sense of shock and awe in Rawalpindi, General Head Quarter (GHQ). It is indeed heartening to note that for once we are in control of escalation matrix and are living up to name of 'fox land' used by Pakistan to describe us in their war games. Hence, it is imperative that we keep a strict vigil, not only on our borders but also across them as has been opined in the famous opening quote, that our dreams can be destroyed by actions in our neighbourhood.



Fault Lines in Pakistan:

Fault lines within Pakistan have existed since the creation of the state. Pakistan, which has been chasing the chimera of 'ummah' (Muslim brotherhood) has multiple fault lines and prime example of this was secession of larger wing Bangladesh on linguistic grounds from the original entity cobbled together on 'one religion, one nation' principle. These fault lines are not only in linguistic domain but transcend to many others, as

enumerated.



Linguistic: Skewed and partisan favouritism to Punjabi has opened up linguistic fault lines with Mohajirs, whose approximate population in Pakistan is 14 million. They speak Urdu and are chided as refugees due to their roots in pre-partition, United provinces (UP) and Bihar. This has resulted in *Mohajir Quami Movement* (MQM), which has considerable influence in Sindh province, particularly Karachi. The word Sindh is derived from *sindhu* which means river (it also refers to Indus River). Sindh has a land area of 140,194 sq. km and its total

population is around 47 million. The 'Jiye-Sindh' movement started in 1960 as a literary movement against the dominating influence of the Urdu language. The linguistic impositions on Muhajirs and

Muslims who migrated to Pakistan were the epicentre of this movement. Sindh has also been home to 'Jiye-Sindh' movement to sustain Sindhi as a language & culture. Linguistic fault lines have also acted as catalysts for Baloch, Pashtun, Meerpuri and Balti movements. Even within Multani society, Seraiki speaking people (20 million) in South Punjab (home to Jaish terrorists) have harboured dreams of 'Seraikistan'.



Punjabi Mahfooz Tanzim movement ideology is based on Punjabi nationalism, art, culture, literature and language. Baba Sheikh Farid is considered as the father of Punjabi Nationalism. This movement enclosed mostly territorial extent in the province of Punjab. It covers 347, 190 sq. km a land area and total population is approximately one hundred ten million.



Ruins of Taxila University

Taxila was the cultural history hub of Indian civilization. It depicts the history of multiple civilizations i.e. Vedic-Sanatana and Buddhists etc.

1. Regional: Pakistan's Western borders have never been fully settled with centrifugal forces demanding freedom for Balochs, Pashtuns, Sindhis, Mirpur-Muzaffarabadi and Baltis besides specific regional problems with Mohajirs & Seraikis. These are fuelled by non-reconciliation of linguistic, tribal, ethnic differences & in some cases on sharing of economic resources/investment & distribution of river waters. Consequently, many

regional fault lines continue to fester. Prominent among these are those of Baloch Freedom Movement.



2.1. Balochistan: (Baloch Freedom Movement: Despite very barbaric measures, Pakistan has not been able to quell Balochi Freedom movement. Balochistan has a land area of 347, 190 sq. km and its total population is approximately 12.3 million. The Baloch are Hanafi Sunnis and a strong group of Zikri Baloch, having a population of about 7,00,000 inhabit the Makran area, who believe in the 15th century teachings of Madhi – an Islamic Messiah – Nur Pak, have their own prayers and do not fast during Ramzan. Baloch nationalism has been a factor in Pakistan since its existence. A number of

militant movements like *Baloch Liberation Army* (BLA) are waging freedom struggle & their top leadership is in exile. In addition to 1,00,000 Para-military forces, there are nearly 23,000 Pak Army personnel deployed to quell the growing insurgency in Balochistan under the leadership of Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti (ex Provincial Governor). The Baloch have been demanding greater autonomy, more public sector jobs and higher share of revenues. The extremely inhospitable landmass of Balochistan, where subsistence is difficult, is critical for Pakistan's energy supplies, and its maritime security and trade by way of Gwadar Port. Balochistan meets 45 percent of Pakistan's energy needs. Today, after a long struggle this movement turn into a demand for the Baloch Liberation Movement.

