

Surging Terrorism and Contingency in Balochistan

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Abstract

Balochistan is the largest province and carries almost 43% of total population of Pakistan. It is a province with rich natural reservoirs, world's largest Copper reservoirs found in Reko Diq in Chaghi, a district of Balochistan. Strategically positioned Balochistan, its immense resources having cosmic area with considerable position on globe. Ties among Baloch Nationalists or the Central Government remained contentious since creation of Pakistan, intermittently more vicious. The present study will depict that the explosive state policies, issues of progress, radicalism, violation of human rights, external intrusion, lack of basic facilities and last but not least insurgencies that cause the impediment in regional prosperity.

Keywords: Balochistan, Insurgency, BLA, Violation

Introduction

Balochistan is the largest province of Pakistan with 43% of total area of state while deprived and minimal population. It is also attached with other three provinces of Pakistan, from East with Sindh, from North-East with Punjab and from North side with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa via tribal area (South Waziristan). A remarkable point is that about 27% of Balochi lives outside the Balochistan, mostly in Sindh (Rizwan, Waqar, & Arshad 2014). Its geographical location is attractive for not only Pakistan but also for its neighbors, i.e. 520 miles long borders with Iran in West and 723 miles long borders with Afghanistan from Northwest, "hence the Indus Valley bounds it with the East and Arabian Sea to the South" (Khetran, 2017).

Historical Background

The history of this province remained full of uprisings. From very beginning, reason of these uprisings was warfare among Baloch people and Central Government. "These relations were even bitterer following the exploitation of their resources and thus the ins and out in the relations with the federation of Pakistan continued" (Rizwan, Waqar, & Arshad 2014). Since independence, Balochistan remained the hub of uprisings, insurgencies and uncertainties. The dilemma of Baloch nationalism deepens with the division of subcontinent and creation of Pakistan in 1947. After removal of British Govt. and division become obvious, the State of Kalat, determined to remain independent or autonomous not to join Pakistan or India. "If it were not for the strategic location

of Balochistan and the rich potential of oil, uranium and other resources, it would be difficult to anyone fighting over this bleak, desolate and forbidding land” (Harrison, 1980).

Brief Summary of Uprisings in Balochistan (from 1948 to 2024)

First Uprising 1948: When it has been decided that sub-continent will divide into “Pakistan and India”, the Baloch-populated areas start lobbying against the British for their independence. “This declaration was supported by the fact that since 1876 Kalat, the largest and most influential Baloch state had been an autonomous state under the British Raj” (Khan, 1975). The Khan of Kalat offered to Pakistan a special connection of sovereignty in which Pakistan would maintain right on security, foreign policy, and communications (Niazi, 2005). Moreover, the Kalat Assembly vote to support for independence but not under Pakistan leadership. During March 1948, various efforts for sovereignty, the then govt. of that time used armed forces to pressurized the Khan of Kalat for adherence with Pakistan. In response, Prince of Kalat took up army. This 1st uprising has been managed by Central Govt.

Second Uprising (Response to One Unit): This uprising has been pilot by Nawab Naoroz Khan, against the amalgamation of Balochistan state Union with West Pakistan. This merger was developing sense of deprivation and neglectfulness in the Baloch people (Dehwar, 1994). Leadership of Pakistan chooses to negotiate with insurgents, while the uprising gets more violence. Hence, announced that musts and grievances of Baloch people will be tried to sort. When the insurgents go down, they were under arrest by the Security along with his son. They took in Hyderabad Jail and sentenced death, through Nawab Naoroz Khan’s death penalty turned into life imprisonment as he grew too old.

