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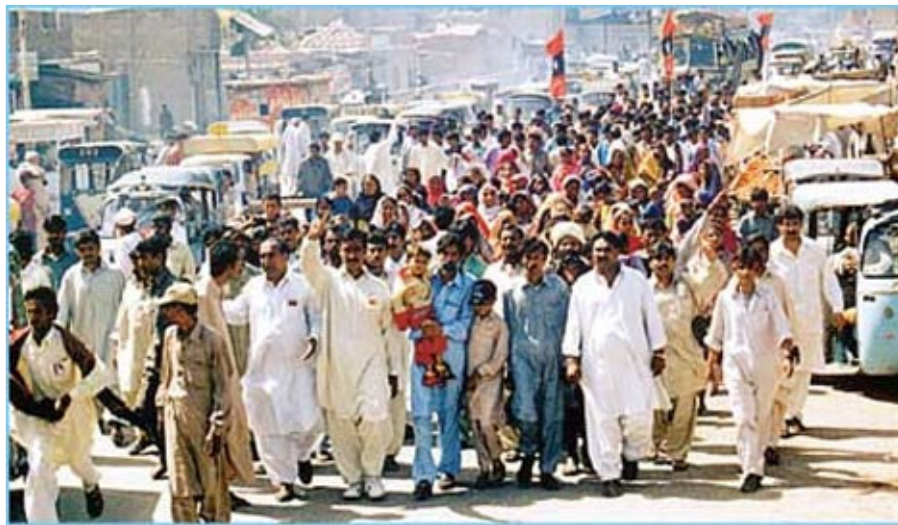
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A Sindhi protest march against Kalabagh Dam

Sindh Demands Re-writing of Constitution, Social, Political Terms to Stay in Pakistan

By M A Siddiqui



KARACHI, May 23: In a landmark Charter of Demands almost the entire intellectual and thinking spectrum of Pakistan's southern province of Sindh has demanded re-writing of the Constitution and revising the legal, constitutional and geo-strategic terms on which Sindh may stay as a part of Pakistan.

In the Charter, presented and approved at the Sindh

National Conference, held at Bhitshah, on May 21, 2005, Sindhis living in Pakistan and overseas loudly proclaimed that "Sindh reserves the right to revisit its historic decision (to join Pakistan) in light of the way it has been (mis)treated within the union."

Analysts say the Charter is one more outcome of the continued military rule in Pakistan which has endangered national unity and integrity to a point where not only Balochistan is simmering with violent nationalist dissent but now Sindh has joined it with the formation of a coalition of all political, nationalist, literary and intellectual forces, demanding an immediate end to exploitation of their rights by Punjab, the largest province.

"The Charter is a manifestation of what the Sindhis are now thinking and planning and if in due course corrections are not made, this Charter could become the basis for the current political and intellectual struggle to turn into an armed struggle against the dominance of the Pakistan Army and elite of Punjab," a Jamshoro University professor said.

The Charter just stops short of declaring that Sindh was parting ways from Pakistan but it gives repeated warnings, between the lines, that this may ultimately happen.

It says: "It is worth mentioning that there was no legal or constitutional obligation for any member states to form the union under Pakistan. It was a simple matter of choice and discretion and a volunteer act on behalf of Sindh to enter this union. Sindh reserves the right to revisit its historic decision in light of the way it has been treated within the union."

Likewise it adds: "People of Sindh demand that the Government of Pakistan should pass such legislation as to assure stable majority of Sindhis and their right to rule over their homeland, forever."

It attacks the Pakistan Army and its interests without mincing any words and says: "Armed forces have continuously subverted provincial autonomy under the pretext of National Integrity, partly because the Pakistan Army remains to be a regional army without attaining a national and inclusive character."

Jawans and officers cadre belong to only two provinces of Pakistan. In order to promote partnership in the well-being and integrity of Pakistan, a national conscription must be introduced at once. Sindh be given a provincial quota in the Army and other Federal Services and no recruitment should be made from such province as have already excess representation, the Charter says.

