

Iran Is Being Tricked into Making Balochistan the New Kurdistan

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The transnational region of Balochistan risks becoming another Kurdistan-like fault line as long as Iran continues to be tricked into worsening relations with Pakistan, with the worst-case scenario being that the Golden Ring's weakest link undermines the entire geopolitical project that it has such a serious stake in securing.

“Blood Borders”

Iran's uncharacteristically bellicose rhetoric against Pakistan in the aftermath of a recent terrorist attack along their shared border in the transnational region of Balochistan risks replicating the Kurdish scenario of turning this issue into an instrument of international leverage against both of them by third-party intelligence agencies for divide-and-rule purposes. Retired US Lieutenant Colonel Ralph Peters infamously published his 2006 policy proposal about geopolitically engineering “[Blood Borders](#)” across the so-called “Greater Middle East”, crucially including [both Kurdistan and Balochistan](#) as integral “independent” components of his desired future vision, which was used as the partial basis by the author in summer 2016 to elaborate on the various [Hybrid War](#) scenarios that the US [could employ against Iran](#) as it seeks to ramp up unconventional pressure against it.

India's Indirect Involvement

Everything began to heat up in 2017 when the US began simultaneously experimenting with the weaponized worsening of both geopolitical fault lines against Iran, but the Islamic Republic seemed to have successfully weathered the storm. The [Kurdish issue](#) has comparatively calmed down since then as a result of Iran's multilateral cooperation with its partners (principally among them Turkey), while the spring 2017 terrorist provocation along the Pakistani border didn't trick Iran into blaming its neighbor like it's doing now (which the author [warned against doing](#) at the time). About the second-mentioned incident, the joint Indo-American Hybrid War on CPEC has predictably destabilized Iran's Sistan and Baluchestan province, which contributed to [last year's terrorist attack on Chabahar](#) and the most recent one that caused such a stir last week.

To be clear, India doesn't have an interest in waging a proxy war against its North-South Transport Corridor (NSTC) partner through which it hopes to one day obtain reliable transit access to the Russian, Central Asian, and Afghan marketplaces, but its irresponsibly myopic obsession with stopping CPEC at all costs blinded some of its decision makers to the obvious blowback risks associated with this Hybrid War plot. At the same time, however, some Indian strategists might have foreseen this eventuality but wagered that Iran would take the bait and blame Pakistan, which it finally ended up doing after this latest incident. That's not

to say that India had a direct hand in what happened, but just that it knowingly shaped the regional security conditions that made it possible.

Tehran Takes The Bait

Iran fell for this false flag because of historical reasons, its “perfect timing”, and the growing “deep state” divisions within the country’s military, intelligence, and diplomatic bureaucracies. Iranian-Pakistani relations were uneasy for years after the 1979 Revolution and Tehran always suspected that Islamabad harbored anti-government militants at Riyadh’s behest, which brings one to the specific timing of the provocation itself. The suicide bombing took place just days before Saudi **Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman** (MBS) travelled to Pakistan and [signed over \\$20 billion of deals](#) to [complement the commitment](#) that he made to the country last year during Prime Minister Khan’s visit to the Kingdom. From a zero-sum security-centric perspective, some in Iran might have thought that “history was repeating itself” and that both countries were conspiring against it.

It’ll be touched upon in a little bit why that theory isn’t true, but for now it’s pertinent to explain why some in Iran would even believe this in the first place. The country’s permanent military, intelligence, and diplomatic bureaucracies (“deep state”) are usually understood as being divided between “moderate”/reformist” and “conservative”/“principalist” factions, with the former usually concentrating their influence in the diplomatic wing while the latter are known to be associated with the military and intelligence services. This “deep state” division was on full display over the past week when the Iranian Ambassador to Pakistan spoke about his country’s [eagerness to join CPEC](#) despite what happened while security representatives blamed Pakistan – and [specifically](#) its ISI intelligence agency – for supposedly having a role in the recent terrorist attack.

“Cutting Off The Nose To Spite The Face”

Geopolitical analyst Adam Garrie did a [fine job](#) explaining the ridiculousness behind this “reasoning”, as well as [citing social media commentary](#) that ironically noted that Iran and “Israel” share the same stance as India’s in tacitly blaming Pakistan for last week’s [Pulwama attack](#). It’s interesting that Iran, which has itself has been a victim of many terrorist conspiracies over the decades, is paying no attention to the possibility that Pakistan is being set up to look like a so-called “state sponsor of terrorism” against both of its neighbors in order to establish the pretext for the US to [potentially sanction CPEC](#) on that basis if the [ongoing Taliban peace talks](#) somehow end up falling through. For all intents and purposes, Iran’s reaction plays right into the US’ hands.

