



Vivekananda International Foundation

# Balochistan



**Forgotten War, Forsaken People**

**Monograph**



# **Balochistan**

## **Forgotten War, Forsaken People**

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## FOREWORD

If there was one genuinely ‘unfinished agenda of Partition’ (to borrow, for a true description, a Pakistani subterfuge aimed at Kashmir), it has to be the case of Balochistan.

It will be recalled that at the time of Partition and its immediate aftermath, the Baloch people, just like the people of the North West Frontier Province, had been dragged, screaming and kicking, into what was shaping as a fanatic Pakistan that went about repudiating the aspirations of its founders. Over the past seven decades, the innate unwillingness of the people to hand over their destiny to a violently torn away state in the name of religious exclusivity, stands vindicated—both these parts of Pakistan have remained mired in poverty and primitiveness. Notwithstanding the rhetoric of Islamist ‘brotherhood’, rulers of Pakistan have consigned these parts to deliberately construed backwardness and brazen economic exploitation for the sole benefit of its feudal lordships, the powerful Punjabi lobby and the mullah-militant-military conglomerate.

All through the decades, the Baloch have protested, confronted and rebelled against Pakistan’s mistreatment of its largest and naturally richest province. There have been as many as four rebellions at such scales that needed deployment of Pakistan’s military machine—with heavy weaponry—to crush these. However, no relief from exploitation and ill-treatment have been forthcoming to the Baloch. It seems that Islamist compassion stops at the boundaries of what is known as Pakistan’s radical Islamist ‘heartland’.

The new era of awareness and aspirations has given rise to a fifth Baloch rebellion, and consequently, another bout of Pakistan’s violent repression. There are state sanctioned murders and abductions leading to missing persons and destruction of property, while exploitation of Balochistan’s natural assets goes on unabated—and unshared with its indigenous people. Unfortunately, many of the Sardars of the community have allowed themselves to be sold against luxury and greed, thereby undermining the popular angst against Pakistan’s colonial rule. Nevertheless, the struggle goes on.

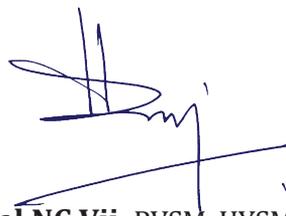
Recently, Indians have woken up to their moral responsibility over a region which has historically been a part of their heritage. No doubt, this realisation



has been provoked by an ever unscrupulous Pakistan's incessant assault upon the Indian nationhood and the equally incessant atrocities that it perpetuates in Balochistan—both done in the name of Islam. This monograph, *Balochistan: Forgotten War, Forsaken People* is therefore a timely analysis of the situation in Balochistan. Besides recording the history of the rebellion, it argues for forging a combined front among the Baloch nationalists and their sympathisers to free this region from the grasp of a rogue state.

I recommend that this monograph should be read by all those people who value freedom and equality.

Jai Hind



**General NC Vij**, PVSM, UYSM, AVSM  
Director, VIF  
Former Chief of Army Staff and  
Founder Vice Chairman, NDMA

**New Delhi**  
**September 2017**

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sushant Sareen did his masters in economics from the Delhi School of Economics and later qualified for the Indian Civil Service and joined the Indian Railway Traffic Service in 1993. A year later he resigned from Government and joined Public Opinion Trends, a news agency that monitors news and developments in South Asia. Since then he has been a close observer of the political situation in South Asia, specialising on Pakistan and by extension, India-Pakistan relations. He was the Executive Editor, Public Opinion Trends. He has also been Associate Editor, southasianmedia.net, a South Asian news portal being run by the South Asian Free Media Association (SAFMA). Sushant Sareen is also a founder member of SAFMA. For a short while he was General Secretary, SAFMA India and is currently a member of the SAFMA India Executive. Between 2002 and 2004, he was the Honorary Director, Pakistan Centre at the Observer Research Foundation. He has also been associated as a Consultant on the Pakistan Project of the IDSA. He is currently Senior Fellow, Vivekananda International Foundation.



He is the author of the book: *The Jihad Factory – Pakistan's Islamic Revolution in the Making*. In addition he has contributed chapters in books published by the Jamia Milia Islamia University, New Delhi and Jammu University. He has also contributed papers on the situation in Pakistan and on India-Pakistan peace process for journals like World Focus, AGNI and Dialogue. He has written columns for a number of Indian newspapers including The Pioneer, Tehelka, Sakaal Times, rediff.com, India Abroad, Ajit, The Tribune, Deccan Herald, New Indian Express, etc. Sushant is also a regular feature on various TV and radio networks, including Times Now, CNN-IBN, NDTV India, Headlines Today, NewsX, Aaj Tak, ABP News, IBN7, ANI, Radio Pakistan, PTV, Lok Sabha TV, and DD News.



# I. THE STATE OF BALOCHISTAN

It is easily the most enduring conflict in South Asia, yet it doesn't seem to attract the attention or headlines that it deserves, either in Pakistan or in the rest of the world. Since around 2002, Balochistan has been in the throes of its fifth uprising against the Pakistani (more appropriately, Punjabi) yoke. Despite four previous insurrections against the Pakistani state, each of which were brutally crushed through the use of overwhelming and disproportionate force by the Pakistan Army, the sense of alienation and more importantly, the quest for national independence or at the very minimum, complete autonomy, is so deep-seated in the Baloch psyche, that they have picked up weapons to challenge the might of the Pakistani state for the fifth time since 1947.

Although Balochistan comprises of around 45 percent of Pakistan's landmass, most of the province is just too remote for the rest of Pakistan, and doesn't figure in the mind-space of most Pakistanis. Officials have to be literally forced to serve in Balochistan, which in some ways is seen as Pakistan's Siberia.<sup>1</sup> The media wakes up to Balochistan only when there is some really bad news that cannot be ignored or brushed under the carpet. Even if the media has any interest in reporting on Balochistan, it cannot as there is a virtual clampdown on independent reporting from the province.<sup>2</sup> The foreign media isn't allowed unfettered access and can at best only report when taken on conducted tours arranged by the Pakistani security forces.<sup>3</sup> The Pakistani media is, of course, either too obedient or too compromised or even too scared to highlight the situation in the province.<sup>4</sup> Investigative reportage is a big no-no

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1 Anwer Sumra, 'As Balochistan smoulders, no one to run the province', Express Tribune 26/8/2012, accessed at <https://tribune.com.pk/story/426378/as-balochistan-smoulders-no-one-to-run-the-province/>

2 Open letter to Government by Hameed Haroon of the Dawn Group of Newspapers, accessed at <http://pakistan451.wordpress.com/2007/04/26/govt-pressurizes-the-dawn-group/>

3 Jon Boone and Kiyya Baloch, 'Balochistan: Pakistan's information black hole', The Guardian 4/2/2016, accessed at <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/feb/04/balochistan-pakistan-information-black-hole>

4 Karlos Zurutuza, 'A black hole for media in Balochistan', Aljazeera.com, accessed at, <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2014/02/black-hole-media-balochistan-2014238128156825.html>; also see 'Waking up to the war in Balochistan', BBC.com, accessed at <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-17029159>

and journalists and civil society activists who have sometimes conjured up the courage to host TV programmes on Balochistan have been intimidated, shot at, and even killed.<sup>5</sup> The culprits are not only security forces and the death squads controlled by the state, but also militants of various hues and persuasions—Baloch freedom fighters, Islamists (including the Taliban and Pakistani sectarian groups), counter-revolutionaries loyal to the Pakistani state, and criminal syndicates who control narcotics and other smuggling networks, etc.<sup>6</sup> In short, Balochistan is virtually a witches' brew of violent state and non-state actors.

The conspiracy of silence within the media, coupled with the unwritten censorship imposed by the Pakistani authorities, has plunged Balochistan into an area of darkness. Very little information or news comes out of the province, and that too episodically.<sup>7</sup> Much of the analysis on the situation in Balochistan is done by people who are either deeply embedded in the Punjab-dominated 'establishment' or by people who stereotype the Baloch as a backward people, dominated by and subservient to exploitative, venal and corrupt tribal chiefs with vested interests in keeping the province and its people backward, illiterate and deprived so that they can retain control. While it is true that Balochistan has not progressed or developed as much as other provinces, to blame this on just the tribal system is nothing short of a travesty and is actually more of an excuse. If anything, it is the Pakistani state that has promoted and patronised the most reactionary and regressive of tribal chieftains and used them to control the province and the people following the classic British policy of divide and rule.

But over the years, many things have started to change even in the conservative society and traditional culture that exists in Balochistan. A new middle-class

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5 The case of Pakistani journalist Hamid Mir who was shot in Karachi because of his programmes on Balochistan, <http://www.hindustantimes.com/world/pak-scribe-hamid-mir-shot-at-says-isi-behind-attack/story-ay2jvJpoojMCzYzwhH2oKK.html>; and Sabeen Mehmud, a civil society activist who was killed on the evening she hosted a talk by Baloch activists, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1177956>

6 Bay laag 8/1/2017, Capital TV, accessed at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qhV-z\\_nPSXo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qhV-z_nPSXo)

7 Ayesha Siddiq, 'How military manages the media', [thewire.in](http://thewire.in) 15/3/2017, accessed at <https://thewire.in/116582/managing-media-pakistan-military/>

has come up which isn't hanging on to the coat-tails of the tribal chiefs, rather it is challenging them. Many activists belonging to this new middle-class, cut across linguistic, tribal and class identities to propagate the cause of Baloch nationalism and are in the vanguard of the struggle for an independent Balochistan. While some of the old tribal elite are still spearheading the movement for independence, even they are increasingly dependent on the new and emerging leadership of the educated middle-class youth to provide the ballast for the freedom movement.

Balochistan, as it exists today, can be divided in two parts: the northern districts that are almost entirely populated by the Pashtuns; and the central and southern districts (including the entire coastal belt) that are almost entirely Baloch. The capital city, Quetta, is claimed by both ethnic groups, though it is believed that the Pashtun are a majority in the city. Apart from Quetta, which remains an issue of contention between the Pashtun and Baloch, there is virtually no over-lap in the areas that these two main ethnicities inhabit. This means that despite the efforts of the Pakistani 'deep state' to pit the Baloch against the Pashtun, there is really no conflict between the two over territory. Neither the Baloch claim Pashtun-dominated areas, nor vice-versa. The Pashtun population has its own issues, problems and politics that don't really intrude or interfere with the Baloch politics and struggle for nationhood. During the 1990s, there were some clashes between the Baloch and Pashtuns<sup>8</sup>, but wiser counsel prevailed and on the eve of the new millennium the nationalist flag-bearers of the two communities seemed to have got around their conflicts.<sup>9</sup> Since then the Baloch leadership has made no claims over Pashtun areas. They have often said that they would like to make common cause with the Pashtuns for achieving their national rights, but they haven't received much traction from the Pashtuns in terms of support for their movement of national liberation.