Demanding re-writing of the Constitution, the Charter says the Center should be given charge of only three subjects, Defense, Currency and Foreign affairs and the Senate should be empowered over the National Assembly.

"In order to retain member states into a union, Pakistan must become a truly federal state with empowering Senate with equal representation from all states and over-riding powers over National Assembly. All appointments to federal courts, Supreme Court, Chief Election Commissioner, members and chairman of Federal Public Service Commission, Ambassadors, heads of autonomous bodies, and Chiefs of Staff of the Army, Navy and Air Force, should be made after the scrutiny and approval of the Senate.

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In a radical proposal copied from the US constitution, the Charter says the provincial governors should be directly elected by the people and must have veto power over every decision of the provincial assembly unless overturned by two-third majority of the house.

Some of the noticeable observations and proposals in the Charter include:

- The Federal Government on account of the forcible usurpation of the capital of Sindh, Karachi, during the years 1948-70, must give a compensation of Rs100 billion to the province of Sindh. The said amount be utilized for educational and developmental uplift of indigenous people of Sindh who were adversely affected by the usurpation of their historic port city, and the nerve center of their entire commercial, economic and cultural life, and the greatest generator of jobs in their province.

- A compensation of Rs200 billion be paid by the Federal Government to the Sindhi people, for giving away the urban property and business to the immigrants under confiscatory settlement laws enacted by the immigrant bureaucracy, there by closing all avenues for indigenous people to urbanize and to enter into business and industry.

- Rs200 billion be paid to the indigenous people of Sindh by the Federal Government as compensation for the agricultural lands given away to non-locals in Kotri and Guddu Barrage command, that right fully belonged to the indigenous people of Sindh.

- A panel of judges of world repute, belonging to SARC, OIC and World Court be appointed, finally to settle the 1853-2005 Sindh-Punjab water dispute.

- By a secret agreement at Jullunder both the sides (India and Pakistan) decided to set afoot a world class conspiracy to defraud Sindh of its share of the common waters. The matter was quietly withdrawn from the competent Arbitral Tribunal, flow of water to Pakistan was stopped by prior arrangement, hue and cry was raised, a false Indo-Pak crisis and a farce of Indo-Pak talks for its resolution were created whereby both sides viz West and East Punjab misappropriated the bulk of water from the common rivers at the cost of Sindh. The plunder goes on unabated.

- Three Pakistani rivers Ravi, Bias and Sutlej whose waters were the common property of Punjab and Sindh and others as upper and lower riparians, were illegally and secretly sold to India for peanuts as a part of the secret Jullunder agreement.

- All laws of the new State of Pakistan were crafted to create a new class of powerful and privileged group of people and to establish a colony within a new multinational State. As a result Sindh and other small provinces were systematically thrown into an economic, political and cultural abyss.

- All businesses and properties of the prosperous Hindus were arbitrarily allotted to the immigrants who did not have to provide any proof of ownership of property of equal value in India. Only an affidavit and two witnesses were required to validate the claim. No native Sindhi was allowed to keep any property even if legally purchased and owned before the partition.

- Systematically overthrowing popularly elected governments with the help of religious extremists and parties engaged in acts of urban terrorism have paved way for a rule by minority and anti-people pseudo-political groups in provincial and central governments.

- It is in the utmost national interest of Sindhi people to have true democracy and not a dictatorship of minority in Pakistan. Having no significant representation in armed forces, bureaucracy, business and media, true democracy and government of genuine representatives is the only leverage available to Sindh to win her due place in the union.

