

Conflict Prevention and the New Provincial Map of Pakistan: A Case Study of Hazara Province

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Abstract

This article will examine in detail how conflicts can be prevented in the new provincial set-up of Pakistan. There exists a potential threat of the outbreak of conflict between different ethnic and lingual groups if new provinces are created without taking into account the interests of major stakeholders and the concerns of minority-majority ethnic and lingual groups. The case study of Hazara by focusing on the movement for a separate province will look into the dynamics of conflict formation and prevention in that region of Pakistan.

Key words: Conflict transformation, preventive action, multi-stakeholder approach, sub-nationalism, hazara province

Introduction

In December 1971 Pakistan became the first post-colonial state to experience its breakup on ethnic grounds (Jehan, 1994). The new map of Pakistan which emerged after its disintegration appeared homogenous and compact unlike the geographically in contiguous eastern and western wings of the country ¹ Yet, the post-1971 Pakistan failed to accommodate ethnic identities who wanted a separate provincial status thus maintaining status quo in the provincial map of the country.

Therefore, as rightly argued by a Pakistani scholar, "One major unresolved area of conflict in Pakistan is the problem of ethnic and regional sub-nationalism in the smaller provinces. Although, Pakistan is now a more cohesive state than it was before the separation of East Pakistan, critical problems still remain unresolved and tend to complicate the process of nation-building." (Amin, 1991).

Constitutionally, Pakistan has four provinces along with Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). India has 28 states and seven union territories, whereas Afghanistan has 34 provinces. Pakistan is a multi-ethnic, multi-lingual multi-cultural and multi-religious state but despite its

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Moonis Ahmar

heterogeneous nature, the country maintained its provincial boundaries without accommodating new provincial units. However, the federal structure of Pakistan composed of four provinces, reflected asymmetry in terms of population and territory. Balochistan is the largest province of Pakistan with 44% of its area but with only 5% of population whereas, Punjab, which is second to Balochistan in terms of territory, is the most populous province of the country with around 55% of population. North-Western Frontier Province (NWFP) having a majority of Pashtuns was renamed as Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) in the 18th constitutional amendment passed by the parliament of Pakistan in April 2010. The province of Sindh is divided into urban and rural areas. Native Sindhis have a majority in rural areas whereas, Mohajirs (migrants from India at the time of the creation of Pakistan) also called as Urdu speaking community, constitute a majority in urban areas.

The dynamics of conflicts in the provincial landscape of Pakistan is primarily ethnic and lingual. No province of Pakistan can claim to be free of ethnic and lingual cleavages and conflicts. Admittedly, the provinces of Pakistan are named ethnically ³ yet within a provincial set up, there are various sub-ethnic identities. For instance, in Balochistan, which reflects the land of Balochs, a sizeable population is non-Baloch composed of Pashtuns and Brauhis. Likewise, in KPK, there is a significant non-Pashtun community called as Hindko and in Punjab, the Seraiki speaking population in the southern parts of the province since long is demanding a separate provincial status. And in Sindh, the non-Sindhi population is substantial primarily composed of Mohajirs (Urdu speaking), Punjabis, Pashtuns and Balochs.

Paradoxically, provinces of Pakistan reflect major ethnic and lingual identities and fault lines of the country, but constitutionally, Islam is the official religion and a binding force. ⁴ The ideological parameters of Pakistan militate against ethnic and lingual assertions, a fact, which was used by religious parties to reject the projection of ethnic and lingual identities.

Since the proclamation of 18th amendment and the renaming of NWFP and KPK, a new impetus has been given by nationalist groups and parties to re-make the provincial map of Pakistan by creating new provinces on ethnic and lingual grounds. Partially responding to the demands to create new provinces, the then coalition government led by the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) established a Parliamentary Commission on the creation of new provinces but only limited to the Punjab. Similar demands were made in KPK, Balochistan and Sindh to establish commissions to redraw the map of the three provinces.

This paper will examine in detail how conflicts can be prevented in the new provincial map of Pakistan. There exists a potential threat of the outbreak of

Conflict Prevention and the New Provincial Map of Pakistan

conflict between different ethnic and lingual groups if new provinces are created without taking into account the interests of major stakeholders and the concerns of minority-majority ethnic and lingual groups.

Following questions will be responded in this paper.