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8 '10 killed, 40 injured in Quetta ethnic clash', *The News International* 11/10/1991, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XIX No. 209 pp. 4996-97 (item 1)

9 Sushant Sareen, 'A conference for restructuring Pakistan', 10/10/2000. This article was written about the Conference of Pakistan Oppressed Nations Movement (PONM) in London. The author isn't able to recollect who the publisher was. A serialised version of the same article was published by Ajit, Jalandhar in late October/early November, 2000

Paradoxically, the tensions between the Pashtun and Baloch are not so much over each going their own way, but more over each being forced to live together in the same province. The latter is a point of friction because it means sharing the cake. This brings to the fore latent conflicts, with each ethnic group trying to grab as big a share of the cake as it can, often at the expense of the other. As a result, each side tries to inflate its numbers—the Baloch to maintain their slender majority that allows them to dominate the politics of the province, and the Pashtuns to grab, or at least claw at, a greater share of the pie. Many of these problems would disappear if the Baloch areas were to be separated from the Pashtun areas (they were forcibly merged as a result of the introduction of the ‘One-Unit’ system to effect parity between West Pakistan and erstwhile East Pakistan, and later when provinces were restored, the Pashtun areas were made part of Balochistan province).

The restiveness in Balochistan, or more accurately the movement for independence, is essentially a Baloch issue. This means that the areas affected by insurgency are the Baloch majority areas of central, southern and eastern districts of Balochistan, namely Gwadar, Kech, Awaran, Panjgur, Kharan, Kalat, Khuzdar, Mastung, Dera Bugti, Kohlu, Naseerabad, Jaffarabad and Lasbela. While tribal *sardars* retain their hold in the central and eastern parts of the province, and try their best to sabotage the efforts of the freedom fighters through their collaboration with the Pakistani state, it is in southern Balochistan—the Makran coastal districts—where the tribal structure is not dominated by the *sardars*, that the movement is the strongest. And though the tribal *sardars* hold sway over parts of central Balochistan, the movement remains very strong in some of the central parts of the province—such as Kohlu, Dera Bugti and Khuzdar, where the Marris, Bugtis and Mengals dominate.

While the zeal and commitment of the Baloch separatists remains very strong, there are some critical problems that they confront in achieving their objectives. The first and foremost is that their numbers are very small. The total population of Balochistan is just around 5 percent of Pakistan’s total population, and this includes both Pashtun and Baloch. Within Balochistan, the Baloch (which includes both Baloch-speaking 40 percent as well as Brahui-speaking 20 percent) comprise around 60 percent of the population and the rest are mainly Pashtuns, with a smattering of Sindhi-speakers in some eastern districts and a much smaller number of Punjabi speakers

who are mostly settled in Quetta but are also present in other parts of the province.<sup>10</sup> In other words, the Baloch comprise merely 3 percent of Pakistan's population, something that makes it very difficult for them to rustle up the numbers that can take on the Pakistani state. Added to this is the fact that they do not have the financial resources or foreign assistance (military, diplomatic, financial) that would make their task easier. The Baloch diaspora is small and is not very prosperous or politically connected to assist the liberation struggle in Balochistan.

Internationally, the Baloch struggle hasn't received much traction. If anything, it has attracted much hostility (especially of Iran) and a fair amount of disinterest from other big regional and global players. In the 1970s, the erstwhile Soviet Union did lend some support to the Baloch separatists (many of them Left-leaning, and imbued and influenced by Marxist philosophy, including some of the *sardars*), but this support was half-hearted and not a long-term commitment. Even so, some of these problems could have been overcome to a great extent, provided the Baloch were not as factious and divided as they are.

But even though the Baloch have the odds loaded against them, the sense of nationhood and the quest for independence has remained so strong that every succeeding generation picks up from where the preceding generation left off. Thus, the Baloch have continued their struggle against what they call Pakistani occupation despite facing daunting and seemingly insurmountable opposition.

This monograph seeks to provide a snapshot of the Baloch liberation struggle and examines the prospects of the Baloch movement achieving its objective.

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10 Pakistan Statistical Handbook 2008

## II. ANNEXATION

In September 2006, the Khan of Kalat, Mir Suleman Daud, erstwhile ruler of Kalat state, summoned a Grand Jirga of all tribal chiefs.<sup>11</sup> The immediate provocation for collecting all the tribal chiefs under one roof after over 130 years was that Balochistan had erupted in anger over the assassination of Nawab Akbar Bugti. In the midst of great restiveness in the Baloch areas, the traditional leadership—tribal *sardars* and elders—had increasingly started becoming marginalised and were being seen as becoming irrelevant by the outraged Baloch common man.<sup>12</sup> Almost all the tribal chiefs congregated at Kalat—partly to regain their relevance<sup>13</sup>, partly because many of them perhaps felt the need to make common cause with their compatriots, and partly because some of them could be motivated to become part of the *jirga* (with the approval of the ‘deep state’) so that they could sabotage from within, efforts to build some kind of Baloch national consensus against the Pakistani state.

The Grand Jirga, which was attended by 85 tribal chiefs and around 300 ‘elders’, was held on 21 September 2006, in Kalat. The declaration issued by the *jirga* spoke about the ‘colonial occupation of Baloch lands by Punjab in violation of the accord signed by the state of Kalat and the Government of Pakistan in 1948’. Denouncing ‘state terrorism’ in Balochistan, the *jirga* called for an end to the brutal military operation that had been unleashed by the Pakistan Army in the province. The *jirga* rejected the mega development projects in the province which many Baloch saw as part of the Pakistani state’s colonisation plan. The Baloch tribal chiefs declared that they would not be bound to honour any of the agreements that foreign companies entered into with the Government of Pakistan in Balochistan. They also demanded the reunification of all Baloch lands into one entity.<sup>14</sup>

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11 ‘Khan of Kalat convenes Grand Baloch Jirga’, The New International 21/9/2006, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXIV No. 222 pp. 12-20 (item 12)

12 ‘Baloch Jirga to move International Court of Justice’, Dawn 22/9/2006, POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXIV No. 223 pp. 35-38 Pak0622313

13 Ejaz Khan, ‘Taking issue to ICJ’, The News on Sunday 15/10/2006, POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXIV No. 242 pp. 43 (item 16) He quotes a BSO leader, Imdad Baloch to make the point of growing irrelevance of Baloch Sardars for the people

14 ‘Concern over colonial occupation’, Dawn 22/9/2006, POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXIV No. 223 pp. 36

Interestingly enough, the declaration was read out by none other than Sanaullah Zehri, who in 2016 became the Chief Minister of Balochistan and like a typical quisling has reneged on virtually every single demand that was made in the declaration. Another prominent Baloch *sardar* to also betray the Grand Jirga declaration was Nawab Aslam Raisani who became Chief Minister in 2008. During his address to the Grand Jirga, Raisani had demanded that 'in accordance with the 1940 resolution, all nationalities should get their rights, and except currency, foreign affairs, defence and communications, all subjects should be transferred to provinces'.<sup>15</sup> But given the track record of treachery of many of the Baloch *sardars*, there was a fair bit of scepticism as to their commitment to the cause of the Baloch people and nation, and whether they will subordinate their interests to those of the people of Balochistan. Writing at that time, Baloch journalist Malik Siraj Akbar quoted a minister in the Balochistan cabinet as saying that 'for these *sardars*, Pakistan is good as long as they are in the government. When they are isolated and deprived of power, they adopt an anti-Pakistan stance'.<sup>16</sup>

But the most significant decision that was taken during the *jirga* was to move the International Court of Justice (ICJ) over the violation of the agreement between Kalat state, the British government and the Government of Pakistan in 1947. This, according to the declaration, was being done as part of the effort to devise a 'clear cut course of action to get due rights of the Baloch nation' and to make the Baloch 'owners of their resources'.<sup>17</sup> Explaining the decision later, the Khan of Kalat said that the ICJ was also being approached to stop the repression by Pakistan and to seek justice over the killing of Nawab Akbar Bugti.<sup>18</sup> In pursuance of the declaration issued at the Grand Jirga, the Khan of Kalat convened another *jirga* on 2 October 2006,<sup>19</sup> which formed a 'sovereign supreme council' comprising the Khan himself and another five

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15 *ibid*

16 Malik Siraj Akbar, 'Balochistan: Dressed with nowhere to go', *The Friday Times*, 29/9 – 5/10, 2006, POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXIV No. 229 pp. 36 PAK062298

17 *Op. cit.* PAK0622313

18 'Baloch Council being constituted to move ICJ', *Post* 28/9/2006, POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXIV No. 228 pp. 30 PAK0622819

19 'Khan of Kalat convenes jirga', *Daily Times* 1/10/2006, POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXIV No. 231 pp. 37 PAK062318

members that included the chief of Jhalawan, Sanullah Zehri; chief of Sarawan, Aslam Raisani; chief of Bairak, Nawab Muhammad Khan Shahwani; former Chief Minister and son of the chief of Mengal tribe, Sardar Akhtar Mengal; and former Chief Minister and chief of Magsi tribe, Nawab Zulfikar Magsi. This council was mandated to approach the ICJ. The *jirga* also established a National Council in which all Baloch chieftains, political leaders, intellectuals, lawyers, activists, labour leaders, and students would be members. This National Council would meet every six months to assess the problems facing the Baloch people.

Addressing a press conference after the conclusion of the second *jirga*, Zehri said that the Baloch were left with no option but to approach the ICJ. The Khan of Kalat 'invoked' the British government which he claimed had guaranteed the accession agreement with Pakistan, adding that 'accession documents have been provided to world fame lawyers to file case in the ICJ'. At the same press conference, Raisani announced that the *jirga* was appealing 'to the international community, United Nations and European Union to take immediate notice of rulers' efforts to convert the Baloch population into a minority and their genocide'. He also defended the Baloch freedom fighters and said the 'Baloch resistant fighters have initiated a struggle to protect the Baloch coast and resources'.<sup>20</sup>

The decision of the Baloch Grand Jirga to approach the ICJ was received by analysts and activists in both Balochistan and Pakistan with a fair amount of scepticism.<sup>21</sup> The pro-independence Baloch Students Organization (BSO) opposed the recommendations of the *jirga* on the grounds that it did not include the 'right to self-determination'.<sup>22</sup> According to Malik Siraj Akbar, the ICJ only adjudicated between sovereign states, and Kalat no longer enjoyed

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20 'Baloch Jirga forms panel to approach ICJ', *The News International* 4/10/2006, POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXIV, No. 232 pp. 32-35 PAK062326; Also see 'Baloch Council contacts Dutch Lawyers', *Dawn* 6/10/2006, POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXIV No. 340 pp. 25-29 PAK063401

21 Malik Siraj Akbar, 'Marris conspired to get Nawab Bugti killed, says Razik Bugti', *The Friday Times* 29/9 – 5/10, 2006, POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXIV No. 229 pp. 35 (item 8)

