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# FACES OF OPPRESSION

## Human Rights Violations in Balochistan

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## 5 - Expert Contributions: Human Rights in Balochistan

### Report by Burzine Waghmar "Repressing Pakistan: Oppressed Balochistan, Suppressed Sovereignty", Sr. Teaching Fellow at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), London

On 23 March 2016 will occur the seventy-sixth anniversary of Pakistan Resolution Day. In anticipation of which, a sobering reminder might not be out of place for thinking Pakistanis. The Pakistan movement owes its inspiration to the gathering of the All India Muslim League on 23 March 1940 at Lahore, the hometown of Pakistan's spiritual founder and national poet, Sir Muhammad Iqbal. A year later, in 1931, following the Round Table Conference, London, Iqbal squarely put to Jawaharlal Nehru of the Indian Congress that India's problems would remain insolvable if the majority community refuses to concede the minimum safeguards necessary for the security and well-being of a minority yet continues to talk of a nationalism which works out only to its own

***"The benefits of lording over this province of extremes ... is plainly manifest in the cold calculus of control and distribution of resources, political and material."***

benefit. Iqbal continued by pointing out that: 'Either the Indian majority community will have to accept for itself the permanent position of an agent of British imperialism in the East or the country will have to be redistributed on the basis of religious, historical, and cultural affinities ...'<sup>1</sup>

It may be lost on Pakistani nationalists, especially its Panjabis, preponderant and pugnacious, that the Balochs would substitute them for 'the majority community'. And the rest falls brutally in place - by substituting agent of 'British imperialism' with American and, especially, the bit about 'a nationalism which works out only to its own benefit.' The benefits of lording over this province of extremes - Pakistan's largest, most

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Disclaimer: The views expressed herein constitute my sole prerogative. They neither imply nor suggest the orientation, views, current thinking or position of the university, school or regional and research study centres with which I hold affiliation.

<sup>1</sup>S. Hayat, 'Muslim Revival and the Freedom Movement', in R. Long, ed. *A History of Pakistan* (Karachi, 2015), p. 345.

impoverished and least populated – is plainly manifest in the cold calculus of control and distribution of resources, political and material.

And, lingering on benefits, one must challenge aloud the claims of trickle-down development so disingenuously outlined by Dr Samar Mubarakmand, former chair of NESCOM (National Education and Scientific Commission), head of Pakistan’s nuclear tests at Balochistan’s Ras Koh hills, Chaghai district (28 May 1998), and a Panjabi, who is the brains, as proudly noted in the Pakistan Army’s monthly magazine, *Hilal*, behind the conception and implementation of the Reko Diq complex (Copper Gold project) and Sind’s Thar Coal project.<sup>2</sup> Balochs and

Sindhis know only full well that the federal authority, Panjabis to a man, harbour not the slightest intention of ploughing back these rental benefits for the denizens of these provinces.

Reko Diq lies at the westernmost part of Balochistan, and, Pakistan. It is barely 100 miles from the Iranian border. The Geological Survey of Pakistan discovered this site in 1969 and, about a decade later, had concluded after surveys that gold and copper ore deposits concentrated in a mere 100 sq. km. zone are worth about \$500 billion.<sup>3</sup> Exploration licenses were issued to multi-national mining companies, starting



Photo Courtesy of: Beluchistan 2011 @Flickr

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<sup>2</sup> S. Mubarakmand, ‘Destined towards a rich Pakistan: Reko Diq mineral resources’, *Hilal*, 51,7 (January, 2015): 22-26.

<sup>3</sup> Mubarakmand, *art. cit.*, p. 23.

from 1993, with a 25 percent stake held by the government of Balochistan in what is known as the *Chaghai Hills Joint Venture Agreement*, plus 2 percent royalties which would accrue to Quetta for all explored and sold minerals.<sup>4</sup> Even putting aside the abysmal 2 percent – a figure one is entitled to question and as to how Islamabad agreed to such an offer in the first place – might one ask how this measly 2 percent has transformed a blighted Balochistan for the better since 1993? This 2 percent would have, indeed should have, shown for itself, surely, in making at least some impact in the living standards and social indicators, all of which are woefully lower, provincially and nationally, in comparison. Reko Diq, besides the Sui gas fields, could be the best thing to have happened to Balochistan. Two rainbow pots, not one, but neither falls in the laps of Balochs. For, as Mubarakmand himself pointed out in his report, wherever gold was discovered so was copper in the immediate vicinity. And he concludes, predicated on