Third Uprising: This has been started in 1962. At that time, Gen. Ayub Khan was the president of Pakistan and launched the “System of Basic Democracies” in 1960. In country, general elections were held in 1962, brought some Baloch nationalist to the front which the military dictator considered as danger to the basic democrats (Rizwan, Waqar, & Arshad 2014). Hence, they superseded with few selected members from Central Govt. and fresh wave of brutality begins. In 1964, Sardar Atta Ullah Mengal confronts the Writ of Govt. and combat started among Parari’s and Pak. Armed forces (Khawaja, 2006). Further the cause of deterioration was to establish Military Cantonment in Balochistan (Dunne, 2006). At that time, the main leadership thought that it may be time of migration for Baloch community, they withstand against it. At last, in 1969, the period of tension came to an end when Gen. Yahya Khan replaced with Gen. Ayub Khan. On 1st July, 1970, The One Unit System has been ceased. After 23 years Balochistan has been given the position of a “Province” (Jang, 1970).

Being Prime Minister of Pakistan, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, starts to see the Balochistan Assembly pushing away from Islamabad and dismissed the Provisional Assembly (Harrison, 1981). In response, the Baloch War starts. As Baloch insurgents began to ambush Army convoys, Bhutto allied with the Shah of Iran (Niazi, 2005). In this war, 55,000 Baloch fought against the 80,000 deployed Pakistani soldiers, as well as Iranian helicopter gunships (Harrison, 2006). Resultantly, Z.A. Bhutto arrested and this uprising came to an end.

Fourth Uprising: In 2002, the initiation of the Gwadar development project touched off a fourth insurgency in the Pakistani province of Balochistan (Niazi, 2005). The purpose was to change it as a grand port designed to River Dubai. The commitment was that to share the profit with Baloch but reality became too different (Shahid, 2002). The leadership realized that the benefit goes to the

Central Government. The ratio of attacks from 2002-2009 became so high. During 2008, 33 attacks per month have been recorded.

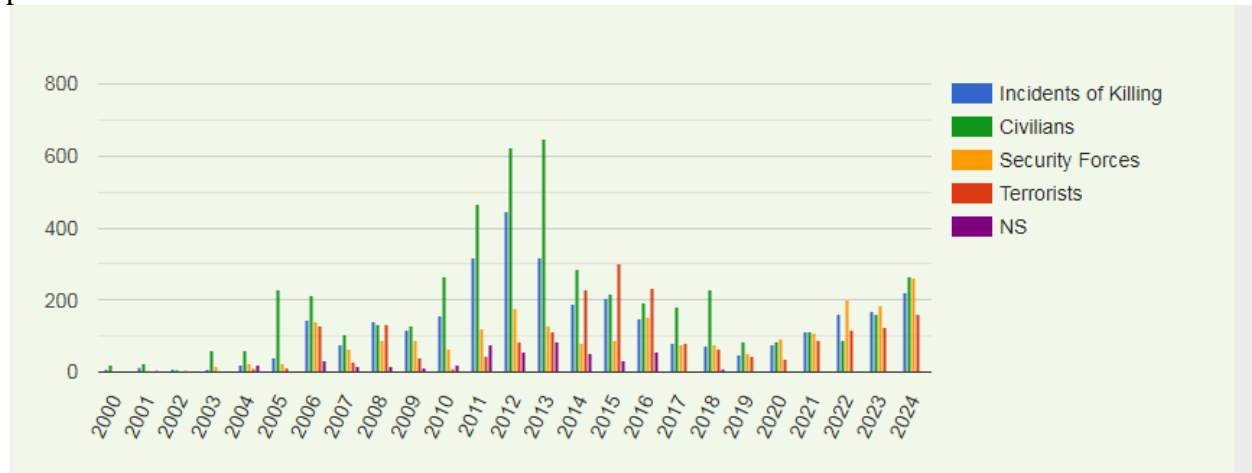


Figure No. 1 Total Incidents of Killing, from 2000-2024

Source: South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP)

In 2006, in a Conference of Corps of Commanders stressed that, “the writ of the Pakistani government will never be challenged. Let that be a warning...if anyone challenges the writ of the government, I will crush it” (Pipes, 2010). According to Baloch, the major reasons of this uprising which is prolonged up to now are the lack of coordination, democracy, uncertain behavior of armed forces or injustice in economic resources. Hence, the Government blamed that the Sardars of Afghanistan and foreign intervention is responsible for all of these circumstances.