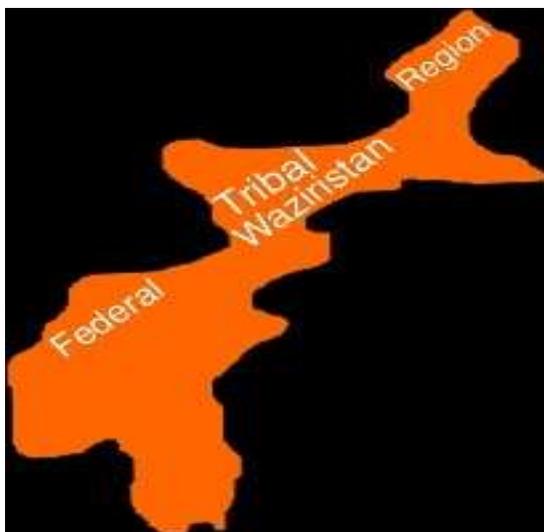
The Baloch people lament that the Gwadar area has been appropriated by Generals of Pakistan Army, who in turn have sold it to Karachi and Punjabi business magnets at astronomical prices. After 2006, under China's over ambitious CPEC project, China has now become a direct colony.

Gas supplies from Sui, Loti and Pir Koh gas fields have been disrupted. Surface transport has been crippled. In 2007, three naval boats have so far been destroyed in Gwadar port. Railways have been compelled to operate only at night. So far, on at least a dozen occasions, railway tracks have been blown and on more than two dozens occasions gas pipelines have been targeted.

It is pertinent to mention that sizeable population of Balochs can trace their origin to Marathas as their ancestors were taken as prisoners and slaves after Maratha Wars.



2.2. Pashtunistan/Waziristan: Pashtuns have never accepted this artificial construct of regional autonomy and are driven by their fierce desire for freedom. The seven tribal regions, **Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA)** and Pashtuns of the region have desired Pashtunistan or Pakhtunkhwa (it has total land area of 74,521 sq. km and total population is approximately 24 million in addition to 3 million Afghan Refugees) on the basis of their shared ethnic and cultural relationship. The literacy rate is 17% and only 10% population has access to sanitation. The area is inhabited by Wazirs (Pathan Tribe). This movement is currently being rallied by *Pashteen Tahfuzz Movement (PTM)* & has pockets of influence stretching to even Karachi. PTM demands a sovereign state in the name of **Waziristan**.



There are 105,000 Pak Army personnel deployed in the 13 areas/agencies that make up Waziristan or FATA. The area known for its fiercely independent tribes.

The enormity of the growing strife in Waziristan can be gauged from the casualty figures. In 2005, 300 civilians and 250 troops were killed, and another 1400 were wounded; while up to March 2006, 121 civilians, 475 terrorists and 71 soldiers have been killed.



Swat Valley

In this region situated a “mini Switzerland” known as Swat Valley. It is located between the foothills of Hindukush mountain range. Swat valley is attractions for major tourist. Swat

valley is also famous in the world as the “holy land of Buddhist learning and piety”. The population of Swat valley is around approximately 1.2 million.



2.3. PoKJ/Sharadapeeth Kshetra: Pakistan illegally occupied areas of Kashmir & Jammu harbour the desire for a unified Kashmir & Jammu. Currently, parties demanding freedom are not even allowed to participate in elections and the entire area is under direct control of Pakistan’s central government with no basic tenets of democracy followed in the region.

Their representatives are neither acknowledged nor have adequate representation in the Pakistan National Assembly. These areas have been subjected to demographic inversions and have been denied development. Lately, there has been a growing clamour in PoKJ to join India considering the continued development on the Indian side. It has a total land area of approximately 15,000 sq. km (6000 sq. km. Kashmir region and 9000 sq. km. Jammu region) and its total population is around 4.4 million.



Ruins of Sharda University

Sharada Peeth was the famous temple in Kashmir on the banks of Kishenganga river (also known as Neelum in Pakistan administered Kashmir). Its ruins are now in Pakistan administered Kashmir, near the Line of Control (LoC). However, the village is famous for its ancient Sharda University known to be a prominent institution of the Asia in the Buddhist era. This historic and glorious university was the seat of highest learning in the Asia region. People from across

the globe came here to receive knowledge and travelled back to spread the new found knowledge throughout the globe. It was also the center of the spiritual education for Buddhists and Hindus.