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mining estimates provided by the Australians, that ‘the total value of the Reko Diq assets is close to \$1 trillion.’<sup>5</sup>

Thirty-five kilometres away, at Saindak, the Chinese, since 2001, are mining almost 600 million tons of copper ore and their efforts are yielding annually 25 tons of gold and 12-15,000 tons of copper.<sup>6</sup> But it would be remiss not to highlight Mubarakmand who, in fairness, does criticise Islamabad, customarily incompetent, in handling such ventures with international mining consortiums. Mubarakmand deserves to be quoted at length: ‘If GoB [Govt. of Balochistan] could invest \$600 million upfront in the joint venture, then it would be entitled to 25 percent share in profit, i.e. 3 percent approximately with an additional royalty of 2 percent. The total receipts to GoB would be about \$75 million from a gross value of copper and gold leaving the country per year valued at nearly \$1.2 billion. The return for GoB after investing 600 million in the joint venture is so paltry that it is barely comparable with the interest on a \$600 million fixed deposit. This is what

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Mubarakmand, *art. cit.*, p. 22.

should happen to a nation which doesn't do anything itself and entrust all it has to foreign companies.<sup>7</sup> A thinking Pakistani and critical Panjabi is doubly refreshing and welcome.

If these accruals had been of appreciable worth, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif need not have gone to town in 2009 with promises of an *Aghaz-e Huquq-e Balochistan*.<sup>8</sup> It is barely worth the paper typed upon. What will be worth watching, and plainly portentous for Balochs, is the 'sunset clause' I clearly forewarned about last year at this very meeting. Pakistan's third constitution passed its twenty-first amendment on 6 January 2015 that unconditionally bestowed immunity to all military courts for trials of terrorists, real or imagined. The rider, this 'sunset clause', declares that it will be repealed on 7 January 2017.<sup>9</sup> There is nothing to suggest an extension may not be a foregone conclusion. Islamabad, after all, has its hands full with domestic discontents most if not all of whom

are malcontents manufactured by its security and intelligence nexus to spread mayhem and murder thus assuring its supremacy through such sponsorship of sanctioned anarchy. It may all change – and not for the better. Executing a Mumtaz Qadri is no indicator that the state is committed to stamping out Islamic extremism. Hunting down Sabeen Mahmud's killers might have been a more sincere start.<sup>10</sup> Not that Muslim clerics from Bolton or elsewhere in England rushed to take the first flight for Karachi to commiserate with Miss Mahmud's parents much less accompany her funeral bier or lead prayers at her grave. Quite a few did fly out to Chaklala for Qadri and many others still back in England extolled his noble life and the still nobler afterlife that awaits him now, a lesson in inspiration not lost on their Friday flock of British-Pakistanis in the

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<sup>7</sup> Mubarakmand, *art. cit.*, p. 24.

<sup>8</sup> B. Waghmar, 'Beleaguered Balochs: Muslim Republics Murdering Muslim Minorities' in *Human Rights, Regional Security and Perspectives for Balochistan and Pakistan Post-2014* (The Hague, 2014), p. 20. Online: <http://eprints.soas.ac.uk/18493/>

<sup>9</sup> B. Waghmar, 'Burning Balochistan: Bombay Blowback and Pakistani Perfidy', in I. Petkovic, ed. *Buried Human Rights, Global Geopolitics and Regional Repercussions: Balochistan in the Shadows* (The Hague, 2015), p. 31. Online: <http://unpo.org/downloads/1578.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> "Who killed Sabeena Mahmud? BBC talks to Raza Rumi & Burzine Waghmar". Tarek Fatah recorded my live interview with Lyse Doucet, his fellow Canadian and noted anchor-correspondent. This live interview on the BBC World Service, April 25 2015, is archived by Mr. Fatah. Online: <https://www.facebook.com/video.php?v=10155368354690012>; also my remarks therein were cited by Vikram Sood, 'Is anyone listening? Does anyone care?', *Mid-Day*, 30 April 2015, p. 14.

afternoon sermons that precede the traditional weekly communal prayer.<sup>11</sup>