1. What is the basis and justification of redrawing the provincial map of Pakistan?
2. What is the scope and viability of creating new provinces?
3. Are the demands of centrifugal forces for creating new provinces on lingual and ethnic identities gaining ground?
4. Should the new provincial map of Pakistan be created on administrative or ethnic/lingual identities?
5. What is the issue of Hazara province and how it is perceived as a source of conflict formation and prevention in Pakistan?
6. How conflict prevention strategies can avert the outbreak of violence and armed conflicts if new provinces are created?

Furthermore, this paper will also examine the role of state actors, centripetal and centrifugal forces, religious and political parties who have divergent positions on providing a legitimate status to ethnic and lingual identities.

Conceptual Framework

Conflict prevention (CP) also called as preventive action aims to avert the outbreak of violence and armed conflicts by pursuing a multi-stakeholder approach (MSH). In the multi-stakeholder approach, all important players/stakeholders who are involved in a conflict situation are on board to prevent a potential conflict from its escalation. Likewise, vulnerable groups particularly women, youths and minorities are also involved to mitigate a violent situation and bring it into control.

CP is the first step to understand the situation which can cause the outbreak of conflict and then work out its plausible prevention. While conflict resolution aims to resolve a conflict; conflict management to regulate or manage a conflict and conflict transformation to seek a positive change in the dynamics of conflict, prevention of conflict can attempt to stop the conflict from taking a violent shape.

According to David Carment and Albrecht Schnabel in their book, *Conflict Prevention: Path to Peace or Grand Illusion*, conflict prevention can be defined as an “evolving concept and innovative set of policy recommendations comprising fundamental attitudinal change among its end users. It is a

medium and long-term proactive operational or structural strategy undertaken by a variety of actors intended to identify and create enabling conditions for a stable and more predictable international security environment.” (Carment & Schnable, 2003). Further elaborating their contention on conflict prevention they argue that,

In response to the recent record of traditional peacekeeping in conflict settlement and resolution, academicians and policy makers have begun to re-examine conflict prevention as an ideal instrument for the creation of peace in the war-torn world. The message of those involved in the study and practice of conflict prevention is as clear as it is obvious. Compared to conflict management, it seems less costly in political, economic and human terms to develop institutional mechanisms that prevent tension from escalating into violent conflict to employ early warning mechanisms that allow the international community to monitor relations between and within states, and to facilitate capacity building within conflict prone societies. (Carment & Schnable, 2003).

However, “a key concern in ensuring conflict prevention is how to ensure that the practitioner is equipped with the best available analytical skills to ensure valid and reliable evaluations of political problems. To be sure, the increasing role of academics, private organizations and non-governmental organizations in providing risk assessments, analyses and early warning information points to a fundamental change in the way in which potential threats to security are assessed and acted upon.” (Carment & Schnable, 2003). Peter Wallensteen and Frida Moller argue that, “the prevention of violent conflict became important early after the end of the cold war. Cases such as the genocide in Rwanda, ethnic wars in Bosnia-Herzegovina and state failure in Somalia pointed to the necessity of finding means to avert conflicts from escalating into wars, human disaster and regional instability.” (Wallensteen & Moller). Wallensteen further argues that, “there are two ways of understanding conflict prevention. One concerns the direct preventive actions: a crisis is judged to be in a dangerous phase of military escalation, intensification or diffusion. A second concern is the structural prevention, when the idea is to create such conditions where conflicts and disputes hardly arise or do not threaten to escalate into militarized action.” (Wallensteen & Moller). Another writer on conflict prevention, Emma J. Stewart is of the opinion that, “conflict prevention is an approach to violent conflict that has been widely adopted by International Organizations and governments in the post-cold war era to address the challenges of inter and intra-state conflicts. Despite the common usage of conflict prevention by governments and International Organizations in the post-cold war period, there is no consensus on the term’s exact meaning and it therefore requires some explanation. Generally, conflict prevention required

Conflict Prevention and the New Provincial Map of Pakistan

the identification of the causes of conflict, and entails attempts to address those causes before the outbreak of violence. As a concept, conflict prevention can be understood at various levels of analysis, whether at the personal, group or community level or at the national or international level and applied before during and after a violent conflict erupts.” (Wallensteen & Moller).

