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HOW BALUCHISTAN BECAME A PART OF PAKISTAN – A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

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INTRODUCTION:

Baluchistan consists of the south west of Pakistan. In the west it borders with Afghanistan and Iran and in the south, it has the Arabian Sea. It accounts for nearly half the land mass of Pakistan and only 3.6% of its total population. The province is immensely rich in natural resources, including oil, gas, copper and gold. Despite these huge deposits of mineral wealth, the area is one of the poorest regions of Pakistan. A vast majority of its population lives in deplorable housing conditions where they don't have access to electricity or clean drinking water. Before the partition of India and Pakistan, Baluchistan consisted of four princely states under the British Raj. These were Kalat, Lasbela, Kharan and Makran. Two of these provinces, Lasbela and Kharan, were fiduciary states placed under Khan of Kalat's rule by the British, as was Makran which was a district of Kalat. Three months before the formation of Pakistan, Muhammed Ali Jinnah had negotiated the freedom of Baluchistan under Kalat from the British. Discussions were made about Kalat's relationship with Pakistan as it was formed. This ensued a series of meetings between the Viceroy, as the Crown's Representative, Jinnah and the Khan of Kalat. This resulted in a communique on August 11, 1947, which stated that: a. The Government of Pakistan recognizes Kalat as an independent sovereign state in treaty relations with the British Government with a status different from that of Indian States. b. Legal opinion will be sought as to whether or not agreements of leases will be inherited by the Pakistan Government. c. Meanwhile, a Standstill Agreement has been made between Pakistan and Kalat. d.

Discussions will take place between Pakistan and Kalat at Karachi at an early date with a view to reaching decisions on Defence, External Affairs and Communications.

BALUCHISTAN: A HISTORICAL ACCOUNT

Referring to a telegram of October 17, 1947 from Grafftey-Smith, the Political Department, in a note on Pakistan-Kalat negotiations, says that Jinnah had second thoughts regarding the recognition of Kalat as an independent sovereign state, and was now desirous of obtaining its accession in the same form as was accepted by other rulers who joined Pakistan. The same note mentioned that an interesting situation is developing as Pakistan might accept the accession of Kalat's two feudatories, Lasbela and Kharan.

By October 1947, Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah had a change of heart on the recognition of Kalat as an "Independent and a Sovereign State", and wanted the Khan to sign the same form of instrument of accession as the other states which had joined Pakistan. The Khan was unwilling to abandon the nominally achieved independent status but ready to concede on defence, foreign affairs and communications. However, he was unwilling to sign either a treaty or an Instrument, until and unless he had got a satisfactory agreement on the leased areas. Fears were also being voiced that officials of the Government of Pakistan might start dealing with the two feudatories of Las Bela and Kharan, and accept their de facto accession.

By February 1948, the discussions between Kalat and the Government of Pakistan were coming to a head. The Quaid wrote to the Khan of Kalat: "I advise you to join Pakistan without further delay...and let me have your final reply which you promised to do after your stay with me in Karachi when we fully discussed the whole question in all its aspects." On February 15, 1948, Jinnah visited Sibi, Baluchistan and addressed a Royal Durbar, where he announced that until the Pakistan Constitution is finally written in about two years' time, he would govern the province with the help of an advisory council that he would nominate. However, the main reason for Jinnah's visit was to persuade the Khan of Kalat to accede to Pakistan. As it transpired, the Khan failed to turn up for the final meeting with him, pleading illness. In his letter to Jinnah, he said that he had summoned both Houses of the Parliament, Dar-ul-Umara and Dar-ul-Awam, for their opinion about the future relations with the Dominion of Pakistan, and he would inform him about their opinion by the end of the month.

When the Dar-ul-Awam of Kalat met on February 21, 1948, it decided not to accede, but to negotiate a treaty to determine Kalat's future relations with Pakistan. On March 9, 1948 the Khan received communication from Jinnah announcing that he had decided not to deal personally with the Kalat state negotiations, which would henceforth be dealt with by the Pakistan Government. So far there had not been any formal negotiations but only an informal request made by Jinnah to the Khan at Sibi.

The US Ambassador to Pakistan in his dispatch home on March 23, 1948 informed that on March 18, “Kharan, Lasbela and Mekran, feudatory states of Kalat” had acceded to Pakistan. The Khan of Kalat objected to their accession, arguing that it was a violation of Kalat’s Standstill Agreement with Pakistan. He also said that while Kharan and Lasbela were its feudatories, Mekran was a district of Kalat. The British Government had placed the control of the foreign policy of the two feudatories under Kalat in July 1947, prior to partition.

On March 26, 1948, the Pakistan Army was ordered to move into the Baloch coastal region of Pasni, Jiwani and Turbat. This was the first act of aggression prior to the march on Kalat by a Pakistani military detachment on April 1, 1948. Kalat capitulated on March 27 after the army moved into the coastal region and it was announced in Karachi that the Khan of Kalat has agreed to merge his state with Pakistan. Jinnah accepted this accession under the gun. It should be noted that the Balochistan Assembly had already rejected any suggestion of forfeiting the independence of Balochistan on any pretext. So even the signature of the Khan of Kalat taken under the barrel of the gun, was not viable, because the parliament had rejected the accession and the accession was never mandated by the British Empire either, who had given Balochistan under Kalat independence before India. The sovereign Baloch state after British withdrawal from India lasted only 227 days. During this time Baluchistan had a flag flying in its embassy in Karachi where its ambassador to Pakistan lived. To say that the Baloch have been ill-treated by all governments and military establishments since their land was illegally and forcefully taken over would be an understatement. As a result, there have been continuous insurgencies, the largest of which was started in 2006 after the killing of Sardar Akber Bugti and 26 of his tribesmen by the Pakistan Army. A 2006 report by the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) documented arbitrary arrests and detentions, torture, extra judicial and summary executions, disappearances and the use of excessive and indiscriminate violence by the Pakistan police, military, security agencies and intelligence forces. These figures are corroborated by Amnesty International. Kachkol Ali Baloch who is the former leader of Opposition in the Balochistan Assembly, alleged that about 4,000 people have been either missing or are detained without trial. The missing persons included around 1,000 students and political activists. Lately his own son was kidnapped and was finally released after being held captive for 14 months. Sardar Akhter Mengal, leader of the Baloch Nationalist Party (BNP) was one of the people arrested in 2006 on framed terrorism charges. The reality was he was planning a long march against the then President of Pakistan General Pervez Musharraf. He was later released in 2008 and all cases against him were dropped. The current Chief Minister of Balochistan, Dr. Abdul Malik Baloch, spoke at a seminar held in Punjab called ‘Stability in Balochistan – Challenges and possibilities’. He clearly stated that if the Baloch people are not given a right to the resources of their province, we would be looking at yet another insurgency and no one will be able to control it.

CONCLUSION:

The true history of Balochistan is never shared or talked about among the general public of Pakistan. Pakistan textbooks and other publications narrate a rhetoric which is far from the truth, and which has made the general public believe in a lie. It is the responsibility of the intellectuals, the teachers and the professors to learn and reveal the real facts according to non-tempered historical documents.

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