22 Op. cit. (Malik Siraj Akbar)

such a status.<sup>23</sup> Another Pakistani analyst maintained that at best the ICJ could only give an advisory opinion but couldn't adjudicate because under the ICJ statute 'only states in agreement can approach [ICJ] for a decision'.<sup>24</sup> Human rights activist Kamila Hyat was also of the same opinion. According to her, 'Kalat is not an independent state presently and it may be interpreted as an internal political matter of a sovereign state, i.e., Pakistan'.<sup>25</sup> Even so, there were concerns that taking the matter to the ICJ would internationalise the issue and prove to be very embarrassing for Pakistan which was already being seen as an unstable, and even a failing state.<sup>26</sup> These concerns would have increased after the Khan of Kalat claimed that he had approached both India and the UK for documents that would strengthen Kalat's case against Pakistan before the ICJ.<sup>27</sup> A few days after claiming that he had approached India and the UK, the Khan of Kalat announced that legal experts had filed Kalat's case against Pakistan with the ICJ. He continued to insist that what the Baloch wanted was implementation of the agreement reached between Kalat state (which was a sovereign entity at the time Pakistan came into existence) and Pakistan.<sup>28</sup>

Unfortunately for the Baloch, the ICJ never took up the case. It later transpired that the case had not been filed at all. One reason for that is believed to be that the Khan of Kalat wasn't able to rustle up the money that was required to hire the legal experts who would fight the case.<sup>29</sup> But other reports claimed that while he had completed consultations with legal experts, there was something

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23 *ibid.* (Malik Siraj Akbar)

24 Mansoor Akbar Kundi, 'Flexing muscles of jirga', *The Nation* 5/10/2006, POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXIV No. 233 pp. 17 (item 13)

25 *Op. cit.* (Ejaz Khan)

26 Rahimullah Yusufzai, 'Revival of Jirga system', *The News on Sunday* 15/10/2006, POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXIV No. 242 pp. 42 PAK0624216

27 'Khan contacts India and UK for Kalat documents', *Daily Times* 10/11/2006, POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXIV No. 263 pp. 23 PAK062636

28 'Balochistan case sent to ICJ: Khan of Kalat', *The Nation* 13/11/2006, POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXIV No. 265 pp. 43 PAK0626515

29 A senior Baloch parliamentarian disclosed this during an interview in Islamabad in October 2007. This point was reiterated by an aide to the Khan of Kalat at a conference on Balochistan in Bangkok in 2010

that was holding up the filing of the case.<sup>30</sup> It isn't quite clear if the reason why the Khan was not filing the case had something to do with the ICJ forum being something of a lost cause because of jurisdiction issues. Nevertheless, the Khan continued to maintain that he would not give up pursuing the matter. Earlier, by March 2007, the Khan of Kalat had been forced into self-exile in the UK after immense pressure started being mounted on him by the quasi-military government that ruled Pakistan at the time.<sup>31</sup> It was reported in 2009 that because the Khan's asylum status had not been decided by the British government, he was unable to move outside the UK and therefore, was unable to pursue the case at The Hague.<sup>32</sup>

Whether or not the ICJ was the right forum for the Baloch to agitate their cause, and regardless of traction or the lack of it that the Baloch struggle for independence has received from the international community, the quest for nationhood and the passion for shaking off the yoke of Pakistani—more appropriately, Punjabi—colonialism is deeply embedded in the Baloch psyche. The roots of this sweeping sentiment lie in history and the way Balochistan was forcibly annexed by Pakistan. The Baloch case for separation from Pakistan has merit and can be justified on historical grounds.

## **The Historical Perspective**

The Baloch base their case on treaties and agreements, not just with the British colonial dispensation but also with Pakistani authorities. In addition, there are legal opinions by noted experts of yore that buttress the Baloch case. The basic position that the Baloch have is that Balochistan, or more specifically the Khanate of Kalat (in which the Baloch include areas that over the years were lopped off and either merged in Punjab and Sindh, or else taken under direct British administration), was never a part of India and that treating it as an Indian state by the British was a violation of the treaty agreements between Kalat state and the British Raj.

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30 'Government making efforts to bring back Khan of Kalat', *The News International* 9/7/2009, POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXVII No. 188 pp

31 Abdul Wahab, 'Khan of Kalat opts for self-exile', *Newsline* March 2007, POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXV No. 82 pp. 44-46 PAK0708216

32 'Khan of Kalat for international mediation on Balochistan', *The News International* 11/7/2009 POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXVII No. 190 pp

According to the Baloch narrative, since Balochistan was never an Indian state, they insist that their status was the same as that of Nepal. Unlike the Indian princely states that had a treaty relationship with the British Raj, the Kalat state, like Nepal, had a direct relationship with the seat of British government in Whitehall.<sup>33</sup> This has been an abiding theme in the Baloch nationalist discourse, and even Baloch politicians like Sardar Sherbaz Mazari who couldn't be called separatists, have maintained that the treaty relationship of Kalat along with its feudatories like Sarawan, Jhalawan, Kharan, Lasbela, Makran were 'unique and comparable to those that the Empire had entered with Nepal'.<sup>34</sup> In defence of their stand, they refer to not just the treaty of 1876 between the British government and Kalat state, but also the standstill agreement signed in August 1947 between the Khan of Kalat and the incoming government of Pakistan.

The 1876 treaty that was signed by the Viceroy and Governor General Lord Lytton on the British side and Khan of Kalat, Mir Khudadad Khab, on behalf of Kalat state specifically mentions that the British government 'engages to respect the independence of Khehat (sic.)' in exchange for the Khan of Kalat agreeing to 'observe faithfully the provisions of article 3 of the treaty of 1854' under which the Khan of Kalat bound himself 'to oppose to the utmost all the enemies of the British government, in all cases to act in subordinate cooperation with that government, and to enter into no negotiation with other states without its consent...'.<sup>35</sup> The provision of the 1854 treaty that circumscribed the sovereignty of the Khan of Kalat was quite similar to the 'limitation on sovereignty of state imposed on Nepal by Article VII of the Treaty of Sagauli'.<sup>36</sup>

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33 Selig S. Harrison, 'In Afghanistan's Shadow: Baluch Nationalism and Soviet Temptations', Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (1981) pp. 23

34 Sherbaz Khan Mazari, 'A journey to disillusionment', OUP (1999), pp 81

35 Text of treaty of 1854 and 1876, 'Iran-Pakistan border dispute: An evaluation of the Iranian claim', CIA archives, pp. 16-21, accessed at <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/document/cia-rdp08c01297r000500130001-4>

36 Prem Uprety, 'Treaties between Nepal and her neighbours: A historical perspective', pp 19, accessed at <http://www.nepjol.info/index.php/TUJ/article/viewFile/3970/3365>. The text of treaty of Sagauli is available at <http://nepaldevelopment.pbworks.com/w/page/34197552/Sughauli%20Treaty%20of%201815%3A%20Full%20Text#TreatywithNipalNovember11860>

The independent status of Kalat was underscored in a letter written by Lord Lytton to Queen Victoria in 1877 stating that the Khan of Kalat wasn't a feudatory of the British crown but was an independent prince. Making clear that the term 'native state' did not apply to Balochistan (or more appropriately Kalat), Lord Lytton informed the Queen that the Khan was received by the Viceroy and was also paid return visits by the Viceroy, something that did not happen in case of Native States.<sup>37</sup> Other top British officials of the time were very clear that the Khan of Kalat was both the *de jure* as well as *de facto* ruler of the 'country' and that the British had no right to interfere in how the Khan ran the internal affairs of his state.<sup>38</sup> The Khan of Kalat was in fact informed by the British government that 'he occupied the position of a sovereign prince entirely independent of the British government, with which he was connected only by his treaty engagements'.<sup>39</sup>

## **The Empire Strikes**

The British maintained this status until the 1890s, after which because of the situation on the Afghan frontier, they started diluting the Khan's authority—they deposed Khudadad Khan and replaced him with his eldest son, Mir Mahmud II and thereby changed the political status of Kalat state. This was done in clear violation of the existing treaties. By the mid-1920s, the British felt that a new Khan of Kalat could reclaim the independence given to him by the 1876 treaty and because the British couldn't afford according Kalat the independence given under the 1876 treaty, a new treaty needed to be negotiated that changed the status of Kalat and made it an Indian state without any independent status. But even the then puppet Khan of Kalat who had for nearly three decades kowtowed to the British, refused to enter into a new treaty arrangement which would make *de jure* the *de facto* subordination of Kalat.<sup>40</sup>

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37 Inayatullah Baloch, 'The Problem of Greater Baluchistan: A study of Baluch Nationalism', Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden GMBH, Stuttgart (1987), pp. 168

38 Martin Axmann, 'Back to the Future: The Khanate of Kalat and the genesis of Baloch nationalism 1915-1955', OUP (2008) pp 175-76

39 Op. cit. (Inayatullah Baloch) pp 174

40 Op. cit. (Inayatullah Baloch) pp 169

Interestingly around the same time that the British were seeking to negotiate a new treaty with the Khan of Kalat to deprive Kalat of its independent status, they had entered into a new treaty of friendship with Nepal in 1923 that superseded the Treaty of Sagauli and specifically mentioned that ‘the two governments [governments of Great Britain and Nepal] agree mutually to acknowledge and respect each other’s independence, both internal and external’.<sup>41</sup> In Kalat meanwhile, the British tried to adopt a subterfuge to degrade the status of Kalat and in 1932 asked Mahmud II’s successor to take his seat in the Chamber of Princes in the Central Legislature, which he refused. In 1933, Mir Ahmad Yar Khan became the Khan. The British Prime Minister saw him as an ambitious man who wanted to consolidate his position and then use that to gain absolute supremacy.<sup>42</sup> The new Khan tried to regain Kalat’s independent status by asserting the international status of Kalat and kept pushing the envelope on trying to make the British respect the treaty arrangement of 1876. He protested the unilateral inclusion of Kalat as an Indian state in the Government of India Act of 1935 as an infringement of the 1876 treaty. The British reacted in their typical way and responded by informing the Khan that the 1876 treaty remained valid and would continue to form the relations between the British and Kalat. In other words, they maintained an ambiguity—acknowledging the treaty without clarifying the questions raised by the Khan.

