

# ROHRBACHER'S BALOCHISTAN RESOLUTION PROVOKES MASSIVE ANTI-US DEMONSTRATIONS IN PAKISTAN



King, Rohrabacher and Gohmert negotiate the final wording of their Balochistan resolution. (Wikimedia Commons photo)

At a time when US relations with Pakistan were already on edge but potentially moving back toward cooperation on pursuit of terrorists and transport of NATO military supplies, Congressman Dana Rohrabacher (R-CA) on February 8 dished out a stellar performance during his ~~stunt~~ hearing on Balochistan, where he mispronounced the name of the region so badly that one Pakistani press account decided to refer to him as Donna Rohrbacher. Rohrabacher now has teamed up with intellectual titans and foreign policy experts Steve King (R-IA) and Louis Gohmert (R-TX) to submit H. Con. Res. 104 on Friday, calling for an independent Balochistan. The arrogance inherent in this action has produced massive anti-US demonstrations in Pakistan that threaten to deteriorate relations even further.

Rohrabacher's resolution, which is co-sponsored only by King and Gohmert, ends:

Whereas it is the policy of the United States to oppose aggression and the violation of human rights inherent in the subjugation of national groups as currently being shown in Iran and Pakistan against the aspirations of the Baluch people: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That it is the sense of Congress that the people of Baluchistan, currently divided between Pakistan, Iran, and Afghanistan, have the right to self-determination and to their own sovereign country and they should be afforded the opportunity to choose their own status among the community of nations, living in peace and harmony, without external coercion.*

Never mind that the US is coercing many countries and cultures in the region at the current time, Rohrabacher wants Pakistan's "coercion" of Balochistan to stop now.

Today's rally against the resolution was large.  
From the Express Tribune:

As several quarters in Pakistan join the chorus to condemn a bill on Balochistan moved in the US Congress, thousands of Difa-e-Pakistan Council supporters rallied in Islamabad against American intervention in Pakistan.

"Today, we have gathered here to raise a voice of protest against US intervention in Pakistan," DPC Chairman Maulana Samiul Haq told the participants who had gathered at Aabpara Chowk in the federal capital on Monday.

"America wants to break Pakistan into

pieces," Haq said, in reference to the resolution in America, introduced by Congressman Dana Rohrabacher which calls upon Pakistan to recognise the Baloch right to self determination. "Our protest is against the possible resumption of Nato supplies, US and Indian occupation and to strengthen the country's defence."

The official response from Pakistan's government is no better:

US Charge d' Affaires Ambassador Richard Hoaglan was called to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Monday and a strong protest was lodged with him with regard to the tabling of a resolution on Balochistan in the US Congress.

Ambassador Hoagland was told in clear terms that the move in the US Congress was contrary to the spirit of friendly relations and violates the principles of the United Nations Charter, international law and the recognised norms of inter-state conduct.

He was asked to convey the serious concern of the Government of Pakistan to the US Administration, said a statement of the Foreign Office.

Note: In the Pakistani press, Rohrabacher's motion is described as being "tabled" in the British sense of being submitted for consideration rather than the US sense of postponing consideration. The bill has been submitted to the full House Foreign Affairs Committee for consideration according to Thomas.

Adding to the chorus of disapproval from Pakistan, their Embassy in Washington quickly issued a statement after the resolution was submitted. The Embassy pointed out that the Balochistan province in Pakistan has elected representatives to Pakistan's Parliament, just

as the other provinces do:

"We reject this ill-informed move and the Congressman's misplaced concern on Balochistan, which is a part of the Pakistani Federation," the Embassy said, commenting on Representative Dana Rohrabacher's move in the House on the rights of the people of Balochistan.

A statement issued by the Embassy reminded sponsors of the move that Balochistan has a "directly elected provincial assembly of its own and has due representation in the National Assembly and the Senate of Pakistan."

"The resolution seeks to cast doubt on the territorial integrity of a member of the United Nations and a friend of the United States, and is totally unacceptable."

Pakistan's Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani also spoke out against the resolution on Saturday. From Dawn:

The prime minister said he was dismayed to learn about the bill since it constituted challenging Pakistan's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Oh, and just what were they saying at today's massive rally? From Pakistan Today:

Several thousand Pakistanis poured onto the streets of Islamabad Monday, chanting "death to America" and demanding holy war at a rally whipped up by right-wing, religious and banned organisations.

It would appear that the good Congressman has been speaking directly to his right-wing counterparts in Pakistan. If only the rest of us weren't dragged into the fight when these hot-heads go after one another.