Era of General Pervez Mushraf and Balochistan

Gen. Pervez Mushraf threw the Govt. of Nawaz Sharif and Marshal Law has been imposed in the state. Baloch remained annoyed and shows estrangement with army due to their conflict and earlier uprisings. Aggression become on its peak when assassination of Nawab Akbar Khan Bhugti, killing of Chinese Engineers at Gawadar Port and killing and loss of local Baloch people. Killing of Nawab Bhugti generate more antagonism and planned rebellion activities starts in the region. To begin with, the Guerilla war has been initiated in 2000 and Armed Cantonments targeted repeatedly. These rebels targeted the Govt. buildings and asserts. The circumstances get intricate while BPLF (Baloch People Liberation Front) admit the attack “Levy Thana” near “Kohlu”. Pamphlets were found in the nearby area inscribed with “Occupation of Baloch resources will not be tolerated” (Anwar, 2010).

Violence became more intense and broaden in Balochistan, one more organization emerge as “Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA)”, hence, accept the responsibly of attack on “Frontier Constabulary”. According to their leaders, they claimed that “they will fight against the fascistic Punjabis till victory and those responsible for the suffering of Baloch and Balochistan will be made accountable. The blood of Baloch spilt by Punjabis, its Army and their stooges will not be forgotten. May the soul of Baloch martyrs rest in peace” (Anwar, 2010).

Narration about the Gawadar Project and General Pervaiz Mushraf Era: This project has been initiated in 20020 by Gen. Mushraf with assurance that this will be the grand port of the area (Dawn, 2002). The neighbor state China hand to hand through finance and man power for this project. The engineers have been assigned the duty to complete the project within due time. But

an untoward incident occurs in Coastal Town of Gwadar in 2004, three Chinese Engineers were killed and others were wounded (Daily News, 2004). In these circumstances, agitation arise in region and Govt. fix a Parliamentary Committee and make some suggestions to constituent amendment in National Integrate the Baloch people. Chaudhry Shujat Hussain being Chairman of this parliamentary committee put forward exhaustive suggestion in Parliament (Dawn, 2004). Then the said committee became divided, one headed by Mushahid Hussain Syed and next by Senator Waseem Sajjad. These committees were consisted on Baloch Nationalists, i.e.,

Sanaullah Balosh Baloch National Party (BNP) Mangal Group

Amanullag Kinrani Jamhuri Wattan Party (JWP) by Nawab Akbar Bhugti

On the same time, articulating the views the both groups seems dissatisfied with these committees as this happened various times in past, resultantly, they failed. Then this assignment handed over to Mushahid Hussain Syed to monitor the affairs within the Balochistan and highlight the securities of Baloch people, on the other hand the next committee by Senator Wasseem Sajjad given the duty to suggest some Constitutional Amendments. “Mushahid Hussain Syed committee in its different meetings held at Islamabad, Quetta and Gwadar from October 2004 to January 2005 thoroughly discussed the situation with the Baloch people” (Report of Parliamentary Committee, 2005). Following suggestions have been presented:

1. Balochitsan should be given more representation in Pakistan Petroleum Ltd. (PPL), Oil and Gas Development Corporation Ltd. (OGDCL) or Sui Southern
2. Equal proposition of Balochistan should be observed in Federal Government Ministries
3. Regarding the “Gawadr Port Authority” it must be moved from Karachi to Gawadar and at least 50% representation should be given to Balochistan
4. New Educational Institutes should be established with three billion rupees package and developed the existing
5. Network of Highways should spread in Balochitsan
6. Improving the living condition, Anti Drought Strategy would opt that would be possible to construct Dams