Although the British Resident in Kalat accepted in 1940 that its status was different from that of other Indian states, by 1942 the Secretary of State for India declared in a letter to the Viceroy that British policy was not to treat Kalat as an independent, sovereign and non-Indian state. The rationale he gave was classic British disingenuousness—that Kalat was an Indian state under the Government of India Act of 1935, that Kalat did not explicitly refuse an invitation to attend the Chamber of Princes on grounds that it wasn’t an Indian state, and such like. The Khan waited for World War II to end before he responded to the position enunciated by the Secretary of State. He did this in a memorandum that was presented to the Cabinet Mission in 1946. The central point of the memorandum was that the successor governments of the

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41 Treaty between the United Kingdom and Nepal 1923, accessed at <http://treaties.fco.gov.uk/docs/pdf/1925/TS0031.pdf>

42 Yaqoob Khan Bangash, ‘A Princely Affair: the accession and integration of the Princely States of Pakistan, 1947-55, OUP (2015) pp 153–54

British Raj would only inherit the treaties signed between the States and Delhi and not between the States and Whitehall. In other words, Kalat would regain complete independence after the British Raj ended.<sup>43</sup>

## **Wolf in Sheep's Clothing**

The person who presented the detailed memorandum, which eloquently presented Kalat's case for not being treated as an Indian state, was none other than Mohammad Ali Jinnah!<sup>44</sup> In fact, Jinnah was quite clear that 'in case a state desiring to retain its independence by cooperating with Pakistan in trade and economic relations only, we welcome to have political talks on the same', adding that 'it is my personal belief that if any state wants to remain aloof. It may do so without any pressure from any quarter...'<sup>45</sup> In a meeting between Jinnah, Lord Mountbatten and the Khan of Kalat on 4 August 1947, it was agreed that Kalat would be independent from the next day and would enjoy the same status it held in 1838. On 5 August 1947, a formal standstill agreement was signed between the still-to-come-into-existence Pakistan and the Kalat state. The first point of this agreement explicitly stated that 'the government of Pakistan agrees that Kalat is an independent state being quite different from other states of India; and [government of Pakistan] commits to its relation with the British government as manifested in several agreements.'<sup>46</sup> The agreement was publicly announced on 11 August 1947. Subsequently, it transpired that Pakistan's acceptance of Kalat's independent status was a legal subterfuge that was done only to prevent retrocession of the areas that the Khan had leased to the British.<sup>47</sup> Only if Kalat was conceded as being an independent state would Pakistan, as the successor state of the British, inherit the leases that had been granted under a treaty between Kalat and the British government.<sup>48</sup>

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43 Op. cit. (Selig S Harrison) pp 23

44 Op. cit. (Inayatullah Baloch) pp 170–72. For the details of the memorandum see Alok Bansal, 'Balochistan in Turmoil: Pakistan at the crossroads', Manas Publications (2010) pp 51–82

45 Op. cit. (Martin Axmann) pp 223

46 *ibid.* pp 223–24

47 Op. cit. (Bangash) pp 167

48 *ibid.* 192

On 15 August 1947, on the day that Pakistan became independent<sup>49</sup>—Pakistan only changed its Independence Day to 14 August much later, probably to distinguish itself from India—the Khan of Kalat also declared independence and unfurled the national flag of Balochistan.<sup>50</sup> Later that same month, a written constitution was promulgated setting up a bicameral legislature comprising an Upper House in which all tribal chiefs were members, and a Lower House or the House of Commons.<sup>51</sup> Within days ‘elections’ were held to the 52 seats of the Lower House, 39 of which returned members of the Kalat State National Party. The Upper House was in any case complete as all 52 chiefs of the tribes were automatic members. Although the elections to the Houses of Balochistan parliament were not of the universal suffrage type, and more in the nature of a selection, the members ‘elected’ by the limited suffrage were public leaders and representative of the people.<sup>52</sup>

With Pakistan already breathing down the Khan’s neck for unconditional accession since September 1947,<sup>53</sup> the Khan of Kalat referred the matter to his parliament in December 1947. The Lower House passed a unanimous resolution on 14 December 1947, declaring that ‘relations with Pakistan should be established as between two sovereign states based upon friendship and not by accession’. In its resolution endorsing the resolution of the Lower House, the Upper House passed a resolution on 4 January 1948, emphatically stating that ‘this House is not ready to accept an accession to Pakistan which endangers the separate existence of the Baluch nation’.<sup>54</sup>

While the resolutions tied the hands of the Khan, he also used them as a negotiating tactic with Pakistan. But Jinnah was losing patience with the Khan, which was conveyed to the latter. In February, the Khan once again summoned both Houses to take their final views on the question of accession. But there was no change in the views of the representatives of the Baloch people. The

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49 Yaqoob Khan Bangash, ‘August 14 or 15?’, *Express Tribune* 22/9/2015, accessed at <https://tribune.com.pk/story/960972/august-14-or-15/>

50 *Op. cit.* (Inayatullah Baloch) pp 178

51 *ibid.* pp 179

52 *Op. cit.* (Martin Axmann) pp 227–28

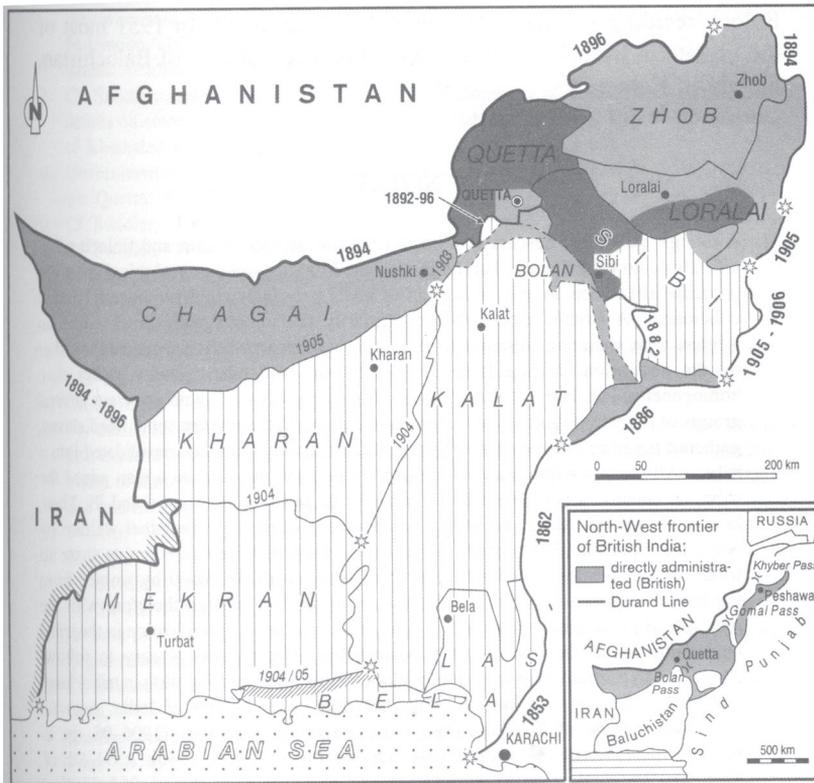
53 *Op. cit.* (Inayatullah Baloch) pp 181

54 *ibid.* pp 184

Khan once again tried to seek more time, but Jinnah had by this time decided to go in for the kill.<sup>55</sup>

The Pakistanis used the rivalry and feuds between the Khan of Kalat and his feudatories in Makran, Lasbela and Kharan to turn the tables on the Khan. Taking a leaf out of the book of the British, and perhaps even prompted by the British<sup>56</sup>, the Pakistanis accepted the accession of the feudatories of the Khan of Kalat on 17 March 1948.

**MAP 1<sup>57</sup>**



55 Op. cit. (Bangash) pp 181-83

56 ibid. pp 184

57 Source: op. cit. (Martin Axmann) pp 37

In one fell swoop, Kalat was reduced to half its size and lost its access to the sea. The bogey used against the Khan—India—was one that has been deployed by Pakistan whenever it wants to justify an illegitimate, illegal, immoral or even inhuman act in Balochistan. As early as November 1947, Pakistan's Foreign Secretary Ikramullah had spoken about 'rumours' that the Khan was negotiating with both India and Afghanistan.<sup>58</sup> While accepting the accession of the feudatories of Kalat state, Pakistan claimed that the Khan was offering to accede to India. Bizarrely enough, the Pakistanis also claimed that he had offered Afghanistan the use of his seaports and had sought protection from the British.

The Khan's vehement denials were water off a duck's back for the Pakistanis who already seemed to have decided to forcibly annex Kalat.<sup>59</sup> Disregarding the protests of the Khan of Kalat against the decision to accept accession of his feudatories, the Pakistan government responded with characteristic duplicitousness and issued a statement that it was awaiting 'with friendly interest the proposals which Kalat state' wanted to make. At the same time, they also took the position that every *sardar* of the Kalat confederacy had the right to accede to Pakistan.<sup>60</sup>

The final act of this sordid drama also had an Indian angle. The Pakistan Army had already moved into and occupied the territory of the feudatory states and was poised to launch an offensive on Kalat to forcibly occupy it. It was in the midst of this extremely tense atmosphere that All India Radio aired a statement of V.P. Menon disclosing that the Khan of Kalat had sent an emissary to negotiate accession to India. The Khan, of course, lodged a protest with Lord Mountbatten against what he called mischievous reporting, and despite Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru regretting the error in reporting and clarifying that given Kalat's geographical position, there was no question of Kalat's accession to India, the damage was done.<sup>61</sup>

With all his options closing, the Khan threw in the towel and on 27 March 1948, announced his decision to accede to Pakistan. The decision was in large part

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58 *ibid.* 180

59 *Op. cit.* (Inayatullah Baloch) pp 186–87

60 *Op. cit.* (Bangash) 186–87

61 *Op. cit.* (Inayatullah Baloch) pp 188

prompted by news of Pakistan Army movements. Later, the Khan accepted that had he not acceded, it could have led to a fratricidal war between Pakistan and the Baloch.<sup>62</sup> On 30 March 1948, the fate of independent Balochistan was sealed when the Khan of Kalat signed the instrument of accession.<sup>63</sup> Later, it was claimed by the Khan of Kalat's grandson, that Prophet Mohammad had appeared in his dream and told him that a country was being made in the name of Islam and that he was being a hurdle in its path. Ergo, the Khan of Kalat decided to join Pakistan!<sup>64</sup>

## **Political Games**

While Pakistan was clearly the villain of the story of Kalat losing its independence, it's villainy was made much easier by both the British as well as the Congress government-in-waiting, in particular, Jawaharlal Nehru. The British had steadily been eroding the independent status of Kalat from around the mid-1890s, but by the mid-1940s, while the World War was still on, the British started thinking about Balochistan from the standpoint of geopolitics. In a secret memorandum written in 1944, which received traction from the Secretary of State Leo Amery, a British general pegged Balochistan as 'the right place for a considerable imperial garrison after the war'.<sup>65</sup> The British realised the strategic value of Balochistan, which is located virtually on the mouth of the Persian Gulf from where the entire Middle-East and its oil could be controlled. Equally important, an Islamic bloc could be created to block the spread of communism.<sup>66</sup>

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62 Taj Mohammad Breseeg, 'Baloch Nationalism: Its origin and Development', Royal Book Company (2004) pp 237

63 Op. cit. (Martin Axmann) pp 233

64 Interview of Prince Omar Ahmadzai, grandson of Khan of Kalat Mir Ahmad Yar Khan, accessed at <http://balochistanwatch.blogspot.in/2010/03/prince-omer-says-prophet-ordered-his.html>