- An ethno-linguistic terrorist and fascist organization has been handed over the Government of Sindh against all norms of democracy and decency and this terrorist organization is using its place of privilege to constantly conspire to divide Sindh on ethnic lines.
- State of Pakistan must stop and reverse all acts of ethnic cleansing and demographic re-engineering of Sindh, which is designed to convert native population into a minority through massive importation of immigrants from all over the world. Pakistani immigration department should be overhauled to clean it from corrupt and foreign born officers, which have no allegiance with Sindh or Pakistan. Unchecked immigration is a clear and present threat to the national security.
- To stop the persistent influx into Sindh of migrants from other provinces and other countries, a strict immigration and naturalization process be put in the place. No one shall be able to work without seeking a work permit or a permanent resident status. Pakistani citizenship shall only be awarded to immigrants of good moral character and those who have played by the rules and have no criminal record during their at least 6 years of lawful permanent status in the country.
- The constitution should be so amended that for employment and self employment purposes a citizen of Pakistan should obtain a work permit if he is to work in a province other than his province of permanent residence, and such work permit be issued only when the host province has zero un-employment percentage.
- All undocumented residents or those who have manufactured fraudulent documents should be deported to their countries of origin. These laws are enforced even in societies, which are claimed to be the beacons of freedom and human rights. It is not a human right to secure economic immigration. It is only a privilege at the discretion of host country.
- To maintain sanctity of democratic institutions, only born or naturalized citizens shall have a right to vote in local or national elections. Anyone found guilty of acquiring voting right through fraudulent means shall be sentenced to imprisonment and be subjected to automatic deportation after release.
- The Constitution should be so amended that citizens should have right to vote only in the places and provinces of their permanent residence and no one should have a right to vote unless he/she is the resident of a place and province for no less than 15 years.
- Pakistan's defense budget is not transparently made and spent. Likewise Pakistan's defense policy is a complete failure, the reason behind is that it does not represent all four provinces, therefore it must put before discussion in all four provincial assemblies and National Assembly and decisions must be made in the light of resolutions by the joint session of parliament.
- The district government system in the name of so-called devolution of power introduced by the establishment should be abolished, as it is unworkable and has become a cause of great confusion and misery for the common man and also as a source of conflict between provincial and local governments.
- All cases against terrorists that were dropped by current and previous Sindh Governments should be re-opened and pursued and all terrorists and murderers must be punished according to the fair legal procedures and requirements. Persons responsible for this criminal practice of causing such heinous injustice be punished sternly.

The sponsors of the Charter say it has has been drafted, proposed and approved by more than 60,000 Hari and mazdoor activists, students and by the office bearers and representatives of political parties, men and women from all walks of life including leaders

of the Sindh Consultative Forum, Pakistan Peoples Party, Awami Tahreek, Sindh Taraqi Pasand Party, Sindh National Front, Sindh Culture and Literature Development Committee, Sindhiani Tahreek, Sindhi Association of North America, Muslim League (Nawaz) Sindh Chapter, World Sindhi Congress (Washington, DC), Sindh Intellectual Forum, Sindhi Adabi Sangat, Jamiat Ulema Islam, Pakistan Labour Party, Balochistan National Movement, Sindh Research Council, Center for Peace and Human Development, Friends of the River Indus, National Workers Party and Sindh Graduate Association.