Pakistanis, never mind Balochs, have much to pray for. As I also pointed out previously, a 'secret information report' prepared by the Home and Tribal Affairs Dept. of Balochistan's provincial government, and leaked on 31 October 2014, warned that ISIS boasts having 'successively recruited a massive 10,000 to 12,000 followers from the Hangu and Khurram tribal agencies', and that it has sent out feelers to 'elements of the *Lashkar-i Jhangvi* and *Ahl-i Sunnat wa Jamat*' for which it has set up a ten-member strategic planning wing.<sup>12</sup> The TTP has already offered its allegiance to ISIS. Captain Akbar Durrani, home secretary of the province, sets no store by pro-ISIS slogans plastered along main thoroughfares as well



the wall opposite Quetta's Iranian consulate in the city's supposedly secure Red Zone. Yet another outfit, purporting to be ISIS by calling itself *Lashkar-e Khorasan* (Khorasan Army), and hailing from Kecch, home district of the chief minister Dr. Abdul Malik Baloch, has urged all Hindus and Zikris to convert to Islam or die.<sup>13</sup> Yet Durrani blithely asks, 'Why would they want to announce their presence

through wall-chalkings on the main roads of the city?'<sup>14</sup> It should, admittedly, be easier now for the authorities to nab such insurrectionists given that Saifullah Chattah, provincial chief secretary, in the presence of Sardar Raza

Muhammad Barech, officially announced the installation of 144 night vision cameras as a key component of the Rs. 1.8 billion master plan to make Quetta a securer city.<sup>15</sup> *Quis custodiet custodes?*

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<sup>11</sup> F. Hanif, 'British imams offer support to killer', *The Times*, 2 March 2016, p. 8.

<sup>12</sup> Waghmar, *art. cit.*, 2015, p. 30. Mubashir Zaidi, 'IS recruiting thousands in Pakistan, govt is warned in "secret" report', *Dawn*, 8 November 2014. Online: <http://www.dawn.com/news/1143133>

<sup>13</sup> S. Baloch, 'Zikris under attack in Balochistan', *Dawn*, 2 January 2015. Online: <http://tinyurl.com/hg3v79q>.

<sup>14</sup> Waghmar, *art. cit.*, 2015, p. 38, n. 22.

<sup>15</sup> 'Balochistan govt to draft law to protect rights of Gwadar residents', *Dawn*, 4 March 2016, p. 5.

Certainly not their American overseers. American consul-general, Brian Heath, may have posed with the traditional headgear of Baloch tribals at a musical reception organized at his Karachi diplomatic premises to mark 2 March, Baloch Cultural Day, but one must query about such spectacles in Karachi or Quetta by Sardar Akhtar Jan Mengal. Many turned out for this state-managed, stage-managed farce despite unseasonal rains this year.<sup>16</sup> Natural downpours are not half as welcome as man-made, life-giving sustenance would be. Would that were the case then Saleem Shahid, who reported these celebrations in the *Dawn* daily of 3 March need not have penned another article 48 hours later of agitated Baloch farmers, including the Zamindars Action Committee, travelling to Islamabad and presenting the prime minister a 'charter of demand' demanding why agricultural loans are regularly denied to Baloch farmers by ZTBL (*Zarai Taraqiyati Bank Ltd*).<sup>17</sup>

I must return to the ISIS question: aside from the leaked report to the *Dawn*, the

Pentagon now maintains that as many as 3,000 ISIS militants are establishing beach heads in Kunar and Nangarharh provinces of eastern Afghanistan. They are designated as ISIL-K (Khorasan), and, according to Brigadier-General William Shoffner, 'operationally emergent' and attempting to establish an operational base in southern Nangarharh.<sup>18</sup> Khorasan (lit. 'rising sun' in Middle Persian or Pahlavi) is the realm of eastern Iran which, since ancient times, comprises of those large swathes of territory that take in western and southern Afghanistan, and are historically designated by that toponym. And this is distinct from the *Lashkar-e Khorasan* mentioned earlier which too is no false spectre as the dreaded *Khorasan Army*, an outfit grafted out of al-Qaeda's 'senior operatives', opposed to the Assad regime and ISIS, and made up of foreign fighters including Pakistanis, Afghans and Iraqis. Its core consists of those who slipped into Pakistan following the allied air campaign, Operation Enduring Freedom, between October and December 2001.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> 'US consulate in Karachi celebrates Balochistan Day', *ARY News*, 2 March. 2016. Online: <http://arynews.tv/en/us-consulate-ich-culture-day/>

S. Shahid, 'Baloch Culture Day celebrated', *Dawn*, 3 March 2016, p. 5.

<sup>17</sup> S. Shahid, 'Balochistan says its farmers being deprived of loans', *Dawn*, 5 March 2016, p. 5.