Killing of Nawab Akbar Khan Bhughti: Beside these, committee emphasis the Illegal Detention of Baloch people and Political personnel's. In this proceeding, committee accepts that Law Enforcement Agencies were involved in the matter of missing persons and it's significant to sort the issue. Furthermore, the worse incident happened when rape of Dr. Shazia Khalid in “Sui” and it assumed that Cap. Hammad, Defense Security Forces has been involved in the matter. She requests to Baloch Nationalist Leaders specially Nawab Akbar Khan Bhughti not to politicize the matter. From here, the main conflict begins, Nawab Bhughti blamed that Cap. Is involved in this incident hence, the Govt. Officials claimed and denied all such incident. Conflict get severe with passage of time, Nawab Bhughti start working as Nationalist with more strength as to safe his people. On March 17, 2005 the clashes between the insurgents and the military started in which ten 10 military personnel died and about 60 insurgents and civilian died (The News, 2005). The rebellious groups of BLA initiated attacks on the Govt.'s mechanism, i.e. “Railway lines, Electricity Installations, Gas Pipelines” were targeted. The recommendations of the parliamentary committee were going to be finalized, an unfortunate incident happened when General Musharaf, the then president and Chief of Army Staff was going to address the local Jirga at Kohlu, a district of Balochistan, came under attack by the miscreant (The News, 2005). The has been as a tough assignment of Govt. and advised about the rigorous outcomes. After these, Nawab Bhughti took to the mountains. In 2006, BLA attacked again on Chinese Engineers in Hub, three engineers have been killed, observing the situation Chinese Govt. stops the projects. Gen. Muahraf called it

“Blatant of Terrorism”. Federal Govt. initiates grand military operation in Dera Bhughti as they thought that Nawab Bhughti is involved in all these incidents. In response, Nawab Akbar Bhughti has been killed with his gallant soldiers in the locality of “Bhambhore Mount” on 26th October 2006 (Daily Times, 2006). “Awais Ahmad Ghani, the then Governor of Balochistan told the media reporter’s that Bhugti died in the cave, when an explosion occurred in it” (Syed, 2006).

This news spread in country and a wave of insecurities arose in the region and local Baloch thought that if their leader can be murdered then how would they secure in Balochistan. The All Parties Conference held in Quetta regarding this matter. But all of these things, military showed their concerns that if anyone raised the voice, they will face the same (Latif & Hamza, 2009). From Baloch leadership, the attacks increased on military installations etc. and protests started in the country except Punjab, officials of Punjab showed least interest even “The Governor Punjab, Mr. Khalid Maqbool went step ahead of the Chief Minister and said “the nation salute to the President Musharaf for eliminating those individuals who were impeding the developmental projects in Balochistan” (Fani, Shahab, Nadeem, Hussain, Nadeem, Mahmood & Ismail, 2011).

It has been obvious that from 1999-2008, the Gen. Mushraf’s era remained worse while the mega projects, i.e.” Gawader Port, Saindak Project, Kachi Kanal, Mirani Dam and Highways Projects” have been started. It may be said that Mushraf’s era remained darkest period of Baloch.