The signatories of the Charter include, among others: Iqbal Tareen (USA), Professor Mushtaq Mirani, Rasool Bux Palijo, Dr. Azeem Almani, Senator Abdul Majeed Qazi, Shafiq Moosvi, Ali Nawaz Memon (USA), Haidar Shahani, Agha Shahabudin, Ishaq Tunio (USA), Yousuf Nasqandi, Aijaz Hakro Advocate, Makhdoom Shahnawaz, Ayaz Latif Palijo Advocate, Professor Umar Chand (New Zealand), MPA Sassui Palijo, G N Mughal, Nazeer Memon, Mairaj Muhammad Khan, Sarwech Sujawali, Rehana Channar, Professor Siraj Siyal, Wishnoo Mal, Sany H Panhwar (USA), Zahida Shaikh, A G Chandio, Abdul Majid Nizamani, Abrar Kazi, Maheen Hisbani, Aftab Bhutto Advocate, Mariam Majeedi, Zain Ansari, Afzal Gujjar, Alam Shah, Khalid Hashmani (USA), Ghulam Nabi Mughal, Sanam Marui, Mion Ali Muhammad Walhari, Altaf Khaskheli, Amar Guriro, Professor Ameer Ali Qadri, Aziz Gopang, Dodo Chandio, Dr Mumtaz Bhutto, Ghulam Mustafa Soomro, Dr Shams Siddiqui, Ghafar Malik, Ghulam Nabi Morai, Ghulam Rasool Chandio, Gul Muhammad Jakhrani, Ahmed Makhdoom (Singapore), Hafeez Kunbhar, Humera Noor Bajeer, Imtiaz Chandio, Iqbal Mallah, Ishaq Samejo, MPA Makhdoom Jamil-u-Zaman, Usman Baloch, Molana Azam Jahangeeri, Mansoor Dahri, Maqsood Memon, Muhammad Ali Legahri, Muhammad Khan Bhurgri, Sabeen Baloch, Mushtaq Rajpar, Muzafar Sadiq Bhatti, Hameero Mal, Nazeer Qureshi, Jami Chandio, Nazir Naz, Jiee Zareena Baloch, Abdul Qadir Ranto, Aslam Baloch, Dr. Qamar Wahid, Mir Hasan Areesar, Dr. Qasim Bughio, Professor Najma Shaikh, Rashid Rajar, Rafik Mangi, Rahmatullah Hisbani, Dr. Nazia Yaqoob Memon (Thailand), Roshan Sunder Chandio, Sohail Kalhoro (UK), Noor Nabi Rahoojo, Professor Saeeda Bashir Chandio, Kamal Chang, Ayoob Sarhandi, Sardar Shah, Sobho Gianchand, Waqar Nathan Shahi, Ali Haidar Shah, Dr. Gulzar Jumani, Sarfraz Vistaro, Tahira Pirah Baloch, Asee Zameeni, Shahab Mughal, Hafeeza Talpur (UK), Zulfiqar Halepoto, Deedar Baloch Advocate, Inam Shaikh, Gul Mallah (UAE), Wahab Munshi, Dr Agha Taj, Zafar Leghari Advocate, Sattar Morio, Allah Bux Bukhari, Tanweer Junejo, Saifullah Nizamani (USA), Yasir Kachelo, Shams Ursani, Durgawati Rajput, Zeb Nizamani, Aziz Buriro, Hasan Wasan, Saleem Channa, Mutafa Karim Patoli, Inayat Baloch, Zubeda Birwani, Akhtar Baloch, Hadi Bhatt Advocate, Ilyas Khokhar, Nazeer Leghari, Dr. Zulfiqar Rahoojo, Atta Rajar, Ameer Bukhari, Muzafar Kalhoro, Ayoob Shar, Ramzan Chandio, Ayoob Gul, Mitho Maheri, Sodho Jogi, Farheen Mughal, Wasand Tharee, Hanif Sarang, Gul Hasan Keerano, Lal Jarwar, Maghan Lal, Ali Muhammad Parvez, Ibrahim Sarang, Shabeer Shar Advocate, Aziz Solangi, Jalal Kori, Sarwech Sario, Mohsan Abbasi, Arif Junejo, Muhammad Maroo Khushk, Professor Nadeem Malik, Ibrahim Kunbhar, Adal Soomro, Shafiq Kandhro, Ghaffar Bhutto, Hissam Memon, Muhammad Ali Deeplai, Khalil Mustafa, Qazi Manzar Hayat, Sarwar Bari, Imdad Husaini, Malik Dino Shaikh (USA), Ali Nawaz Dahri, Professor Abdul Rehman Sial, Shaukat Jogi (Australia), Ghulam Hussain Chang, Sarwar Nawaz Bughio, Professor Tahmeena Mufti, Ghansham Prakash, Khalid Maroo, Mahitab Mahboob, Noor Muhammad Bajeer, Muhammad Siddique Otho, Ghulam Hussain Malookani, Sarmad Palijo, Jabbar Habibani, Ehsan Leghari, Qamardin Khoso, Ashfaqee Soomro, Zarar Peerzado, Irshad Leghari, Rashid Daudpoto, Adeel Mahar.

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