<sup>18</sup> M. Evans, 'Obama sends troops to fight Isis in Afghanistan', *The Times*, 21 January 2016, p. 32.

<sup>19</sup> K. Sengupta, 'Back, the al-Qaeda branch supposedly bombed out of Syria', *The Independent*, 23 April 2015, pp. 26-27.

Proof of their presence is evinced in the killings of Afghan Shia in Balkh, September 2015, a province not normally known to be violent, and in which they have assumed the mantle from the Taliban, and whom they are fighting against as seen in the raging battle which took place between them and ISIS in June 2015.<sup>20</sup>

Dead men tell no tales. But they leave behind legacies. And letters. In special reports exclusively carried in *The Times*, Anthony Lloyd's scoop describes how Afghan troops, after one such combat, found an Urdu letter written to a certain Sheikh Idriss instructing him to contact one Issa Pakistani because 'he wants to buy those arms including Kalashnikovs and pistols. I hope that you will co-operate with him.'<sup>21</sup> We know the recipient – who never received it – but now we also know the sender on whose corpse it was discovered: Hafiz Saeed Khan, a Pakistani, and self-styled governor of

*wilayat khorasan* (Khorasan province).<sup>22</sup> As the Afghan army's Brigadier-General Nasim Sangin remarked to Anthony Lloyd: 'But this letter, with its instructions from Pakistanis to Pakistanis, backs what we suspect: the Daesh [= ISIS] here in Afghanistan are the project of our neighbour over the border.'<sup>23</sup>

There is every reason to contend that Hafiz Saeed and his cohorts are not breakaway Taleban factionalists but the 'metastasis of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's organisation in Syria and Iraq.'<sup>24</sup> Hafiz Saeed Khan was publicly declared the *wali* (leader) in a radio broadcast by Muhammad al-Adnani, al-Baghdadi's spokesman in January 2015. As Brigadier-General Sangin also pointed out, '[M]ost of the Daesh [= ISIS] we kill here, and 95 percent of their commanders, are Pakistanis.'<sup>25</sup> He and his Afghan National Army troops have yet to locate a single Afghan or foreign corpse in their battles – all are Pakistanis among, for example, more

***“Dead men tell no tales.  
But they leave behind  
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<sup>20</sup> K. Sengupta, 'The Taliban problem hasn't gone away in Afghanistan – and now Isis has arrived too', *The Independent*, 24 July 2015, p. 26. T. Coghlan, 'Isis accused of massacring Shia in Afghanistan', *The Times*, 8 September 2015, p. 31.

<sup>21</sup> A. Lloyd, 'Dead man's letter reveals who's in command of Isis in Afghanistan', *The Times*, 8 September 2015, p. 37. Thoroughly detailed by him in a

later report in idem, 'Isis invades Afghanistan', *The Times*, 5 December 2015, pp. 1, 4 and 'His special beheading knife had fork in blade to sever vertebrae', *The Times*, 5 December 2015, pp. 8-9.

<sup>22</sup> Lloyd, *art. cit.*, p. 37.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

than 200 such fighters killed in Achin district. All intercepted radio communications among these militants, as Sangin observed, were in Pashto or Urdu, never Arabic.<sup>26</sup>

Prime Minister Cameron in 2010 was rounded upon by all, especially British Pakistanis, loyal Britons despite hyphenated identities and dual passports, for declaring that Pakistan 'is looking both ways'.<sup>27</sup> It certainly is now more than two ways. Not that these Britons approved of the BBC's *Secret Pakistan* authoritative documentary, which aired in Great Britain, October-November 2011, some five months after

Usama bin Ladin was killed in Abbotabad, and indisputably highlighted Pakistani perfidy in the war on terror.<sup>28</sup> Yet *Geo News* felt it was the patriotic thing to do by sending its London anchor, Murtuza Ali Shah, to cover this pathetic protest by a brazen bunch whose loyalties lay not towards the land in which they were protesting, cocooned comfortably, but for the land in which they vacation during some weeks or months of the year.<sup>29</sup> So while these purblind Pakistanis can work up their rage, the facts will not go away, as Josh Mull pointed out some years ago, '[T]he Taliban's

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> N. Watt and V. Dodd, 'Cameron sparks diplomatic row with Pakistan after "export of terror" remark', *The Guardian*, 28 July 2010, p. 1; R. Prince and R. Crilly, 'David Cameron: Pakistan is promoting the "export of terror"', *The Daily Telegraph*, 29 July 2010, p. 15.

