

Comprehensive review of NAP

Balochistan report card

*Shahzada Zulfiqar**

*Shahzada Zulfiqar is a senior journalist based in Quetta, with a deep understanding of politics in Balochistan.

The Balochistan-specific point calls for undertaking “the process of reconciliation” - with disgruntled Baloch. In addition, many other points have direct bearing on Balochistan, like of registering madrassas and ending private militias.

As with other provinces, NAP is reviewed at an apex committee, comprising province’s top civilian and military officials of the province. The committee met once under the Prime Minister and twice under the chairpersonship of Chief Minister Dr. Malik Baloch.

So far, six convicted persons have been sent to the gallows. A single military court is already working in Balochistan, following NAP. Balochistan’s home department has sent 53 cases to the interior ministry, over a two dozen of which have been sent to the military court.

In February 2014, apex committee met under Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, with Army Chief General Raheel Sharif as participant, drawing a roadmap of implementing NAP.

The meeting, because of being overwhelmed by the military high ups, approved for stern action against militants and their leaders, calling for negotiation with only those having no involvement in acts of sabotage and terrorism.

Stern action

The stern action includes a broad range of issues: military operation against militants; extradition of self-exiled Baloch leaders from western countries; and confiscation of their all moveable and immovable properties to choke financing to their outfits, already banned.

Besides these, federal agencies like Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), Customs, National Accountability Bureau, and Police have been directed to investigate into the funding of terrorists. Hawala operators, working under the garb of money-exchange business, are also interrogated, their tehsil records are scrutinized and their property details obtained.

In the cyber domain, the government has already blocked pro-separatist websites, blogs and Facebook accounts.

Pakistan Army was involved in military operation in the districts infested with the insurgency while Frontier Corps Balochistan, a paramilitary force, accelerated the pace of already-launched “information based operations” in the province.

The Frontier Corps claims to have killed hundreds of activists and dozens of commanders of banned organizations and arrested many more.

One of those it has been following is Dr. Allah Nazar, head of Baloch Liberation Front. Dr. Nazar is the only commander who leads his group on ground, compared to leaders who live abroad. Unlike other Baloch insurgent groups, BLF also draws significant support from middle-class – Allah Nazar himself is a medical specialist.

The government and military high-ups think that the on-going 5th Baloch insurgency is coming to an end in Balochistan. And that there will be no dissent voice, if Dr. Allah Nazar is killed.

On June 29th, 2015, on a tip of about the presence of most wanted man Dr. Allah Nazar, head of Baloch Liberation Front, a leading insurgent group, the army conducted an operation in Awaran district and killed his brother and two nephews along with other six villagers. However, the news about the presence of BLF commander proved wrong.

Political observers in the province also argue that the government needs to improve the law and order in the province by crushing the on-going separatist movement for paving the way for mega projects like operationalizing Gwadar port and laying down China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

Reconciliation

Ever since coming into power in 2013, Prime Minister Sharif has been advocated for giving reconciliation efforts a chance. Sharif's desire has been of bringing on negotiating table all angry Baloch leaders – whether fighting against the state or not, whether sitting inside the country or living in self-exile.

Even the National Action Plan calls upon the provincial government to pursue reconciliation process in Balochistan.

But the February 2015 apex meeting called for negotiations with only those who have not taken arms against the state. Similarly, in June, an apex committee, headed by Chief Minister Malik Baloch, promised general amnesty for all those who forsake arms against the state.

According to this policy, one million rupees will be awarded for an ordinary fighter entering mainstream, one-and-a-half million for a local commander, and two million for area commander, and more for others as per to their status, besides promising them government job and security for them and their families.

Moreover, pro-government tribal sardars like Nawab Sanaullah Zehri; Nawab Chagaiz Marri, son of separatist late Khair Bakhsh Marri; and Sardar Sarfaraz Domki,

grandson of late Nawab Akbar Bugti played their due role in persuading the outlaws to surrender before the law.

Over one hundred fighters, including six commanders, have publicly surrendered from Awaran, Lahri and Kohlu.

One such commander is Obaidullah Babrak, a BLF fighter in Awaran. At the time of surrender, he moved to provincial capital Quetta. Within a few weeks of his surrender, in July, he complained in a press conference that the government hasn't fulfilled any of the promise announced under general amnesty. (The government argues there might be some misunderstanding.)

While the government takes such surrenders as game changer, Baloch nationalist groups have little faith in these tried-and-tested measures. They have been tried in the past too, they argue, adding that such measures aim at buying loyalties of the armed activists through money instead of addressing their genuine issues. Despite surrenders made by some of their commanders and members, separatist groups have rejected the amnesty offer, vowing to continue fighting till independence.

Baloch nationalists point towards dichotomy in dealing with

Balochistan: on one hand, the forces are killing Baloch youth through the 'kill-and-dump policy' or military operations; on the other hand, government offers reconciliation.¹

Such dichotomies continue to raise head in provincial government's other reconciliation efforts.