Conflict prevention is also discussed in terms of preventive diplomacy. According to Martin Griffiths and Terry O’ Callaghan, “the main focus of preventive diplomacy is to identify and respond to brewing conflicts in order to prevent the outbreak of violence. Preventive diplomacy offers the possibility of avoiding much of the pain and suffering associated with violent conflict and the hurting stalemate that so often follows violence. Preventive diplomacy requires attention to early warning to detect situations that might lead to violent conflicts.” (Griffiths & Callaghan, 2004). In a nutshell, conflict prevention is a hard task to mobilize skills and capabilities of different stakeholders to avert a situation which can cause the outbreak of violence and armed conflict. Ideally, people with technical expertise, institutional support and vision can play a vital role in sensing a conflict and preventing its escalation.

While the concepts, ideas, approaches and theories in the field of peace and conflict studies primarily emanated in the West, it is in the developing world where there exists enormous scope to prevent issues which have a potential to transform in a violent form. Unlike the West, which has not fought a war with each other since the end of the Second World War, millions of people have been killed in the non-Western world in inter and intra-state conflicts. Therefore, it is in the interest of the non-Western world to seriously work out conceptual and theoretical framework based on indigenous efforts to look into the causes which result into the outbreak of conflict and a methodology to prevent its escalation.

Pakistan, as a developing country is also grappling since its inception as an independent state in August 1947 with numerous violent conflicts. Some of the concepts in the realm of conflict prevention which are relevant for the developing countries including Pakistan are as follows:-

1. Preventive diplomacy.
2. Mediation.
3. Conciliation.
4. Arbitration.
5. Early warning and early response.
6. Information technology.

7. Human development.
8. Peace-keeping

These concepts, which are inter linked with each other and which can help the process of conflict prevention cannot render positive results unless the stakeholders in a conflict situation possess substantial political will and determination and the resources. Sometimes, early warning is given about the outbreak of a potential conflict, but there is the absence of early response. If preventive diplomacy, mediation, conciliation and arbitration are practiced but peace-keeping measures are not taken or there is no effort to pursue human development which can provide employment and economic opportunities, the process of conflict prevention cannot take off. Similarly, lack of information technology to get latest information and data about a situation ripe for the outbreak of violent conflict can also derail the process of conflict prevention. In a nutshell, one can argue that conflict prevention as a wholesome approach can render positive results if all the eight concepts are practiced. One cannot claim that the concepts mentioned above provide a surety for preventing conflicts, but it all depends on the stakeholders that to what extent they are interested to save the lives of people and avert a colossal destruction in case a conflict is allowed to take a violent shape.

I. New Provinces: Conflict Formation or Prevention?

Provincial Map of Pakistan



Source:

<http://www.google.com/imgres?imgurl=http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons> accessed on July 14, 2013.

Conflict Prevention and the New Provincial Map of Pakistan

According to 1973 constitution, Pakistan is a federal state composed of four Provinces and federally administrated tribal areas. Constitutionally, Gilgit and Baltistan (GB) and Azad Kashmir (AK) are not part of Pakistan, but these two areas come under the administrative control of Islamabad. Considered as disputed territories under Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), GB and AK have no representation in the legislative organs of Pakistan. If the status of GB and AK remains in limbo for long, one can expect further complications if there is a move to merge these two regions in the federal structure of Pakistan and grant them separate provincial status. Both GB and AK can become a source of conflict if Pakistan fails to address issues which cause popular discontent and instability in the two regions controlled by Islamabad.

The four provinces of Pakistan can no doubt be termed as a hub of conflicts at different levels because of four main reasons. First, resource based conflicts, particularly those dealing with water, energy, natural and mineral resources. Second, sectarian and ethnic conflicts Third, conflict involving minorities and finally, the assertion of sub-provincial identities demanding a separate provincial status. Furthermore, conflict over political and economic interests and the complicated issues of governance also compound the predicament faced by the major stakeholders in the provinces of Pakistan. The process of conflict formation and transformation in Pakistan has much to do with the inter and intra-provincial discords and acrimony. Council of Common Interest (CCI) and National Finance Commission (NFC) are the two institutional arrangements which are made to deal with economic and resource based conflicts between or among the provinces of Pakistan. Yet, political mistrust and polarization at the provincial level is so deep rooted that neither the NFC nor CCI can play a meaningful role in resolving issues which cause friction among provinces.

Can change in the provincial map of Pakistan lead to a positive transformation of conflicts or such an arrangement will further aggravate the nature of conflicts?