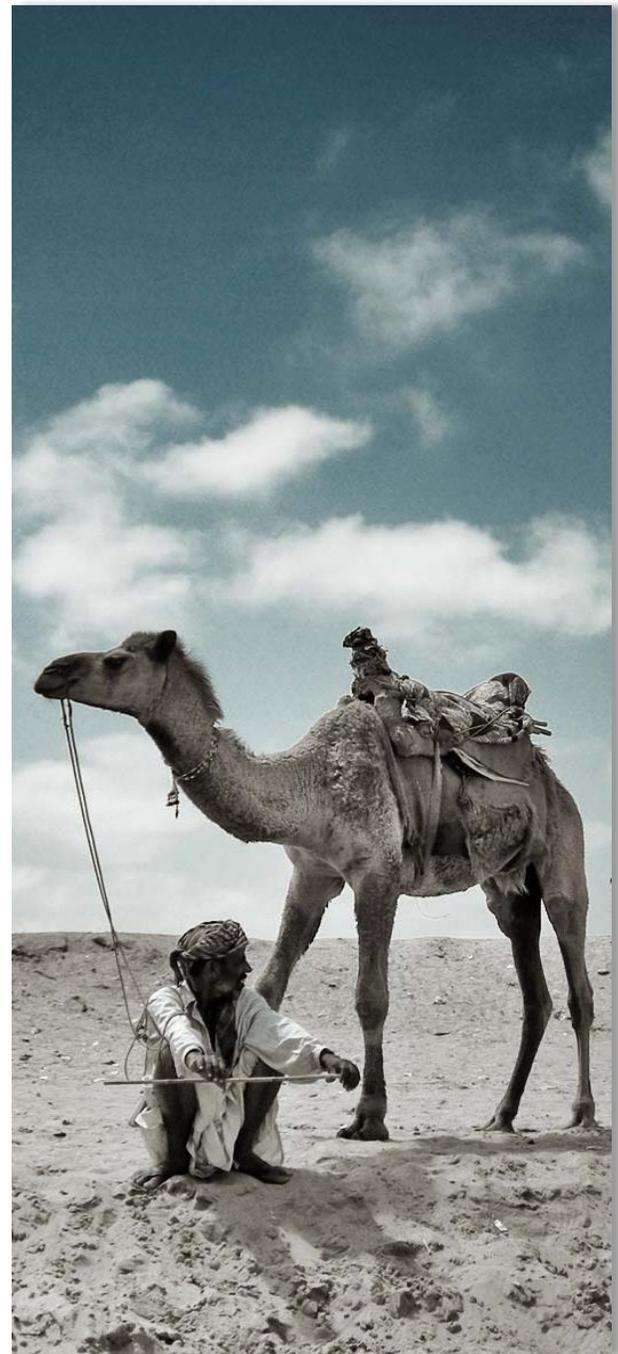
<sup>28</sup> Waghmar, art. cit., 2015, p. 32, n. 37. *Secret Pakistan*, a two-part documentary, aired on BBC2 in October-November 2011, some five months after Usama bin Ladin was killed in Abbotabad, indisputably highlighted Pakistani perfidy in the war on terror. Details are archived at <http://tinyurl.com/jbmc58x> and [http://www.bbc.co.uk/pressoffice/pressreleases/stories/2011/10\\_october/26/pakistan.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/pressoffice/pressreleases/stories/2011/10_october/26/pakistan.shtml). Both episodes may be viewed online: <https://vimeo.com/67973006> and <https://vimeo.com/67972817>.