2.4 Baltistan/Walaristan/Shumali Elakazat:

This Shia dominated region of Gilgit-Baltistan



(GB) is being subjected to settlement of Sunni population with theological autocracy. It has very little autonomy & democracy. In the Pakistan National Assembly the representatives of this region are also neither acknowledged nor nominated as a part of the Pakistan National Assembly. Geographically, Gilgit-Baltistan is situated in the trans-Himalayan region and it is a part of the Ladakh. In fact the Northern Areas, which are actually a part of PoJK, but incorporated in Pakistan, are five times of the area designated as Pak Occupied Jammu & Kashmir. It has a total land area of 72,971 sq. km. and its total population is around 1.8 million.

The area, culturally and linguistically much different from other parts of Pakistan, has been subjected to state backed Sunni terrorism. The composition of the Northern Light Infantry Units is being re-engineered by the central government to make it Sunni dominant.

It consists of some of the world's highest mountain ranges. The ranges are the Karakoram and the Western Himalayas. The Pamir Mountains are to the north, and the Hindu Kush lies to the West. It is also famous for its rock arts (more than 50,000 pieces of rock arts (Petroglyphs) have been discovered till date) and inscriptions are found along the Karakoram Highway in Gilgit-Baltistan, stretched along ten major sites between Hunza and Shatial. The most significant aspect of this region is the higher life expectancy in comparison to other nations. It has also been denied benefits of development & education. Its resources like gold mines have been leased out to Chinese. Mega hydel projects like Daimer-Basha are being planned as part of CPEC with vast submergence, yet benefits of royalty are ironically proposed to be passed to *Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa* (KPK) province. All of this has led to freedom movement for a sovereign **Walaristan** started in 2012 in leadership of **Sardar Arif Saheed** who was later assassinated by Pakistan Army and ISI.

- 2. Theological Oppression:** Minorities like Hindus, Christians, Sikhs, Shiya & Ahmedia are subjected to oppression, public humiliation & conversion on trumped up charges of blasphemy. The minorities were reduced to 205 percent even as the country's population soared to 156 millions by the year 2000. When in any society, it is the minorities that play the crucial role in moderation. Their existence is a safeguard against extreme tendencies. Their young girls are regularly abducted & converted. Even within Islam,

Shias & Sufis are target of ultra-radical Salafi groups like Lashkar-e-Jhangvi & subjected to mass terrorism. Tiny minority of Ahmediyas notwithstanding, icons like Nobel prize winner, Abdus Salaam has been declared non Islamic & officially banned.

3. Human Rights Violations: Women, religious minorities, and transgender people face violent attacks, discrimination, and government persecution, with authorities failing to provide adequate protection or hold perpetrators accountable. A climate of fear continues to impede media coverage of abuses both by government security forces and militant groups. Members of the Ahmadiyya religious community continue to be a major target for prosecutions under blasphemy laws, as well as specific anti-Ahmadi laws across Pakistan.

4. Terrorism and Law Enforcement Abuses: Suicide bombings, armed attacks, and killings by the Taliban, Al-Qaeda, and their affiliates targeted religious minorities, security personnel, and politicians, resulting in hundreds of deaths. Pakistani security forces often are responsible for serious human rights violations including torture, enforced disappearances, detention without charge, and extra judicial killings, according to Pakistan human rights defenders and defense lawyers. Counter terrorism laws also continue to be misused as an instrument of political coercion. Authorities do not allow independent monitoring of trials in military courts and many defendants are denied the right to a fair trial. Several hundred cases of abducted and missing persons cases have been documented by Amnesty International with majority of them either Balochs or Pashtuns. Unofficial estimates however give these numbers to run in several thousands.



The proposed conference would provide a platform to firstly take holistic view of the emerging realities & macro trends followed by focus on mapping of fault lines in Pakistan & understanding their ramifications.

The objective is to understand how these fault lines are going to affect Pakistan, its neighbours and regional peace and security of South Asian region. And subsequently, China's role in the same context can also not be overlooked.

In-depth discussion and deliberations will be held on the following topics during the conference:

- 1 Ethnic Liberation Movement in Pakistan**
- 2. Theological Oppression & Human Rights Abuse in Pakistan**
- 3. Terrorism as State Policy of Political Coercion**