The demand for the creation of new provinces in Pakistan is not new particularly given the fact that it was the provinces which created Pakistan as a new state and not *vice-versa*.⁵ Although, established in the name of religion as specified in the two nation theory, Pakistan became the first post-colonial state to disintegrate on ethnic grounds. West Pakistan which became a successor state of Pakistan in post-December 1971 period appeared more compact and homogenous than united Pakistan whose eastern and western wings were separated by 1,000 miles with India (perceived as a hostile country) in the middle and were lingually and culturally poles apart. The only

Moonis Ahmar

common bond between East and West Pakistan was religion. Unfortunately, the post-1971 Pakistan failed to unleash the process of national integration which deepened lingual, cultural and ethnic contradictions among the four federating units of the country. In fact, the first language riots in post-1971 Pakistan took place in Sindh in July 1972 when the Urdu speaking population rejected a bill which was presented and approved in the PPP dominated Sindh Assembly to declare Sindhi as the official language of Sindh province. As a result of such riots, which took place in both urban and rural parts of Sindh, several people were killed, injured and large-scale displacement of people took place as Sindhi speaking people migrated to rural areas and Urdu speaking people to the Urban areas of Sindh, particularly Karachi. ⁶ Demographic and power asymmetry in the provincial landscape of Pakistan further galvanized a sense of insecurity among smaller provinces against the perceived domination of Punjab. The demand for ensuring symmetry in the provincial set-up of Pakistan by dividing Punjab got an impetus in the recent past, namely after the proclamation of 18th amendment in which the name of NWFP was changed to KPK.

Two different trends in Pakistan's political history shaped discourse on creating new provinces. First, those favoring a centralized power structure with a unitary form of government got an impetus in mid-1950s when one-unit was established in West Pakistan and provinces were abolished in order to achieve parity with the then East Pakistan which had a demographic edge over its western counterpart. Although, provinces were restored in West Pakistan according to the Legal Framework Order (LFO) proclaimed by the then Martial Law regime of General Yahya Khan in 1970, the centripetal forces continued their efforts to have a strong central authority. Second, the centrifugal forces favoring a decentralized state structure with strong provinces got an impetus after the dismemberment of Pakistan in December 1971. The 1973 constitution tried to erect a balance between Center and Provinces but the imposition of martial law in July 1977 strengthened centripetal forces as the military-bureaucratic establishment pursued a policy which tried to marginalize the role and powers of provinces. During Zia's era, Islam was promoted as a major bond integrating different provinces of Pakistan. "Therefore, in the field of center-province relations meant that Islam, which Zia consistently equated with Pakistan, was the primary focus of one's effective loyalty; and all the other affective values, especially ethnic identification, became secondary" (Rakists, Summer 1988). Nationalist parties and groups in smaller provinces of Balochistan, NWFP and Sindh began to demand for a "New Social Contract" between provinces and the center based on confederal arrangement. Status quo in the provincial boundaries of Pakistan, despite the demands of centrifugal forces to create more provinces has much to do with the fear in the established circles of the country that

Conflict Prevention and the New Provincial Map of Pakistan

changing the provincial map of Pakistan will open a ‘Pandora’s box’ and unleash violent conflicts. How far such preconceived notions are true needs to be examined in some detail

The 1973 constitution of Pakistan provides a road map for creating new provinces in the country. For instance, Clause 4 of Article 239 of the Constitution specifies the procedure to have more provinces. The particular clause says that, “a bill to amend the constitution would have the effect of altering the limits of a province shall not be presented to the president for assent unless it has been passed by the provincial assembly concerned by the votes of not less than two-third of the total membership. This means that after its passage in the two Houses of the Parliament, such a bill would have to be approved by the provincial assembly concerned with 2/3 majority before its presentation to the president.” (Butt, 2012). Furthermore, clause (4) of Article 239 needs to be read with Article 1 of the Constitution to achieve the purpose of creating new provinces out of the existing provinces. Paradoxically, before the holding of general elections in May 2013 both the houses of parliament passed the bill to divide Punjab and create the province of “Jonobi Punjab-Bahawalpur’ but the bill was not presented before the Punjab Assembly dominated by the PML (N). Therefore, in view of the opposition of PML (N) to the proposed bill, it couldn’t be presented before the president for his assent.