By diplomatically teaming up with India and blaming Pakistan for the latest terrorist attack against it, Iran is increasing its strategic dependence on the US’ ally as the most reliable long-term pressure valve against the effect of American sanctions (or so it’s been [mis]led to believe). Not only that, but Iran is proverbially “cutting off its nose to spite its face” by [implying Indian-like rhetoric](#) to carry out a “surgical strike” against Pakistan because it’s recklessly reversing years of hard work that its diplomats put into improving relations with its neighbor and restoring mutual trust. Worse still, the long-term consequences of a Kurdistan-like regional fault line erupting between Iran and Pakistan over Balochistan could undermine the [Golden Ring](#) geopolitical project that Iran has such a serious stake in securing.

The Worst-Case Scenario

While [Pakistan is the pivot state](#) on which this entire construction depends, the Golden Ring would nevertheless be dealt a heavy blow if Iran isn't fully on board because its weakest link could "open up the gates" to US-approved Indian influence right into its Central Asian core [in order to tacitly "contain China"](#), which might actually be why the [US issued India a waiver for Chabahar](#) late last year in preparing for this scenario's eventual fulfillment following the exploitation of an inevitable Hybrid War "blowback" provocation like what happened last week. Iran would be mistaken, however, for thinking that its strategic security can be assured more by US-allied India than China and the other multipolar Great Powers of the Golden Ring, but it might also have something else in mind.

Iran understands its geostrategic importance, both in general and specifically in terms of how it could be used by the US through India to "contain China", so some of its "deep state" factions might be betting that they can reach a quid-pro-quo with America whereby Washington relieves some of the Hybrid War pressure upon it in exchange for Tehran facilitating New Delhi's access to the Golden Ring's Central Asian core. Taken to its logical extent, this school of thought might even be of the conviction that aligning too closely with the Golden Ring might "trigger" the US to intensify its destabilization operations against their country, figuring that it's better to "conveniently" take advantage of the latest attack to shift the pressure onto Pakistan instead.

Making The Best Of A Bad Situation

That's just the worst-case scenario, though, and it's possible that events might not unfold entirely like that, or that Iran is even considering such a Machiavellian strategy in the first place. Having said that, it's extremely unlikely that any "best-case scenario" will materialize because Iran crossed the Rubicon by directly blaming the ISI for supporting terrorism, thus drawing the consternation of many patriotic Pakistanis who deeply appreciate this institution's irreplaceable role in defending their country from that said scourge. Bilateral ties will probably take some time to recover from the self-inflicted damage that Iran wrought to them with this outburst even if it explains behind closed doors how its "deep state" divisions were the cause of it, but that doesn't mean that all is lost for now.

If Iran has the political willpower, then it can make the best out of this bad situation that its official representatives are responsible for by showing a sincere desire to deepen security cooperation with Pakistan along their shared border. Going further, the two countries could combine their relevant military and socio-economic resources into creating a comprehensive "[Democratic Security](#)" strategy for sustainably stabilizing the transnational Balochistan region between them, possibly even securing some Chinese funds for this through an initiative that the author suggested late last year could eventually be branded as "[BRI-Aid](#)". There's no better time than now for Balochistan to transform from a "Blood Borders" barrier to regional integration into a CPEC+ bridge for facilitating the Golden Ring, but the ball is completely in Iran's court.

Concluding Thoughts

As regrettable as it is to see, Iran took the bait and fell for the Hybrid War plot of blaming Pakistan for the latest terrorist attack along their shared border in Balochistan, which has had the immediate consequence of reviving the US' "Blood Borders" scenario in the region as a Kurdistan-like wedge develops between these two Muslim Great Powers. Iran dealt

enormous damage to bilateral relations with its reckless rhetoric holding the ISI responsible for what happened, but the worst-case (though nevertheless realistic) scenario of the Islamic Republic counterintuitively serving as the US' indirect Indian-led access route to the Golden Ring's Central Asian core can still be avoided if Tehran has the political will to team up with Islamabad against terrorism and turn Balochistan into a bridge for regional integration.

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