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The Balochistan complexities

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Balochistan is veritably in a spot, nowadays also in the vile lap of target killings and sniper shootings. Its problem is at once complex and intricate, not readily explicable and not amenable to easy solutions and populist remedies, either. Even the very sense of deprivation and denial engulfing the province is not as simple as is it projected to be. Anger over the raw deal dealt to Balochistan by the Centre intermittently does pervade there from top to bottom. But the province's elites are very much part of this problem, not its solution. They feed on this popular sentiment to promote their own politics and to enrich their own coffers, not to alleviate the sad predicament of the commoners, living in bulk in their perpetual enslavement and bondages for ages. The commoners in the province are indeed in a pickle. They are really a pathetic lot, bearing all the brunt of every injustice, of every deprivation and of every denial that every federal government has over the time felt no inhibitions or qualms in inflicting religiously on the province unfeelingly. But their elites have flourished even in the worst of times. And even in the best of times, their own plight has only worsened. These elites have indeed been no friends to them, still keeping them largely in brutal chains, exacting obedience from them with their ferocious gunmen and their dreadful private jails, and denying them all avenues and opportunities to emancipate to become fuller human beings with their own voice and master of their own will and vote. Not infrequently, these elites have been in the government in the province and part of the federal power centres. Yet the commoners have got no good from them. Neglect has been the perennial fate of this mercilessly wronged humanity, no matter who is in rule in the province or at the centre. To add to their pains, the province is presently in the throes of woeful ethnic schisms and sectarian wedges. The ethnic bonhomie and amity that had long been the distinctive hallmark of the province's polity has lately come under severe strains, with Pakhtuns facing increasingly murderous and arson assaults and long-settled Punjabi residents undergoing forced evictions in the Baloch belt. Shia-Sunni fracas have become not so infrequent, shaking the province's erstwhile sectarian harmony unnervingly. With criminality on the rise, criminal gangs are arguably stoking up these ethnic and sectarian divisions for furthering their own wicked trades. Worse, the mineral-rich and strategically-located province is now very much in the rivalling international eyes, with various world powers eyeing it avariciously to push it into their own orbits of influence and domination. They have infested it massively, and have softened it up worrisomely, and not so covertly but in cases quite overtly, by propping up local proxies and militant outfits with generous financial largesse, arms supplies and human aid. Yet more

appallingly, as a scion of the Bugti dynasty, Brahmadagh, has snuggled up in the Indian lap to do New Delhi's bidding, some other leading sardars, the Mangals for one, make no bones about it they would welcome a foreign intervention, even military, to hew off Balochistan from Pakistan. The things shaping up fast in Balochistan are deeply disturbing, indeed. Yet there seems no realisation of the Balochistan problem's enormity in Islamabad and of the dangerous turn it is taking rapidly. There is no perceptible attempt at understanding the problem's complexities in evidence in Islamabad. The situation is too dire to tackle with mere ceremonious apologies, as has it become a fashion with the incumbent Islamabad top echelon to ooze out periodically. It needs hard-boiled thinking, creative thoughts and imaginative planning to address. Not even those APC talking shops can and will do here. Only well-thought-out policies and strategies can work, for which the Islamabad hierarchy must get its own act together. While doing all to give a stab to boiling issues like the cases of disappeared persons, political prisoners and political activists' assassinations to the general satisfaction, it must sit down, think hard, evolve imaginative policies and pragmatic plans, and execute them robustly to address the real Balochistan problem. The focus of this new order should solely be the emancipation, empowerment and enrichment of the huge enslaved humanity being kept caged by the province's privileged elites. It is this humanity, the Islamabad hierarchy must know, which is being allured with the temptation of money and seductive promises by foreign players and their local proxies to destabilise the province. And it is this humanity which these evildoers will seduce more alluringly to fructify their sinister designs against this country and this nation. They must be exposed and their ugly faces shown to the world without bothering about those bunk diplomatic niceties, which despicably have become this hierarchy's creed incredulously. Balochistan, by every reckoning, is sitting on a live volcano, ticking to explode. This has to be averted at any rate. Hence the ruling political leadership, the military establishment and the intelligence apparatus in Islamabad must get together and think out how to do it and then act quickly. Time is just running out, they all must know.