The year 2012 saw some major developments in terms of creating new provinces in Pakistan. These developments reflected growing demands particularly in Punjab and KPK for creating Seraika, Bahawalpur and Hazara provinces. Paradoxically, Sindh and Balochistan, which are also lingually and ethnically divided are vulnerable to serious instability. On January 3, 2012, the Muttahida Quami Movement (MQM) submitted to the National Assembly Secretariat a constitutional amendment bill seeking creation of new provinces in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. While the bill specifically mentions Hazara province to comprise six districts of KPK, it suggests that people of 21 districts in south Punjab should decide through a referendum if they want a large Seraiki province or more than one province. The districts where the MQM has suggested referendum are Bahawalpur, Bahwalnagar, Rahim Yar Khan, Multan, Khanewal, Lodhran, Vehari, Toba Tek Singh, Jhang, Chiniot, Khushab, Mianwali, Sarghoda, Layyah, Muzaffaragah, Sahiwal, Pak Pattan and Okara. The MQM leaders termed the creation of new provinces essential and warned that a Balochistan like situation could be created if new provinces were not carved out in the KPK and Punjab. ⁷ MQM, which has its power base in Sindh, particularly in its urban parts, has not raised the issue of a new province in Sindh particularly composed of Karachi and Hyderabad but it is perceived by some circles that its active support for creating new provinces in

Punjab and KPK has much to do with its ultimate goal to divide Sindh on ethnic grounds. Although, MQM denies such assumptions, but critics argue that the Karachi based MQM has an age-old ambition to seek a provincial status in Sindh for those who migrated from India after the creation of Pakistan in August 1947.

In August 2012, the then PPP led coalition government established a parliamentary commission to create new provinces in Punjab under the chairmanship of Mr. Farhatullah Babar, Senator and official spokesperson of President Asif Ali Zardari. Criticizing the parliamentary commission, PML (N) leader Senator Pervez Rashid said that “new provinces should be created wherever they were required all over Pakistan, but this issue must be resolved permanently” (Butt, 2012). He described the present commission as a political stunt and said it had been put up to take political mileage and exploit voters by sending a misleading message to them. The PML (N) leader also said that a universally accepted commission should evolve a consensus whether the distance from the provincial capital should be the basis for making that area an independent province or the population of a certain region should be made a ground for a new federating unit (Butt, 2012). Disregarding the criticism and reservations of PML (N) on the formation of parliamentary commission to divide Punjab, on January 26, 2013 the commission approved the draft of a constitutional amendment bill seeking creation of a new province to be called “Bahawalpur-Janoobi Punjab” comprising three southern divisions and two eastern districts of Punjab. According to the details, the proposed province will comprise nearly one-third of the present Punjab in three respects, the number of districts and the number of seats in National Assembly as well as present provincial legislature⁸ Taj Muhammad Langah, Chairman of the Pakistan Seraiki Party (PSP) while speaking before the in-camera session held in the parliamentary commission convened to administer the formation of new provinces said that, “we want a new province comprising 21 districts on the basis of shared language, culture and history. The proposed name of Janoobi Punjab is out of question. We will not accept any name other than Seraiki province.” (The Express Tribune, 2012).

On February 8, 2013 the 24th constitutional amendment bill for creation of another province in Punjab was tabled in the Senate by the then Federal Law Minister. The amended version of the bill proposed an amendment in Article 198 (3) of the Constitution which in its present form reads as: “the Lahore High Court shall have a bench each in the Bahawalpur, Multan and Rawalpindi.” The bill proposed to strike off Bahawalpur and Multan both to be part of the proposed Bahawalpur-Janoobi Province of the commencement of the Constitution 24th Amendment Act (Bill for New Province Tabled in Senate, 2013). Furthermore, it needs to be noted that on May 3, 2012, the National

Conflict Prevention and the New Provincial Map of Pakistan

Assembly of Pakistan passed a resolution which recommended the creation of the province of Janoobi Punjab from the existing province of Punjab. Unfortunately, the issue of new provinces became a victim of conflicting political interests of the main opposition party PML (N) and the PPP led coalition government. In the 2013 election campaign, the issue of new provinces was raised by political parties but it failed to attract the attention of voters, particularly in Punjab, where PPP, an ardent supporter to divide Punjab, faced a crushing defeat at the hands of PML (N).

The Issue of Hazara Province

Map of Hazara Division



Source:

<http://www.google.com/imgres?imgurl=http://img4.allvoices.com/thumbs/image/609/480/54104860-hazara-division.jpg&imgrefurl=http://www.allvoices.com/contributed-news/5724910>
accessed on July 14, 2013.