65 Op. cit. (Inayatullah Baloch) pp 174

66 Narendra Singh Sarila, 'The Shadow of the Great Game: the untold story of India's partition', Harper Collins (2009), pp 31

For some time, the British seemed to be toying with the idea of treating Balochistan as a separate country.<sup>67</sup> But the British position reverted to treating Balochistan as an Indian state on the eve of the end of the colonial era. Despite British constitutional experts opining that Kalat was not an Indian state, the then Secretary of State Pethick-Lawrence took a contrary stand. He was of the view that to accept the claims of Kalat would encourage similar claims by other states that would not just endanger the integrity of India and Pakistan, but also create new but weak international entities. And in the case of Balochistan, the Leftist leanings of the Baloch political leadership spooked the British, who felt that an independent Balochistan led by 'anti-imperialist, progressive and nationalist elements' would work in favour of the Soviet Union.<sup>68</sup>

Clearly, the 'Pakistan strategy' of the British did not allow for Kalat's independence, much less for the retrocession of the leased areas, including Bolan pass and Quetta, that would have serious economic and strategic repercussions for Pakistan.<sup>69</sup> While the Khan toyed with the idea of becoming a British protectorate, something like the Emirates in the Gulf, the British weren't interested because it would displease Pakistan and advised Kalat to enter into a settlement with Pakistan.<sup>70</sup> The British were, in fact, warning and 'guiding' the Pakistanis against according any recognition to Kalat as an independent international entity and informing them of the dangers of such a development.<sup>71</sup> Shortly before the annexation, or forced accession of Kalat by Pakistan, the official position of the British government was made clear in a reply to a parliamentary question: a close understanding should be arrived at between Pakistan and Kalat on all matters of common concern.<sup>72</sup> It was pursuant to this policy that the British refused to supply arms and

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67 *ibid.* pp 22

68 *Op. cit.* (Inayatullah Baloch) pp 174–75

69 *Op. cit.* (Bangash) pp 165; also see Sarila whose thesis is that Pakistan was seen as a future defence partner and therefore it couldn't be left in a vulnerable state, which is precisely what would happen if Kalat and all its territories were not included in Pakistan

70 *Op. cit.* (Inayatullah Baloch) pp. 182

71 *ibid.* pp. 257

72 *Op. cit.* (Bangash) pp. 191

ammunition to Kalat state without the approval of the Pakistan government.<sup>73</sup> With no weapons, and no external support, the fall of Kalat to Pakistan was a bygone conclusion.

The man who claimed he was the last Englishman to rule India<sup>74</sup>—Jawaharlal Nehru—was also averse to Kalat's independence. In the case of British Baluchistan, the area of Kalat that was under British control, Nehru rejected a proposal for self-determination as 'preposterous' because it would leave the future of the strategic frontier of India in the hands of one man chosen by unelected and semi-feudal elements.<sup>75</sup> On Kalat, Nehru took the stand that 'the fact that Kalat is a border state adds to its importance... An independent India cannot permit foreign forces and foreign footholds such as Kalat might afford near its territories'. Nehru had somewhat similar concerns as the British regarding the independence of states, though he was probably not aware that he was on the same page as the British. In a note to the last Viceroy, Lord Mountbatten, Nehru wrote: 'This is a definite invitation to at least the major states to remain independent kingdoms, presumably as feudatories or allies of Britain. Also, it is definite incitement to them to play off Pakistan against the rest of India.' He was of the view that such a step would 'create disruptive tendencies among the states and endanger important strategic areas'.<sup>76</sup>

Nehru's stand against Kalat's independence had obviously driven a wedge between him and the Khan of Kalat. For instance, after the signing of the 5 August 1947 formal standstill agreement between Kalat and Pakistan, in which the latter recognised Kalat as an independent state, Kalat sought a similar recognition from New Delhi. It also sent a request for permission to establish a trade agency in Delhi, but the Indian government refused to consider these requests. After the rebuff, the Khan of Kalat, who was also evaluating the option of acceding to India, consigned this option to the rubbish bin.<sup>77</sup> With the promulgation of the India independence order, it was

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73 Op. cit. (Inayatullah Baloch) pp. 183

74 Interview of John Kenneth Galbraith accessed at <http://www.outlookindia.com/magazine/story/it-was-indias-good-fortune-to-be-a-british-colony/212952>

75 Lt. Col. Syed Iqbal Ahmad, 'Balochistan: It's Strategic Importance', Royal Book Company (1992), pp 111

76 *ibid.* pp. 15

77 Op. cit. (Inayatullah Baloch) pp. 181, 182

agreed that it would devolve on Pakistan to negotiate fresh agreements with tribes in Balochistan because these areas were not contiguous to India.<sup>78</sup> In a statement to Parliament after the forcible accession of Kalat, Nehru denied that the Khan of Kalat had ever mentioned accession to India, and said that 'in view of the geographical position of Kalat state, the question [of accession] did not arise'.<sup>79</sup> V.P. Menon, however, claimed in his controversial statement that was broadcast by All India Radio and became the reason for the Khan of Kalat throwing in the towel, that while an agent of the Khan had approached the government of India, the request for accession had been rejected because India 'refused to have anything to do with that state'.<sup>80</sup>

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78 V.P. Menon, 'The Transfer of Power in India', Orient Blackswan (reprint 2017), pp. 407

79 Op. cit. (Inayatullah Baloch) pp. 188

80 Op. cit. (Syed Iqbal Ahmad) pp. 120

### III. REBELLION (1948–1978)

The forced accession of Kalat incensed the Baloch and anti-Pakistan protests broke out throughout Balochistan.<sup>81</sup> Rattled by the protests, within a fortnight of Jinnah accepting the 'instrument of accession', the Pakistani state turned the clock back on all the administrative and legislative reforms that the Khan of Kalat had introduced after declaring independence on 15 August 1947 and restored status quo ante and arrested senior political leaders.<sup>82</sup> The same day that Pakistan usurped all the powers from the hands of the Baloch on 15 April 1948, the younger brother of the Khan of Kalat, Prince Abdul Karim, raised the banner of the first rebellion of the Baloch against Pakistani occupation. As former governor of the Makran province, the Prince tried to start an armed movement in the Jhalawan (lower Balochistan) region of the Kalat state. But clearly, there was neither any political preparation for this struggle, nor was there any worthwhile military capability to take the fight to the enemy.

After minor skirmishes between the Prince's 'Baloch Mujahideen' and the Pakistan Army, the former was forced to cross over into Afghanistan on 16 May 1948.<sup>83</sup> A few weeks later, he wrote an impassioned letter to his brother that articulated the reasons for his rebellion. More importantly, the letter is prescient in the description of Pakistan and Pakistani Punjabis by the Prince. He writes: '...the Pakistan people are not only more aggressive than the British, but they are also in the habit of biting off their own friends [emphasis mine].' He goes on to say that 'from whatever angle we look at the present government of Pakistan, we will see nothing but Punjabi fascism [emphasis mine]...it is the army and arms that rule. There is no morality or justice...it is an immoral military government, far worse than British democracy. There is no place for any other community in this government, be it the Baluch, the Sindhis, the Afghans or the Bengalis... Not to speak of Islamic ways they have not the slightest regard for its name. The brothels and wine shops thrive as usual, and total Punjabi Fascism rules supreme everywhere'.<sup>84</sup> The only other

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81 Op. cit. (Breseeg) pp. 239

82 Op. cit. (Inayatullah Baloch) PP 190

83 Op. cit. (Breseeg) pp 240

84 Op. cit. (Inayatullah Baloch) pp. 191–92

person to sum up the Pakistanis so well was Mullah Abdul Salam Zaeef, the former Taliban envoy to Islamabad.<sup>85</sup>

## **Scene of Instability**

While in Afghanistan, the Prince tried to organise a resistance movement by seeking support from not only within Balochistan but also from countries such as Afghanistan and the Soviet Union.<sup>86</sup> But he failed. The Afghans, who had irredentist claims over Balochistan, not only refused to help but also refused permission to operate from Afghan soil. The Soviets only offered sympathy but no material assistance. The Iranians were also approached but they were not willing to go beyond offering asylum to the rebels.<sup>87</sup> The unkindest cut of all was a royal *firman* issued by the Khan of Kalat denouncing the Prince and his associates as rebels and declaring that no assistance of any kind be given to them.<sup>88</sup> Finding no support from any quarter, the Prince was left with no option but to negotiate his return to Balochistan. Baloch nationalists claim that the Prince was assured a complete pardon if he disarmed his 'army'. This agreement was underwritten by Pakistani officials who swore on the Quran to fulfil their side of the bargain. Needless to say, this was the first of the big betrayals by the Pakistanis of their solemn commitments to the Baloch. The Pakistani version is, of course, completely the opposite and they claim that the Prince entered Balochistan with Afghan assistance but was forced to surrender after being attacked by Pakistani troops.<sup>89</sup>

In what became the template of Pakistani treachery while dealing with the Baloch, the Prince was arrested along with another 142 of his followers, tried and sentenced to 10 years of rigorous imprisonment.<sup>90</sup> Thus, the first rebellion of the Baloch ended in a bit of a whimper in July 1948. But it enhanced among the Baloch a sense of betrayal and dishonouring of agreements, injustice

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85 Abdul Salam Zaeef, 'My Life with the Taliban', Columbia (2010), pp. 234–35

86 Op. cit. (Breseeg) pp 241

87 Op. cit. (Inayatullah Baloch) pp 195

88 ibid. pp 196

89 ibid. pp 197–98

90 ibid. pp 199

and heavy-handedness of the Punjabi-led Pakistani establishment and in the process laid the foundations for subsequent uprisings.<sup>91</sup>

By the mid-1950s, restiveness started growing among the Baloch once again. This was because of the policies of the Punjabi establishment that not only wanted to centralise power but also carve out a homogenous identity, even if artificial, by undermining the ethnic identity of the people. The instrumentality for achieving this was the One Unit plan under which all the provinces in the then West Pakistan were bundled into one administrative and political unit. This in large part was also done to gain parity with the more populous East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) and thereby prevent the ganging up of non-Punjabi provinces against Punjabi domination.<sup>92</sup> The Khan of Kalat saw an opportunity in the growing anger within Balochistan over the One Unit plan so as to regain his lost kingdom and re-emerge as the Khan of a Greater Balochistan that also included the Baloch areas of Punjab. He summoned a meeting of major Baloch tribal chiefs and demanded the dissolution of One Unit. But while almost everyone in the gathering was against One Unit, they weren't agreed on the Greater Balochistan scheme under the Khan of Kalat.<sup>93</sup>