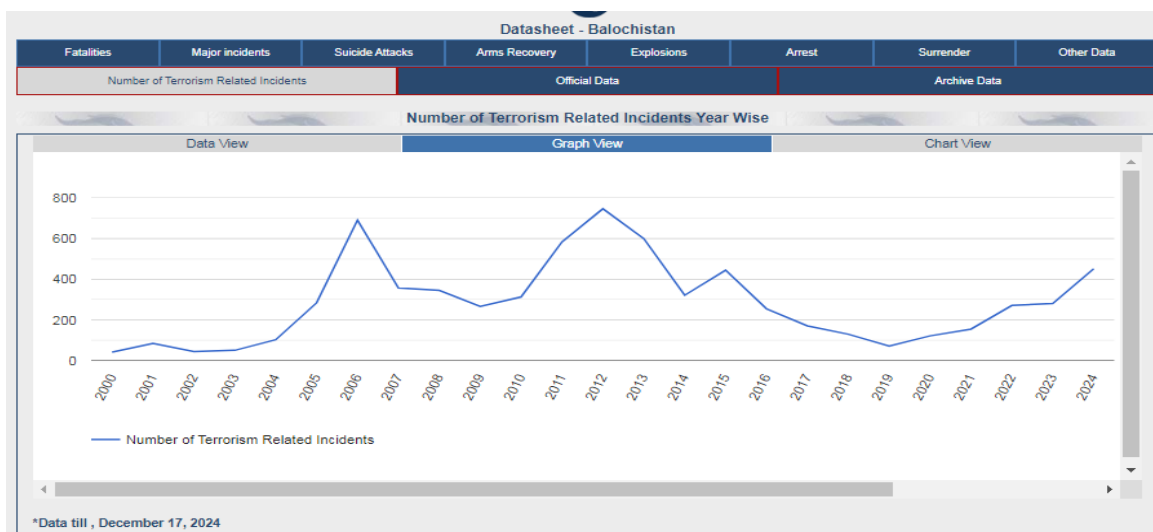


Figure No. 2. Total Number of Terrorism Incidents from 2000-2024

Source: South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP)

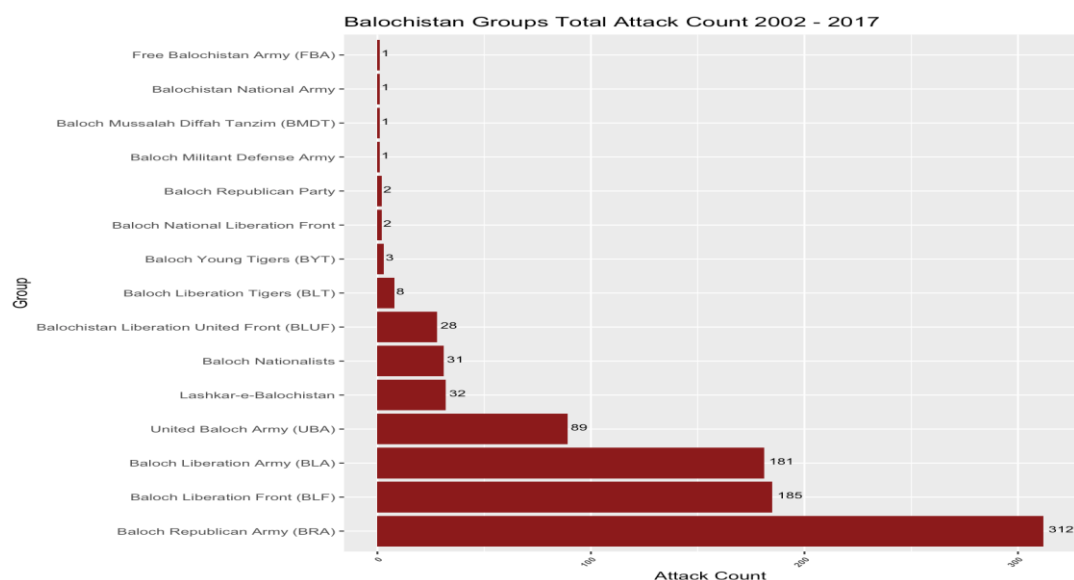


Figure: 3 Balochistan Insurgent Attack Counts from 2002-2017

Figure 3 showed Balochistan’s active separatist groups and their total attack from the years 2002 to 2017 (*although the first claimed attack was in 2004).

Source:

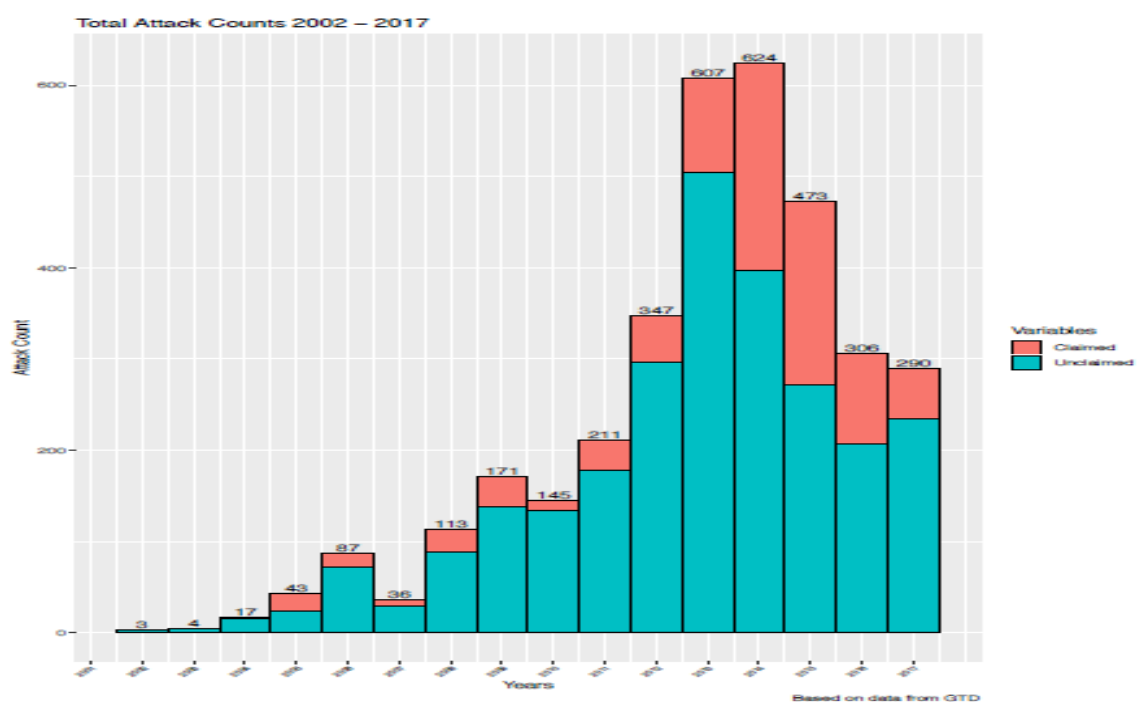


Figure: 4 Balochistan Attack Counts Including Claimed and Unclaimed from 2002-2017

Source:

Figure showed “includes claimed and unclaimed attacks by year. Claimed attacks would include any attack from the insurgent groups listed in the earlier graphs. Unclaimed attacks are limited to include any attack within the boundaries of Balochistan: this means that there is a greater margin of error in whether every unclaimed attack is related to the Balochistan insurgency, and would not

include attacks related to the insurgency outside of Balochistan (perhaps into a neighboring province or along the border with Afghanistan)”.

Claimed attacks are consolidated due to low-activity (and likely non-Baloch insurgent) groups: Pro- Kabul Provocateurs, Political Group, Pathan Tribal Group, Sindhi nationalists, Tribal Group, Muslim Militants, Ittehad-i-Islami, Shia Muslim extremists, Kalpar Tribesmen, Kaka-Tribesmen, Tribesmen. ()