<sup>29</sup> See M.A. Shah, 'British Pakistanis protest against BBC's 'Secret Pakistan'', *Geo News*, 19 December 2011. Online: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YIWM\\_GlxSWE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YIWM_GlxSWE); A. Lieven, 'Why Britons get caught in the Pakistan web?' *The Times*, 17 December 2008, p. 32. Hardly debatable whether disloyalty or

ambivalence. It is not a warm and fuzzy feeling, during times of duress, to be domiciled among those for whom priorities, predicated on primordial belonging, lead them to resolve dilemmas of identity and fidelity by instinctively hitching their wagons to their own 'own people' (*apne log*) against the rest. If the mere airing of a television programme stirred indignation, one may be condoned for provocatively querying as to which eyesores must we turn a Nelson's eye to allay these fellow subjects' notions of traditional 'honour', and win their fealty in a national crisis. Was it so demeaning to derive quiet pride in being British who, globally, are regarded second to none for the production of solidly researched, non-partisan, informative documentaries? Paul Collier, 'The time has come to slow down immigration,' *The Guardian*, 5 November 2014, p. 33, cogently concluded: 'As to diversity, it involves a trade-off: as it increases, variety is enhanced but cohesion is reduced. ... There is a universal psychological tendency for inconvenient truths to be denigrated, and this is certainly inconvenient for the left.'

all-important Quetta Shura is in Balochistan, so the Pakistani military can't have any American troops that close to a key military asset. So they instead "clear" Balochistan of "Islamic terrorists" (democratic Baloch dissidents, not Taliban) and remove it from American calculations.<sup>30</sup> Nor can they throw tantrums when Zohra Yusuf, chair of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP), categorically rubbished the province's home minister, Sarfraz Bugti, who attributed the murdering of minorities to the 'unspecified and nefarious goals' of R&AW and NDS (Indian and Afghan intelligence services respectively), and squarely stated, 'that there are sufficient grounds to believe that the unrest is taking place under the patronage of state elements [and] that the acts are being carried out in order to give a religious colouring to separatist movements in the restive province for the benefit of the international community.'<sup>31</sup>

The last word must be left to Sartaj Aziz who was in Washington DC for the US-Pakistan Strategic Dialogue but who, at the Council of Foreign Relations, dropped the best kept



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<sup>30</sup> Waghmar, art. cit., 2014, p. 21, n. 20.  
<sup>31</sup> Waghmar, art. cit., 2015, p. 30, n. 22. Kiyya Baloch, 'Who is responsible for persecuting Pakistan's minorities?' *The Diplomat* (12 November, 2014). Online: <http://thediplomat.com/2014/11/who-is-responsible->

[for-persecuting-pakistans-minorities/](#); M.A. Notezai, 'The tragedy of Balochistan's minorities', *Daily Times*, 7 January 2015, p. A7. Also see the interview of Zohra Yusuf in A. Hussain, 'No other province faces a situation

open secret for a decade, namely, that the Afghan Taleban's 'leadership is in Pakistan, and they get some medical facilities, their families are here.'<sup>32</sup> Matt Waldman's 2010 LSE report anticipated Aziz's confession for his extensive interviews were with 'ten Taliban commanders', and all of whom remarked, with frontier forthrightness, about the casual presence of ISI 'participants or observers' on the 'Quetta Shura Council' like the 'sun in the sky'.<sup>33</sup>



**Rock formation 'Old Princess of Hope', near Gwadar**

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where people are forced to flee for their lives', *Herald*, 47, 11 (November, 2014): 60-61.

<sup>32</sup> A. Iqbal, 'Pakistan underlines its influence on Afghan Taliban', *Dawn*, 4 March 2016, pp. 1, 5; 'Sartaj Aziz's frankness', *Dawn*, 5 March 2016, p. 8.

<sup>33</sup> M. Waldman, *The Sun in the Sky: the relationship between Pakistan's ISI and Afghan insurgents*, Crisis State Discussion Papers 18, LSE DESTIN Development

Studies Institute, London, June 2010. Online: <http://www.aljazeera.com/mritems/Documents/2010/6/13/20106138531279734lse-isi-taliban.pdf>; also B. Waghmar, 'Yet another Stan? Talibanisation and Islamic Radicalism in Balochistan and Southwest Asia', in *What Future for Balochistan? Global and Regional Challenges* (The Hague, 2013), p. 26. Online: <http://eprints.soas.ac.uk/16749/>.