To the Pakistanis, the Khan of Kalat's plans smacked of another rebellion against the Pakistani state. In fact, one of the excuses/reasons given by Iskander Mirza for imposing martial law on 8 October 1958, was the Khan of Kalat's alleged plans to secede from Pakistan. And to ensure that this charge was credible, a few days before martial law was imposed on 5 October 1958, the Pakistan Army surrounded Kalat and orchestrated a clash in which a number of people were killed, a mosque was damaged, and the Khan of Kalat was arrested on charges of treason and dragged away to Lahore.<sup>94</sup> Even as the Khan was forced to surrender after a Pakistan Army tank fired a volley of shots at his palace walls, and he was being taken away, a crowd gathered outside the palace to protest the Pakistan Army action. The Pakistan Army fired into the crowd and killed a few people. Iskander Mirza also issued orders depriving

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91 Op. cit. (Martin Axmann) pp 235

92 Op. cit. (Selig Harrison) pp 27

93 Op. cit. (Martin Axmann) pp 284–85

94 Op. cit. (Mazari) pp 83

the Khan of Kalat of not just his privy purse, but also of all his distinctions, privileges and immunities, and his son was nominated his successor.<sup>95</sup>

The treatment meted out to the Khan led to disturbances all over the province and the Pakistan Army resorted to a heavy- and ham-handed crackdown to quell it, including deploying tanks and artillery in towns, which in turn worsened the anti-Pakistan sentiment that was already sweeping Balochistan. Soon skirmishes between tribal guerrillas and the Pakistan Army were being reported. Nauroz Khan, an octogenarian and chief of the Zehri tribe, emerged as the leader of the Baloch resistance fighters who numbered around a thousand. The Pakistanis responded by bombing his house and confiscating his property. But Nauroz Khan continued his struggle against Pakistani occupation and declared he wouldn't stop until One Unit was scrapped and the Khan was returned to power. The fight went on for over a year, during which the Pakistan Army followed a scorched earth policy, bombing villages suspected of giving sanctuary to the guerrillas.<sup>96</sup>

The fighting ended after Nauroz's nephew and *sardar* of the Zehri tribe, Doda Khan Zehri, carried a Quran and assurances from the Pakistani officials that all his conditions had been accepted, and henceforth Baloch traditions would be respected. On the back of these solemn assurances, Nauroz Khan descended from the hills, but was immediately arrested. A special military court tried Nauroz and his followers and sentenced them all to death.<sup>97</sup> Nauroz Khan's son and five other family members were hanged in July 1960, but his sentence was commuted to life imprisonment and he died in captivity in 1964.<sup>98</sup> But if the Pakistanis thought that they were snuffing out Baloch resistance by their treacherous and brutal methods, they couldn't be more wrong.

After violating the pledge given to Prince Abdul Karim, the betrayal of Nauroz Khan convinced the Baloch of the perfidy of the Pakistani state and of the Punjabi establishment. The legend of Nauroz Khan continued to grow. Stories about his stoicism have inspired generations of Baloch, and ballads were composed about his bravery, his grit and the injustices heaped upon him by

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95 Op. cit. (Syed Iqbal Ahmad) pp 167–68

96 Op. cit. (Selig Harrison) pp 28

97 Op. cit. (Mazari) pp 84–85

98 Op. cit. (Martin Axmann) pp 287

the Pakistanis; all of which have fuelled the anti-Pakistan and anti-Punjabi sentiment among the Baloch.<sup>99</sup> Nauroz Khan became a martyr for the Baloch cause, and a symbol of Baloch grievances against the Pakistani state and the Punjabi establishment. As for Doda Khan Zehri and his treacherous conduct against his own uncle, he came to symbolise the dubious role that Baloch tribal *sardars* have played in Balochistan. The same Doda Khan's son, Sanaullah Zehri, has carried forward the treacherous tradition of his father, and after all his fiery rhetoric at the Grand Jirga in 2006, threw in his lot with the Punjabi-led Pakistani establishment by joining Nawaz Sharif and finally managing to secure the Chief Ministership of Balochistan in 2015.

The dishonouring of the agreement with Nauroz Khan and the treatment meted out to him got deeply embedded in the Baloch psyche. The scorched earth policies fuelled Baloch nationalism like nothing else could.<sup>100</sup> The sense of betrayal has continued to rankle even decades later. The Pakistan Army's handling of Nauroz Khan provided the tinder for the next rebellion, which wasn't long in coming. As is its wont, instead of dousing the flames of resentment, the Pakistan Army only inflamed the emotions of the Baloch with their heavy-handed handling of the unrest in Balochistan. Because of the losses inflicted by the rag-tag force of tribal guerrillas led by Nauroz Khan, the Pakistan Army decided to set up new cantonments in different parts of the Baloch country. This was a provocation for the Baloch who saw these cantonments as a sort of colonisation by Pakistanis to entrench themselves permanently on Baloch lands.<sup>101</sup> Around the same time, the then military dictator of Pakistan, Ayub Khan, also introduced his version of democracy—Basic Democracy system. Coupled with the cantonments, Ayub's self-serving idea of democracy became a red rag for the Baloch, who considered both these measures an encroachment on their rights and power.<sup>102</sup> Throwing more fuel in the fire, Ayub threatened the Baloch with 'total extinction' if they continued their resistance to his plans.<sup>103</sup> The Pakistani establishment also tried some

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99 Op. cit. (Mazari) pp 85

100 Op. cit. (Breseeg) pp 290

101 Op. cit. (Selig Harrison) pp 29

102 Rizwan Zeb, 'Roots of Resentment – II', Friday Times 5/8/2016, accessed at <http://www.thefridaytimes.com/tft/roots-of-resentment-ii/>

103 Op. cit. (Breseeg) pp 291

tribal engineering by deposing the Marri, Mengal and Bugti tribal chiefs from their chieftainships and replacing them with their own nominees, or more appropriately, lackeys. This only added to the sense of outrage among the Baloch and two of these nominated chiefs were assassinated.<sup>104</sup>

## **Rebels with a Cause**

By 1963, a new generation of Baloch leaders and fighters, influenced by Leftist guerrilla movements and Marxist-Leninist ideology picked up the baton for furthering the cause of Baloch nationalism.<sup>105</sup> The man who not only spearheaded and organised what is often referred to as the Third Rebellion from 1963 to 1969, but also laid the foundations for an even bigger insurgency in 1973 was Sher Mohammad Marri a.k.a. General Sheroff (named so by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto for his alleged close links with the Soviets).<sup>106</sup> In the early stages, the objective of the Parari movement—Balochi word for a people whose grievances cannot be solved through talks—which was organised by General Sheroff, wasn't secession. It was to wage a guerrilla war to force the withdrawal of the Pakistan Army from Baloch areas, scrapping of the One Unit plan and restoring a unified Balochistan province.<sup>107</sup> Subsequently, the demand for control of Balochistan's mineral resources and wealth, and later even the demand for independence, got added on.<sup>108</sup>

The Parari movement, which was organised under the label of Baloch People's Liberation Front (BPLF), vastly extended the area of insurgency from what it had been when Prince Abdul Karim raised the banner of revolt and when Nauroz Khan rebelled against the Pakistan state. According to Selig Harrison, the Pararis established 22 base camps spread over 45,000 square miles from the Mengal area in the south (Jhalawan) to the Marri-Bugti country in the north. The Pararis used guerrilla tactics against the Pakistani forces, which responded with their typical scorched earth policies and even used air power

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104 *ibid.* pp 292

105 *Op. cit.* (Selig Harrison) pp 29

106 *ibid.* pp 30

107 *Op. cit.* (Breseeg) pp 291

108 Amir Mateen, 'Focus-Balochistan-II', *The News International* 26/7/2006, accessed at <https://www.thenews.com.pk/archive/print/672539-focus-balochistan-ii>

against the Baloch fighters. Commanding the Pakistani troops was General Tikka Khan, whose tactics earned him infamy as the 'Butcher of Balochistan'. The fighting continued sporadically until 1969, when Yahya Khan, the dictator who replaced Ayub Khan, abolished the One Unit in West Pakistan and restored the provinces. The peace treaty was negotiated with the Baloch by the governor of West Pakistan, Air Marshal Nur Khan, and the Pararis agreed to a ceasefire.<sup>109</sup> But while the province of Balochistan was restored, it was also reorganised by merging some Pashtun areas, which were part of the erstwhile British Balochistan, in the new province.<sup>110</sup> But the Baloch had learnt by now not to trust the Pakistanis, and therefore, expecting hostilities to break out again, they continued to expand their network and build their support base.<sup>111</sup>

In 1970, elections were held all over Pakistan. Baloch nationalists who had all collected under the umbrella of the National Awami Party (NAP) emerged as the single-largest party capturing eight out of 20 seats in the Balochistan provincial assembly. Together with the Islamic party Jamiat Ulema Islam (JUI), a coalition government led by Sardar Ataullah Mengal assumed office in May 1972. Pakistan's then President, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who was also doubling up as Civilian Martial Law Administrator, was reluctant to hand over power to the Baloch nationalists.<sup>112</sup> Bhutto was allergic to any opposition, even more so because in the aftermath of the debacle at Dhaka, Pakistan feared the Baloch nationalists were another Awami League in the offing. This was also a time when the spectre of Pashtunistan was looming large in front of what was left of Pakistan. The fact that the Mengal government initiated measures to 'Balochistanise' the administration and police (replace Punjabi officers with local officials and reform the police by introducing a new police force for rural areas that was under the direct control of the provincial government), promote Baloch languages and culture, and also had differences with the

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109 Sheikh Asad Rahman, 'Baloch resistance's beginnings', *The Post* 15/5/2006, POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXIV No. 112 pp. 19 (item 4)

110 Op. cit. (Breseeg) pp 303

111 Op. cit. (Selig Harrison) pp. 30, 33

112 Op. cit. (Breseeg) pp 306

Pakistani establishment over the issue of Punjabi settlers on fertile Baloch lands, only added to the suspicions, distrust and anger in Islamabad.<sup>113</sup>

After just over nine months in power, during which time Bhutto did everything possible to undermine and sabotage the government by orchestrating strikes and farmer protests, even accusing the NAP leaders of conspiring with the newly-formed Bangladesh to convert Pakistan into a confederation, Ataulloh Mengal's government was dismissed in February 1973.<sup>114</sup> Apart from charging the Mengal government with exceeding constitutional limits, hounding the opposition, and promoting parochialism, one of the grounds for the dismissal was the alleged involvement of the Mengal government with Iraq and the Soviet Union to dismember both Iran and Pakistan.<sup>115</sup> The dismissal happened two days after the recovery of a huge arms cache from the house of the Iraqi defence attaché in Islamabad. While the Iraqis denied that the weapons were meant for Pakistani Balochistan, it appears that some of these weapons were indeed going to be shared with the Pararis in Pakistan. But the involvement of the Balochistan government was never proved and it is believed that some hardliners among the Baloch nationalists, such as General Sheroff, were probably complicit without the knowledge or assent of the Mengal government.<sup>116</sup>