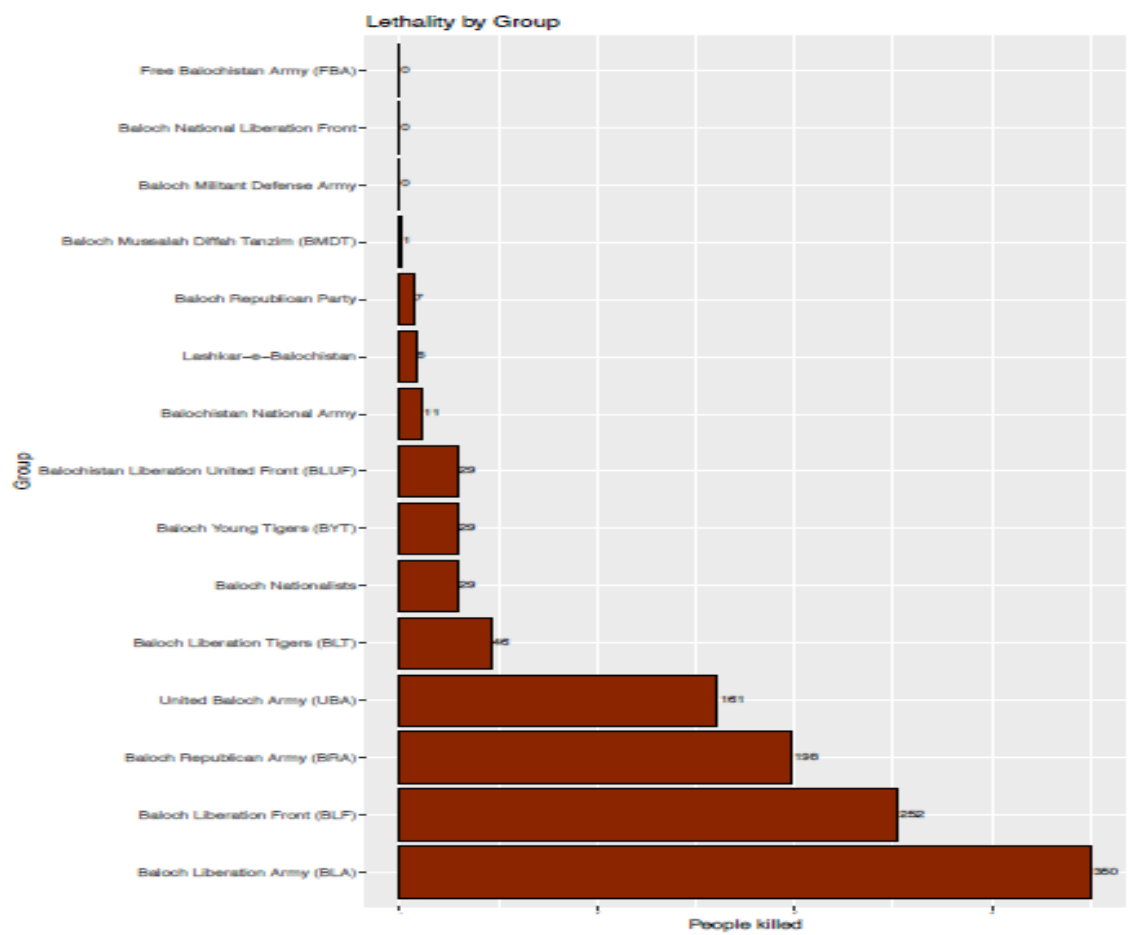


Figure 4: Balochistan Insurgent Group Total Number Killed

Figure No. 5 Balochitsan Insurgents Group Total Number killed

Source:

Figure shows group lethality based on total number of people killed per group.

The Foreign Intervention in Balochistan: The realist perspective, which sees the international system through the prism of nation states is dominant within the security Establishment and claims that the insurgency is supported by external intervention (Bull, 1977 and Buzan, 1991). The worse circumstances in Balochistan remained the proof of foreign intervention. The rebellious attacks on Armed Installations or on Govt. Offices, can't be possible with no suitable practice and plan. Approximately, millions have been spent on the attacks. Estimated cost for BLA remained 40 to 90 million per month. Opponents of Pakistan have great wish to brittle Pakistan. According Dr. Ayesha Siddiqua, fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Centre, Washington, these external powers could possibly be India, Iran and Afghanistan. There is also engagement of the American agencies working in Balochistan (Siddiqua, 2005). According to the officials in Pakistan, the

presence of Indian consulates in the area of Pak-Afghan border and also in Zahidan is encouraging and it is used as base camp for the insurgent movements (Mazari, 2005). Gwadar Port remained the area of interest for Iran and India. India spent money in Dollars to enlarge the Chahbahar Port this is combine developed with Gwadar Port. On the same time, Russian interest cannot be starved off. The Balcoh rebellious also used the Russian Weapons in various uprisings. Ties among Pakistan and Afghanistan lingered tensed in the matter of Pakhtunistan. According to Afghanistan, Pakistan is sub staining the Taliban who create unrest in region. Interference of America also there in Balochistan, though Pakistan remained big followers on war against terrorism. It is also believed that the main source of financial support to the insurgents comes from the CIA agents in Afghanistan (Bansal, 2008).