Hazara division is the largest divisional unit in the province of KPK. Stretching from Kohistan to Kaghan, Hazara division is inhabited primarily by Hindko and Pashtu speaking people. Since quite long the movement to create Hazara

Moonis Ahmar

province is a source of conflict in that region. While those supporting a separate Hazara province argue that their demand is legitimate as they fulfill major requirements which are needed to have a separate provincial status, opponents, primarily the Pashtun dominated Awami National Party (ANP) claiming to represent Pashtuns, point out that the proposed province of Hazara will not be viable and will hurt the interests of the majority community in the province.

The movement for a separate Hazara province got an impetus when on April 12, 2010 seven people were killed by police firing on a demonstration in Abbotabad which was demanding a separate provincial status for Hazara division. Since then, lawyers, political parties and other segments of civil society in Hazara have been holding protest meetings and rallies against what they term 'repressive' policies of KPK government of Peshawar in denying the people of Hazara their due rights and status.⁹ To what extent the movement for Hazara province is legitimate and why it has not been able to muster support in the general elections held in May 2013 needs to be analyzed in some detail.

One major issue which has not strengthened Hazara province movement is the division within the Hindko speaking population. There are several groups and parties struggling for a cause which requires unity and proper coordination. For instance, following prominent groups are pursuing their demand for a Hazara province.

1. Hazara Tehrik with Baba Haider Zaman as its chief coordinator.
2. Hazara Province Tehrik with Sardar M. Yousuf as Chairman.
3. Tehreek-i-Huquq-e-Haszara led by Ali Asghar Khan.
4. Hazara Qaumi Mahaz with Khursheed Ali Hazarvi as its President. It is claimed by his party that he was the first to raise the issue of the creation of a separate Hazara province.

However, the first major activity related to Hazara province surfaced in early 1980 when Qazi Azhar along with a group of friends founded Hazara Student Federation in Karachi. When the 18th amendment bill renamed NWFP as KPK in 2010 and 20th amendment bill submitted in the National Assembly by MQM in January 2012 to create Seraiki and Hazara provinces in the National Assembly was presented, the Hazara movement got an impetus. But surprisingly, all the four groups representing the cause for Hazara province failed to get an electoral mandate in May 11, 2013 general elections because they were unable to contest polls under a single platform.

Conflict Prevention and the New Provincial Map of Pakistan

Different stakeholders representing the Hindko speaking population in Hazara division sometimes followed an aggressive and sometimes conciliatory approach in their demand to create a separate province for Hazara. For instance, speaking at a press conference on August 5, 2011, Shahjahan Khan, the ex-president for Hazara Mansehra District Bar Association said that, “if the prime minister can announce the creation of Seraiki province then he can also make a declaration for Hazara province” (Lawyers Plan for Agitation for Hazara Province, 2011). However, the Chief Minister of KPK while talking to the delegations of Hazara lawyers, representatives of the All Traders Federation and members of the Abbotabad Press Club and Union of Journalists in Abbotabad said that the “demand for the establishment of Hazara province was the right of the people of Hazara Division and there was no reason left with his government to oppose its creation.”¹⁰ Furthermore, in a statement issued in Peshawar on April 22, ANP provincial president Afrasiab Khattak said that his party was ready to hold constitutional talks with the Chief of Action Committee of Hazara Tehrik Baba Haider Zaman (ANP Offer Talks to Hazara Tehrik, 2012). Likewise, addressing a public meeting in Mansehra on November 15, 2012, Chief of Tehrik-i-Suba Hazara, Baba Haider Zaman said that, “his party was ready to hold negotiations with Awami National Party over the call for the creation of Hazara province in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa if its government registered a case against the people who were responsible for the April 2010 killing of seven people in Abbotabad police firing” (Hazara Province: Baba Offers Conditional Talks to ANP, 2010). The problem is, the ANP never initiated any move to lend support for a separate Hazara province because it considered such a move detrimental to the interests of Pashtuns and tantamount to splitting KPK on ethnic grounds. After the electoral rout of ANP in May 11, 2013 elections and formation of a coalition government led by Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf (PTI) in KPK, one needs to see how PTI will respond to the demand for a separate Hazara province. The opposition PML (N) in KPK will definitely lend its support for a Hazara province but in order to get two-third support of members in KPK assembly, it will have to seek the support of PTI, Jamaat-i-Islami (JI) and Jamiat-e-Ulemai Islam (JUI).