The dismissal of the elected government sparked off the Fourth Rebellion, which was much more intense, ferocious and widespread than the previous three uprisings (*see Map 2*). Baloch nationalist rebels took to the mountains and started ambushing the security forces. Bhutto responded by seeking help from the Iranians, who were also extremely wary of the Baloch uprising in Pakistan because of its spill-over impact on the restive Iranian Baloch. The Shah of Iran agreed to give Pakistan \$200 million in economic and military assistance, including 30 helicopter gunships. These attack choppers were desperately required by the Pakistani forces as they were unable to tackle

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113 Rashed Rahman, 'Suppression of Baloch Nationalism', *The Nation* 14/11/1997 & 21/11/1997, POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXV No.269 pp. 2786 (item IX); also see Breseeg pp 307

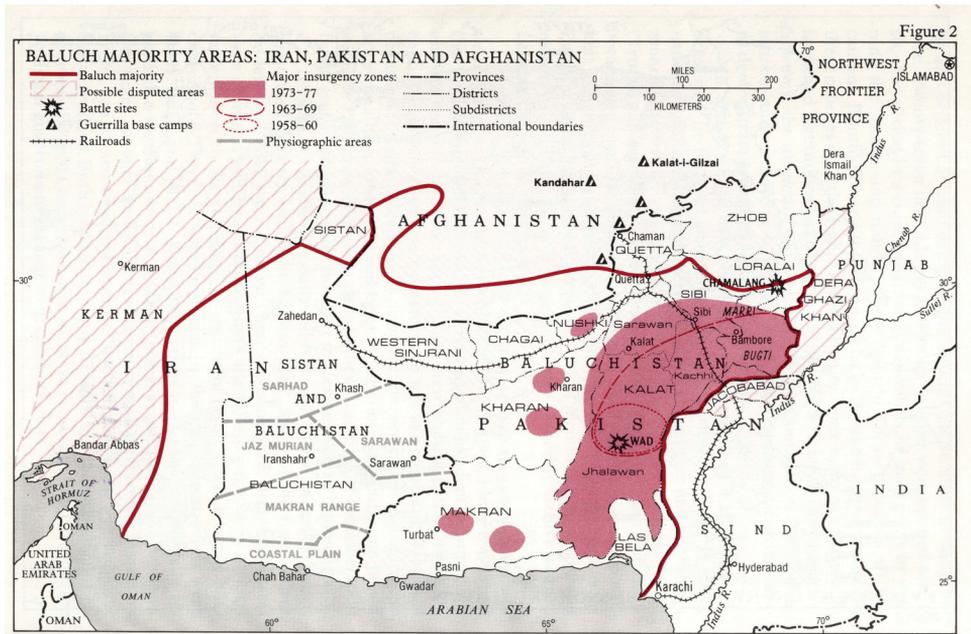
114 Op. cit. (Breseeg) pp 311-15

115 Pakistan Government White Paper on Balochistan, POT Pakistan Series Vol. II No. 107 pp. 545-53 (item 2); also see Syed Iqbal Ahmad pp 182

116 Op. cit. (Selig Harrison) pp 35-36

the Baloch guerrilla fighters who knew the terrain and were able to harry the Pakistani troops which were unable to chase them.<sup>117</sup> After enlisting help from the Iranians, Bhutto pushed in four divisions of the Pakistan Army into Balochistan (close to 80,000 troops), cracked down on the political leadership and imprisoned the top leadership, including the dismissed chief minister Mengal, the tribal chief and Member of Parliament Khair Bux Marri and former governor Ghaus Bux Bizenjo. This move only added fuel to the already raging fire and the Baloch uprising erupted with a ferocity that engulfed the province for the next four years.<sup>118</sup>

## MAP 2: BALUCH MAJORITY AREAS IN IRAN, PAKISTAN AND AFGHANISTAN<sup>119</sup>



117 Op. cit. (Rashed Rahman)

118 Op. cit. (Selig Harrison) pp 36

119 Map source: ibid. (Map 2)

Arraigned against the four divisions of the Pakistan Army and other Pakistani paramilitary forces totalling around 1,00,000 troops, were about 55,000 Baloch guerrillas at various stages of fighting.<sup>120</sup> But unlike the Pakistani forces who were armed with the latest weapons, the Baloch rebels had only antiquated weapons. Even the White Paper issued by the Bhutto government in 1974 accepted that the weapons with the insurgents were mostly .303 and 7mm rifles with a few LMGs.<sup>121</sup> And yet, during the four-year long war between 1973 and 1977, the Baloch insurgents extracted a heavy price from the Pakistan Army, inflicting a loss of around 3,000 men. An estimated 5,000-odd Baloch guerrillas died in the fighting.<sup>122</sup> Baloch estimates of the casualties in the war are much higher and according to one account, the Pakistan Army suffered nearly 7,000 casualties while around 15,000 Baloch (including combatants and non-combatants) lost their life. That this estimate, which has been given by someone who had fought on the side of the Baloch appears to be somewhat exaggerated is clear from the fact that it puts the number of guerrillas killed in the fighting at only 160.<sup>123</sup> Baloch civilians were, however, made to pay a very heavy price and nearly 2,00,000 people were displaced from their homes.<sup>124</sup>

Although the White Paper of the Pakistan government tried to underplay the scale of the insurgency by claiming that ‘the trouble remained confined to two main areas: Jhalawan sub-division of Kalat district...and the Marri areas of Sibi district’,<sup>125</sup> the reality was quite different. Almost the entire province was engulfed in the fighting, from Dera Ghazi Khan in Punjab to Sibi, south of Quetta, and from Dadu in Sindh to Nushki close to the Afghan border.<sup>126</sup> The rebels had virtually severed the links of Balochistan with Punjab and Sindh by dominating the roads and attacking the railway network. With guerrilla attacks against both military as well as economic targets increasing,

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120 Op. cit. (Breseeg) pp 324

121 Op. cit. Pakistan Government White Paper on Balochistan

122 Op. cit. (Breseeg) pp. 324

123 Op. cit. (Sheikh Asad Rahman, Post 15/5/2006)

124 Sanaullah Baloch, ‘Mutilated Balochistan’, pp 58. This is an unpublished manuscript that was translated from Urdu in 2004 by ORF

125 Op. cit. Pakistan Government White Paper on Balochistan

126 Op. cit. (Syed Iqbal Ahmad) pp 184

and the situation seemingly slipping out of control, the Pakistanis resorted to overwhelming force and started aerial platforms—fighters and helicopter gunships—to get the better of the insurgents.<sup>127</sup>

The White Paper, of course, claimed that ‘at no stage has the Pakistan Air Force been used for bombing or dropping paratroopers’ and that ‘only some light aircraft, including a small number of helicopters were used for aerial reconnaissance’.<sup>128</sup> But the fact of the matter was that the choppers were used extensively to strafe the guerrillas and flush them out of their mountain hideouts. In what is regarded as a war crime, in September 1974, the Pakistan Army attacked an encampment of families comprising women, children and older family members of the guerrillas in the Chamalang valley in order to draw out the fighters who were in the mountains. To protect their families, the fighters drew a protective circle around the camp and fought valiantly for three days against the Pakistan Army that threw everything in its arsenal at them—artillery, fighters, gunships.<sup>129</sup> As long as the Baloch were adopting hit-and-run tactics, they were more than a match for the Pakistan Army, but in a frontal engagement, the odds were heavily loaded against them.

The Chamalang battle was a turning point in the Fourth Rebellion. The Baloch fighters suffered a huge setback and were unable to regain the initiative.<sup>130</sup> Most of the fighters took refuge inside Afghanistan and used that as a base to continue mounting attacks inside Balochistan. But gradually the insurgency lost steam. In 1977, after overthrowing the Bhutto government in a military coup, General Zia ul Haq released the imprisoned Baloch leaders, announced a general amnesty for the rebels who had taken refuge in Afghanistan, and offered political negotiations.<sup>131</sup> General Zia managed to bring the fighting to an end but he couldn’t win peace. The political negotiations failed to address the concerns and demands of the Baloch leadership, especially on the issue of autonomy for Balochistan.<sup>132</sup>

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127 Op. cit. (Selig Harrison) pp 37

128 Op. cit. Pakistan Government White Paper on Balochistan

129 Op. cit. (Selig Harrison) pp 38

130 Op. cit. (Breseeg) pp 331

131 *ibid.* 333

132 Op. cit. (Selig Harrison) pp 40

An uneasy calm descended in Balochistan after the end of hostilities. The Pakistani authorities adopted the time-honoured policy of divide-and-rule to win over most of the Baloch tribal *sardars* through bribery, thereby driving a wedge between the tribes.<sup>133</sup> Within the tribes, the Pakistanis tried to cut the power of the troublesome *sardars* by opening up some of the areas and initiating 'developmental' work to wean away the tribesmen from their *sardars*.<sup>134</sup> But over almost the next quarter century, little changed in terms of the attitude of the Punjabi-dominated military and political establishment in Islamabad towards the Baloch. In the words of Asad Rahman, 'Even after the armed resistance of 1948, 1958, 1960 to 1968, and the civil war of 1973-77, the attitude of all Federal governments, civilian or military, has not changed in the least towards Balochistan.'<sup>135</sup> It was precisely this failure of Pakistan that the problem in Balochistan continued to simmer and led to the next and longest insurgency in Balochistan, one which is continuing even today 15 years later.

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133 Op. cit. (Breseeg) pp 334

134 Op. cit. (Syed Iqbal Ahmad) pp 186

135 Asad Rahman, 'Genesis of Balochistan's problems', The News International 14/11, 21/11, 26/11, 6/12 - 2000, POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXVIII No. 294 pp. 5083 (item17)

## IV. UPRISING (2000 till date)

The Pakistan Army managed to worst the Baloch nationalists in the 1973–77 war but weren't able to win over the Baloch. The sentiment of nationalism has not only remained strong, but also latent. In 1997, Ataullah Mengal's son, Akhtar Mengal, became chief minister, once again in a coalition, this time with Nawab Akbar Bugti's Jamhoori Watan Party (JWP) and the religious party Jamiat Ulema Islam of Fazlur Rahman.<sup>136</sup> But like all other government's that came into office after the dismissal of Ataullah Mengal's government, it wasn't long before Akhtar Mengal's government became a virtual menagerie of political players and even included parties like Nawaz Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League (PML) and Benazir Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party (PPP).<sup>137</sup> Clearly, managing such a diverse coalition meant making major compromises on ideology. But despite bending over backward to compromise, there remained problems between the Mengal government in Balochistan and Nawaz Sharif's government in Islamabad. What is more, there was also trouble between Bugti and Mengal.<sup>138</sup> Following Mengal's opposition to the nuclear tests,<sup>139</sup> Nawaz Sharif submitted a no-confidence motion against him.<sup>140</sup> Mengal was finally forced to quit and he blamed Islamabad for conspiring against his government.<sup>141</sup>

Mengal's ouster once again touched a raw nerve among the Baloch nationalists. That things were bubbling under the surface was tacitly acknowledged by General Pervez Musharraf who deposed Nawaz Sharif in a coup in 1999, and in his first address to his country, one of the priorities he listed as being