In the holy month of Ramadan, Chief Minister directed a delegation comprising provincial ministers and parliamentarians-cum-tribal elders of ruling National Party went to London to meet self-exiled Khan of Kalat, Mir Suleman Daud, urging him to return home for filling the tribal vacuum created in his absence.

Mir Suleman sits at the top of Baloch tribal hierarchy. His grandfather Mir Ahmad Yar Khan signed Instrument of Accession with country's founder Quaid-e-Azam, legalizing Balochistan's union with new state of Pakistan. Although Mir Suleman doesn't have influence over separatist outfits, he symbolizes tribal society. In 2006, in the aftermath of the assassination of prominent Baloch politician Akbar Bugti in a military operation, Mir Suleman left Pakistan.

At that time, he also conveyed a tribal jirga in Kalat, the only tribal jirga ever to be convened in the last century. That grand jirga, comprising 85 chieftains and over 300 elders from

¹ The word "kill and dump" is a common term used by nationalists.

all over country and other walks of life, gave Khan the mandate to approach International Court of Justice against Pakistan for its failure to abide by the Instrument of Accession reached by his grandfather. Winning over Khan will weaken the cause of separatists.

When a delegation from Pakistan went to see him in 2015, Khan put before them some conditions such as recovery of Baloch missing persons and putting an end to the on-going military operations in Balochistan, the so-called kill and dump policy, and the trample-down of the sanctity of '*chaddar* and '*chardevari*' (household). Balochistan government is unable to meet the conditions of Khan.

As of now, Chief Minister Malik Baloch may lead another delegation to London for another round of talks with Khan of Kalat. To make Khan flexible in his conditions, the new delegation will offer some special perks and privileges to the Khan, if he returns.

Meanwhile, Nawab Sanauallah Zahri, a senior minister and provincial head of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz, in his separate plan of reconciliation, is also trying his best to persuade Khan of Kalat into returning home. Quite likely, Mr. Zehri will be sworn in as the new chief minister, under an agreement reached between different parties in Murree after 2013 elections.

Pressing issues

Some of the issues from Balochistan are worth looking into, as they directly relate with NAP's other points:

One, when it comes to religious-inspired militancy, the basis of NAP, despite killings of top-notch militants, a lot needs to be done.

Following NAP, security forces killed top sectarian men like Usman Saifullah Kurd and Mahmood Kurd alias Wadeed, masterminds of deadly suicide attacks, killing hundreds of Shia Muslim in Balochistan and Sindh. Similarly, in August 2015, an important commander of Al-Qaeda's Umar Lateef was killed in Chaghi area bordering neighbouring Afghanistan, while his wife Tayyaba who is said to be head of women wing was arrested. Meanwhile, in Punjab, head of Lashkar-e-Jhangvi along with his accomplices was killed. That much is positive.

After these killings, one can expect from security agencies to bring such heinous elements in Balochistan to justice. There is a desire from the people that the forces need to move against banned outfits, which often wear political faces publicly in Balochistan.

Security forces have also raided on the shops in Quetta and other

districts and confiscated a dozen of books with hate material.

On the other hand, no action has been taken against the sectarian-infested madrassas.

According to a report of Home Department, 2,441 seminaries have been registered. Still, it is believed, around a thousand madrassas are yet to be registered in the far flung areas of the province.

Two, contrary to the claims of the officials, some government-backed private militias still operate across the province. Many Baloch nationalists believe these militias are controlled by the pro-government notables, against separatist groups.

The government-backed militias have also been accused of persecuting religious minorities, particularly Hindus, during the past 15 years of insurgency. Hindu traders in restive districts particularly Khuzdar, Kalat and Mastung were being forced to pay *bhatha* (extortion) to these private militias. They are intimidated against any protest publicly over forced conversion in the cases. Hundreds of Hindu families have forcibly migrated to India or neighbouring Sindh province. Curbing such groups will automatically improve the status of religious minorities, as called by NAP.

The activists of these militias have been involved in crimes like highway

robbery, rape, car snatching and abduction for ransom.

Officials said that they have come across enough evidence against one Shafiq Mengal, head of a government-backed militia, of harbouring sectarian and Pakistani Taliban militants. These militants have also attacked Levy personnel, killed eight. A case has also been registered against Shafiq, but he lives with impunity in his ancestral town of Wadh in Khuzdar district.

Sardar Akhtar Mengal, the head of Balochistan National Party, which believes in parliamentary struggle, has been a harsh critic of intelligence agencies for erecting private militias against him and his party.

Three, another major issue Baloch population is confronted with is the illegal registration of millions of Afghan refugees as Pakistani nationals and as voters. Baloch nationalists, including Dr. Malik, are opposing the next census to be conducted in 2016 on the grounds of the presence of Afghan refugee, estimated to be two-and-an-half million in Balochistan.

Except for the ruling National Party, no Baloch party is in the favour of making Gwadar port operational and constructing the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. Baloch parties call for addressing their reservations of the projects, which, they fear, will turn the Baloch population into a minority in their own land.

The military high-ups in apex committee meetings have assured provincial government to inform its concerns to their top brass and federal government. Pashtun parties, often symbolized by the Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PkMAP), reject these reservations.