Figure No:6 Map of Balochistan

USA thought that China is the rival state and its existence in Balochistan bewildering them in prospects. Existence of China near “Strait of Hormus” in Indian Ocean, a convincing route to export the oil from “Gulf States”, hence US intends to sustain its harmony in this constituency. This matter became worse in Balochistan. USA is not constrained to Baluchistan but have plan on the gigantic resources on “Central Asian States” or this province is easily approachable to their way. USA wished to hold the region for her future plans and eliminate China from the picture that is the only challenging power in region.

Violation of Human Rights: From 2003-2008, more than 8000 persons have been displaced by Pakistan Security. Use of violence became exposed. Human damaged bodies, i.e. burnt, nails drawn out, smashed the various parts of body, holes in the head etc. “This year the human rights commission of Pakistan released a review about disappearances in the region and recognized the Inter-Service Intelligent (ISI) and Frontier Corps (FC) as the criminals” (Kundi, 2007). During 2006, according to the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan analyze that there have been no basic services in the region, i.e. access to the facility of hygiene, less educational facilities, high death rate, clean drinking water etc.

Narration about 2024: On 29th January 2024, Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) imitated an operation “Dare-e-Bolan” in Mach, within Kachi district. Around 380 weapon Baloch controlled the area within 40 hours (Balochitsan Post, 2024). “The BLA’s coordinated attacks involved shooting at the local paramilitary Frontier Corps (FC) headquarters, firing rockets at the central jail, ambushing police centers, bombing a railway track, and setting fire to a hotel as well as several shops and oil tankers. The operation reportedly resulted in the deaths of four security personnel, two civilians, and more than 20 militants” (Dawn, 2024). On March 2024, Baloch Separatists attacked on Gwadar Port Authority Complex. “According to the Pakistani military’s Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the attack was thwarted and eight militants were killed, while two armed forces personnel lost their lives during the attack (Express Tribune, 2024). Majeed Brigade of BLA accept the liability of attack (Pakistan Today, 2024). In August 2024, a horrible incident occurred in Bela, a town in Lasbela District, when more than 70 people have been killed in Balochistan. According to military officials 14 soldiers and policeman, along with 21 militants were killed after the attacks. Separatist attack in Musakhel District, 23 civilians were killed in attacks those belongs to Punjab. Attack on the highway which joints Punjab with Balochistan. BLA informed people to stay away from the highways of Balochistan. The armed personnel’s targeted military personnel who travelling in civilian clothes, shoot after identification. Hence, as per Interior Ministry, all of killed person were local people not military parsons. “News Vehicles travelling to and from Punjab were inspected, and individuals from Punjab were identified and shot,” Najibullah Kakar, a senior official in Musakhail, told the AFP agency”. The injured brought to Dera Ghazia Khan’s Hospitals and nearest medical centers. The killed people were killed after checking their CNIC (Al-Jazeera, 2024).



Figure No. 7 People inspect a burned-out vehicle torched by attackers after they killed passengers on a highway in Musakhail [Rahmat Khan/AP]eo Duration 2 minutes 30 seconds2:30

Source: Al-Jazeera and News Agencies

Conclusion: The surging terrorism, uncertainty in Balochistan can be measured through the research paper. The paper reflects the doubts of fear among Balochistan and Government. The circumstances in province worse with the passage of time. There is no rule of law of Govt in Balochistan. Kidnapping, killing of local people, disappearance, violence and attacks on government installation is the routine matter in province. The situation is going to become more threatening that the Baluchistan has been going to the “Anarchy”. People feel insecure in their birthplace. The current uprising is the result of distrust in political forces and nationalists. The mediators trying to cope the situation through dialogue in the light of constitution of Pakistan while nationalists believed on violence. There must be no role of Intelligent Agencies in Political Matters of Balochistan, their role must be limited to the law and order and for security measure but their role is increasing day by day. The issue of disappearance of people must be resolved. One more element to improve to trust of Baluchistan leadership, their equally contribution in all affairs of their life. Government should provide chances to sort their issues. In mega projects, local people should be given proper place. Ethnicity must be abolished through tactful measures. Their society has been based on Tribal system; let them grow with limited conditions. No need to take such manners from agencies, military institutes otherwise it will go towards the Anarchy in province.

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