Justifying his stance for a separate Hazara province, Qazi Azhar argued that, “the massive protests and the energetic participation of the masses for the establishment of Hazara province witnessed in 2010 were only because all the groups and parties were united for the cause” (Hazara Movement, Divided we Fall, 2012), (Rizvi, 2012). Addressing a big “Hazara Sooba Banao” protest rally outside the parliament house in Islamabad the movement Chairperson, Sardar Mohammad Yousuf said the Hazara population would stop paying utility bills and its people would march towards Islamabad. He said the Hazara province movement has been continuing for the last two years and seven precious lives have been sacrificed for the movement. As many as ten million

Moonis Ahmar

people were united on one point agenda of seeking a separate province.¹¹ Furthermore, speaking before public gathering in Manshera and Ghari Habibullah, Sardar Haider Zaman, Chief of Tehrik-e-Sooba Hazara urged the Chief Minister of KPK to support the resolution on Hazara province in KPK Assembly. When the Chief Minister says he supports the constitutional ways for the creation of Hazara province, he should back the resolution on Hazara province in KP assembly. He said the Prime Minister should also pay attention to Hazara province issue and not merely talk about the Seraiki province. (CM asked to back resolution on Hazara Province, 2011). Speaking in favor of Hazara province, JUI (F) legislature, Liaq Ahmed Khan said that, “the people of Hazara only demand separate province and they will not demand electricity, houses, water and other resources. We have enough resources in our area. The Prime Minister should also announce his support for Hazara province.” (Rehman, 2012).

Both PML (N) and PML (Q) rendered their fullest support for the creation of Hazara province but for different reasons. PML (Q) blamed PML (N) of striking a deal with ANP for changing the name of NWFP as KPP for supporting a third term election of former Prime Minister. Speaking at a public gathering in Manshera, the then Deputy Prime Minister and a senior leader of PML (Q) Chaudhry Pervez Elahi said that, “the people of Hazara had extended support to Pakistan Muslim League (N) and its Chief Nawaz Sharif in the past, but he (Nawaz) didn’t respect their views and signed the seventeenth Amendment, which provided legal cover to change the name of the province to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. In fact, Mr. Sharif did all this to clear his way for becoming prime minister for the third time. We would give Hazara the status of a province as we know that your predecessors have rendered great sacrifices for Pakistan.” (Deputy PM Promises Status to Hazara, 2012). Traditionally, PML(N) has secured majority of national and provincial assembly seats from Hazara division and hence it cannot disregard local sentiments and aspirations for a separate province of Hazara.

On May 20, 2012, PML (N) legislatures from Hazara Division submitted a resolution in the KPK assembly secretariat asking the government to amend the constitution to upgrade Hazara division into a province. The resolution stated that Hazara division was rich in natural resources but the past injustices had disappointed its dwellers and forced them to launch a movement for a separate province. Hazara also fulfilled all the conditions required for getting status of a separate province, the resolution added. (PML-N MPs Table Resolution for Hazara Province, 2012). The viability of Hazara division in terms of water resources, agricultural and farming products exists but if it is elevated as a separate province, it will considerably reduce the provincial size of KPK. Hazara’s predicament, which as a stumbling block for a provincial

Conflict Prevention and the New Provincial Map of Pakistan

status, is the squabbling and rift within groups and parties demanding to establish the province of Hazara province.

Conclusion

After three years of political agitation and wrangling, the supporters of Hazara province are at the crossroads because of two main reasons. First, the tempo and momentum which was created to establish a separate Hazara province has diminished because of fragmentation of Hazara movement. As pointed out earlier, the absence of unity and a cohesive approach among the upholders of Hazara movement led to their marginalization in May 2013 general elections. Second, the PML (N) government sooner or later will have to proceed as far as the creation of new provinces in Pakistan is concerned. Delay in giving practical shape to the division of Punjab and KPK will give a new impetus to groups and parties demanding a new provincial map of Pakistan.

It is time, the parliament of Pakistan establishes a new commission to give a thought about creating new provinces in the country. The earlier parliamentary commission was Punjab specific which lacked legitimacy and consensus among major stakeholders. More so, that commission failed to complete its job which justifies the creation of a new parliamentary commission to redraw provincial boundaries of Pakistan on administrative grounds. This would mean two things. First, upgrading existing divisions in Pakistan as provinces and second, to make sure that such a restructuring is acceptable to people; is not too costly and is able to properly deal with issues faced by the local population. Twenty-seven provinces will be created if divisions in Pakistan are upgraded as provinces. Right now, there are 9 divisions in Punjab, 7 in KPK, 6 in Balochistan and 5 in Sindh.

