

ROHRABACHER ATTEMPTS TO JUSTIFY HIS MEDDLING WITH PAKISTAN

Over the weekend, the Washington Post gave California Republican Congressman Dana Rohrabacher space so that he could attempt to explain to us why he is disrupting diplomatic efforts to repair US-Pakistan relations by continuing his quest for an independent Balochistan. Rohrabacher does manage a reference in the opening paragraph to the atrocities befalling the Baloch at the hands of Pakistani authorities, but his column is more of a laundry list of what is wrong with Pakistan rather than why Balochistan should be independent.

Remarkably, Rohrabacher states “With this resolution, I do not seek to single out Pakistan”, but goes on to list a litany of complaints against Pakistan, most of which have nothing to do with the Baloch. Rohrabacher hits Pakistan for being an accomplice in the 9/11 attacks, for the fate of Shakeel Afridi and for harboring the Taliban. Coming from the man who coined the term “Freedom Fighters” to describe the Mujahedin while on Reagan’s staff and even going so far as to fight alongside bin Laden in Afghanistan against the Soviets, this is a remarkable level of hypocrisy. He also happens to mention that the Chinese have designs on the port of Gwadar. The clincher that Rohrabacher is simply punishing Pakistan comes in his penultimate paragraph:

It is time Washington stopped aiding Pakistan and developed a closer friendship with India and, perhaps, Baluchistan.

Yup, he’s not singling out Pakistan, he just

thinks we need to stop supporting them and support their biggest enemy and those fighting from within.

Missing from Rohrabacher's piece is any mention of what the Baloch are doing in their quest for independence. One would think that having been burned already by teaming with bin Laden out of hatred for the Soviets, Rohrabacher would look into the actions by those he is now supporting against Pakistan. Others appear to be aware that such examination will come soon, and we see a recent piece in Dawn where the independence movement attempts to justify some of its worst violence:

Brahamdagh [Bugti], whom the authorities in Pakistan have variously accused of financing, running and heading terrorist activities in Balochistan, rejected the perception that Baloch sardars were against development in their areas. He said the Baloch were, however, opposed to road-building projects meant for further exploitation of the province's natural resources.

When asked about the murder of Punjabi settlers in Balochistan, Brahamdagh blamed the army. "When the army kills people, the family members [of those killed] have no choice but to react and take revenge," he said.

The reason roads are being destroyed is that they are being used to exploit natural resources and Punjabi settlers are being murdered because the Baloch have to kill someone in return for the Pakistani army killing their family members. What could possibly go wrong with supporting groups with these views?