While in opposition, PML (N) is believed to have supported the “idea of splitting Punjab into five provinces, Sindh and KPK into three and Balochistan into two federating units.” (New Federating Units - PML wants 13 Provinces , 2011). Thirteen provinces, which PML (N) is believed to have suggested were: Lahore, Multan, Rawalpindi, Sargodha and Bahawalpur in Punjab, Karachi, Hyderabad and Khairpur in Sindh, Quetta and Kalat in Balochistan, Peshawar, Dera Ismail Khan and Malakand in KPK. (New Federating Units - PML wants 13 Provinces , 2011). Devoid of ethnic or lingual characteristics, the elevation of divisions as provinces will go a long way in curbing negative nationalistic tendencies.

Notes:

1. According to an American Professor of Geography, “national cohesion has also been retarded by a gradually widening difference between two wings in the rate of economic development. Not only is the state difficult to administer in a physical sense, because of the intervening space occupied by India whose relations with Pakistan have been tense and hostile but many centrifugal forces are at work in East and West Pakistan against the development of strong social bonds, bonds desperately need to overcome lack of physical contiguity.” See Glenn Stephenson, “Pakistan: Discontiguity and the Majority Problem,” *Geographical Review*, Vol. 58, No. 2, April 1968, p. 202, 195.
2. Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (formerly called as the North Western Frontier Province), Punjab and Sindh). Gilgit and Baltistan, formerly called as Northern Areas are administratively controlled by Pakistan but like Azad Kashmir are considered as disputed territory under Jammu and Kashmir.
3. For an analysis on the religious and ethnic dichotomy in the constitutional framework see, Moonis Ahmar, “Ethnicity and Constitutional Reforms: A Pakistani Perspective in Iftikharazzaman (ed.) *Ethnicity and Constitutional Reform in South Asia* (Colombo: Manohar, 1998), pp.108-129.
4. According to the Lahore resolution of March 23, 1940, northwestern and northeastern Muslim majority provinces of the Indian sub-continent were to be grouped as independent states. However on April 9, 1946 in a meeting of Muslim League held in Delhi, it was decided to drop the word “states” so as to establish the sovereign state of Pakistan composed of the Muslim majority provinces of Northwestern (Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan and Northwestern Frontier Province) and Northeastern parts (Bengal and Assam) of the Indian sub-continent.
5. The language bill in Sindh Assembly was passed despite the fact that Urdu was adopted as the official language by the provincial assemblies of Balochistan, Punjab and NWFP. Language riots in Sindh led to widespread ethnic polarization and displacement of both Urdu and Sindhi speaking people. See Moonis Ahmar, “The Sindhi-Mohajir Conflict,” in Monique Mekenkamp, Paul van Tongeren, and Hans van de Veen (eds.), *Searching for Peace in Central Asia and South Asia* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc. 2002), p. 456.
6. Amir Wasim, “MQM submits bill in NA for new provinces,” *Dawn* (Karachi), January 3, 2012.

Conflict Prevention and the New Provincial Map of Pakistan

7. See news item, “one-third of Punjab to make new province,” *Daily Dawn* (Karachi), January 27, 2013. The parliamentary commission had become controversial since its inception as the PML (N) objected to its composition as well as its focus on one province. The PML (N) argued that it supports the creation of Bahawalpur and Seraiki provinces and wants the creation of a national commission to take up demands for carrying out new federating units out of other provinces as well, particularly the Hazara province out of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. *Ibid.*,
8. In a National Assembly debate on new provinces held on January 3, 2012, Mr. Laiq Mohammad, MNA from Mansehra (JUI-F), while pleading the case for Hazara province revealed that when the Hazara police had refused to fire on demonstrators, police from Mardan and Charsadda was called to use force killing several demonstrators. See National Assembly of Pakistan, Assembly debates, Tuesday, January 3, 2012.
9. See “KP won’t oppose Hazara province demand: Hoti” *The News International* (Karachi) September 18, 2011.
10. See “Campaigners warn of civil disobedience,” *Daily Dawn* (Karachi), February 10, 2012. Baba Haider Zaman made it that “if people from Hazara can sift capital from Karachi to Islamabad and build Tarbala Dam then how all the people of Hazara cannot set a separate province.” *Dawn*, April 23, 2013.

End Notes

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