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136 'BNP's Aktar Mengal to head coalition govt in Balochistan', Dawn 20/2/1997, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXV No. 47 pp. 469-70 (item 4)

137 '10 more join Mengal Cabinet in Balochistan', Dawn 5/11/1997, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXV No. 259 pp. 2680 (item 21)

138 Afrasiab Khattak, 'Rift in Balochistan', Frontier Post 23/11/1997, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXV No. 280 pp. 2917-18 (item 14)

139 'Pak tests are against peace, security: BNP', Dawn 2/6/1998, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXVI No. 145 pp. 1784 (item 3)

140 'No trust move filed against Balochistan CM Mengal', Dawn 13/6/1998, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXVI No. 140 pp. 1720-21 (item 18)

141 'Centre conspired in my ouster, alleges Mengal', The News International 31/7/1998, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXVI No. 189 pp. 2451-52 (item 14)

part of his agenda was to ‘strengthen the federation [and] remove inter-provincial disharmony’.<sup>142</sup> But Musharraf’s quasi-military government only made matters worse. By the turn of the millennium, Balochistan was all set to erupt. The military dictatorship in 1999, followed by the tumultuous regional developments following the 9/11 terrorist attacks and the US invasion of Afghanistan, had already added to the existing pressure inside Balochistan. The final straw was the 2002 election that Musharraf is believed to have rigged to bring religious parties such as JUI-F and Jamaat Islami (Jamaat Islami) into power at the provincial level in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (then NWFP). The manipulation of the election became a trigger for the fifth uprising<sup>143</sup> that has ebbed and flowed but not ended even after more than 15 years.

### **An Ancient Struggle in a New Millennium**

While most analysts date the fifth uprising from around 2004, and many even point to the assassination of Nawab Akbar Bugti in 2006 as the starting point of the rebellion, the fact is that tell-tale signs of another Baloch uprising had started manifesting themselves from the first year of the new millennium. This is important because it puts a lie to the Pakistani propaganda that India has used its post-9/11 presence in Afghanistan to fuel the insurgency in Balochistan. The facts on the ground make it clear that the insurgency had already commenced before 9/11 when Pakistani proxies, the Taliban, were holding sway in Afghanistan. The Baloch uprising became more ferocious in subsequent years but that had less to do with the developments in Afghanistan and more to do with the mishandling of the situation by the Pakistani military establishment in Balochistan. Every insensitive and ham-handed move by Pakistan’s Punjabi-dominated military and political establishment in Balochistan—Akhtar Mengal’s ouster, rigged elections, undeclared military operations and forced disappearances of Baloch activists, imprisonment of iconic Baloch leaders and finally the assassination of Nawab Akbar Bugti—all

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142 ‘Text of Musharraf’s address to nation on his agenda’, Dawn 18/10/1999, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXVII No. 275 pp. 4011-13 (item 1)

143 Frederic Grare, ‘Balochistan: The State versus the Nation’, Carnegie Papers 2013, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, PP 10-11, accessed at <http://carnegieendowment.org/files/balochistan.pdf>

added to the disaffection and alienation towards Pakistan, which in turn gave a fillip to the insurgency.

In July 2000, three bombs exploded in one day in Quetta, including one in the cantonment area that killed over half-a-dozen soldiers.<sup>144</sup> The Quetta cantonment was also coming under rocket attacks from the surrounding hills and on one particular occasion, the roof of an empty classroom of the Command and Staff College collapsed after taking a direct rocket hit.<sup>145</sup> The July bombing was claimed by the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) which seemed to have re-emerged for the first time after the 1973–77 insurgency.<sup>146</sup> Pakistani observers tried to link the BLA with Nawab Khair Bux Marri and the Marri tribe (which had been in the vanguard of the 1973–77 insurgency) and saw the BLA attacks as retaliation against the arrest of Nawab Marri in a murder case of a High Court judge.<sup>147</sup> But neither Marri, nor the other dissident *sardars* such as Mengal and Bugti, owned up to the BLA, much less admitting to leading the outfit.<sup>148</sup>

In May 2000, top Baloch politicians held a meeting in Quetta in which their sense of deprivation and resentment against Pakistan was openly expressed. While Akhtar Mengal called for a new constitution, another politician declared that Pakistan had ceased to exist in 1971, implicitly suggesting that Balochistan should be free to find its own destiny. In an interview published a few days after this meeting, Nawab Akbar Bugti hinted at establishing a free Balochistan if the Pakistani federation wasn't able to perform.<sup>149</sup>

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144 'Seven dead, 27 hurt as 3 bomb blasts rock Quetta', Dawn 23/7/2000, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXVIII No. 198 pp. 3363-64 (item 18)

145 'Quetta Staff College under rocket attack', Frontier Post 27/12/2000, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXIX No. 3 pp. 40 (item 2)

146 'New Dimension in Terrorism', The Nation 25/7/2000, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXVIII No. 198 pp. 3448 (item 2)

147 'Khair Bakhsh Marri held in judge's murder case', Dawn 12/1/2000, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXVIII No. 16 pp. 297 (item 21)

148 Op. cit. (Grare 2013) pp 8-9

149 Anees Jilani, 'Smiling dead donkey and restive Balochistan', The News International 10/5/2000, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXVIII No. 154 pp. 2703-04 (item 10)

## **Oil or Nothing**

Among other things, the Baloch were increasingly frustrated over the relentless exploitation of their resources by Pakistan without any of the benefits being shared with the local people. While gas was discovered in Sui in the early 1950s, and was piped to Punjab and Karachi soon after, the capital city of Quetta started receiving piped natural gas only 30 years later, and that too because it was needed in Quetta cantonment.<sup>150</sup> Even 60 years after the discovery of gas in Balochistan, 59 percent of the urban population of the province did not get the benefit of this resource and only 13 of the 32 district headquarters were being supplied natural gas.<sup>151</sup> The travesty, or if you will, tragedy, of Balochistan's exploitation is evident from the fact that Sui, the place from where gas is being extracted and supplied to Punjab and other parts of Pakistan, is deprived of gas!<sup>152</sup>

This was the backdrop against which the military dictator Pervez Musharraf announced plans to hand out oil and gas exploration licenses in Balochistan.<sup>153</sup> He also announced other mega-projects in Balochistan, including the Gwadar port project,<sup>154</sup> Mirani dam, Coastal Highway and Saindak Gold project. But instead of assuaging the Baloch, these very projects became a rallying point for the nationalists who saw in them designs to subjugate the Baloch and exploit their resources. The reason for this was that the Baloch were not given any stake in the system, they had no control over these projects and they

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150 'Gas supply to central and southern Balochistan', *Balochistan Express* 3/5/2016, accessed at <http://www.bexpress.com.pk/2016/05/gas-supply-to-central-southern-balochistan/>; also see 'Zia inaugurates Quetta natural gas pipeline', *Pakistan Times* 7/1/1983, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XI No. 7 pp. 80 (item 13)

151 Iftikhar Firdous, 'Deprived Province: 59% of Balochistan without natural gas', *Express tribune* 26/5/2014, accessed at <https://tribune.com.pk/story/713135/deprived-province-59-of-balochistan-without-natural-gas/>

152 Sana Samad, 'Sui gas in Balochistan', *Balochistan Express* 8/6/2016, accessed at <http://www.bexpress.com.pk/2016/06/sui-gas-in-balochistan/>

153 'CE announces Rs 6 bn uplift plan for Balochistan', *The News International* 24/2/2000, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXVIII No. 56 pp. 1025 (item 8)

154 For a detailed exposition of the Gwadar port controversy see Sushant Sareen, 'Corridor Calculus: China Pakistan Economic Corridor & China's comprador investment model in Pakistan', *Vivekananda International Foundation* (2006), pp. 20-23

stood to gain very little from them. The Pakistanis negotiated with the tribal chiefs, particularly Akbar Bugti and Attaullah Mengal, to get them on board for allowing the exploration work to happen unhindered. Initially, the Baloch leaders gave their nod in return for a development package,<sup>155</sup> but within days they expressed their reservations because the agreement had not been signed by anyone authorised by the Pakistani government, and familiar with the perfidy of the Pakistani state, the Baloch were naturally unwilling to be led up the garden path once again.<sup>156</sup>

The breakdown of talks led to the breakout of violence. While in the Marri region, rockets were routinely fired on security forces and government installations, in Bugti country, gas pipelines and other energy infrastructure started being targeted. According to one estimate, in 2001 and 2002, nearly two dozen rocket attacks were carried out against the gas infrastructure.<sup>157</sup> With pipelines getting blown up, the supply of gas to Punjab would get disrupted, causing great hardship to domestic consumers and inflicting a heavy cost on not just industry but also on the gas companies. For instance, one report estimated that suspension of gas from Sui (which at that time was supplying 45 percent of the total gas used in Pakistan) cost the Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Ltd. a daily loss of PKR 60 million.<sup>158</sup>

The Pakistani state responded in a ham-handed manner as usual to the unrest in Dera Bugti. To secure the gas infrastructure, some 50,000 Frontier Corps (FC) troops were despatched to Dera Bugti. In addition, the Pakistanis started to interfere in Bugti tribe politics and propped up Akbar Bugti's rivals to challenge him in his bastion. The trouble, however, was that an essentially economic problem, albeit with social and political implications, was converted into a security problem by Pakistan's militaristic mindset. The unrest was triggered by the failure of the gas companies to live up to their side

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155 'Balochistan leaders agree to allow oil, gas exploration', Dawn 10/5/2001, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXIX No. 126 pp. 2124-25 (item 22)

156 'Baloch leaders voice reservations on oil, gas explorations', Pakistan Observer 14/5/2001, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXIX No. 134 pp. 2259-60 (item 11)

157 Munawar Hasan, '24 rocket attacks in two years', The Nation 23/2/2003, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXI No. 31 pp. 691 (item 16)

158 'Gas station blown up rupturing pipelines', The News International 22/1/2003, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXI No. 30 pp. 654 (item 1)

of the bargain and fulfil commitments they had made to the local people in return for getting gas concessions.<sup>159</sup> According to a report, “The demands of the local population include the recruitment of local engineers and workers, confirmation of the jobs of hundreds of temporary workers, development schemes for the welfare of the local population and protection of the rights of over 300 employees of the Sui purification plant that is due to be handed over after its sale to Pakistan Petroleum Limited (PPL) in late June. They also demand the restoration of the facility of recruitment of heirs of those who retire or die in service. The gas company officials and the Ministry of Petroleum reached an agreement over some of these demands but, according to the local population, the agreement was never implemented.’ Even as the Pakistani security forces were placing Dera Bugti under siege, armed Baloch tribesmen, not just from the Bugti tribe but also Marris, made a beeline for Dera Bugti and surrounded the security forces.<sup>160</sup>

The Dera Bugti siege ended after a month-long stand-off between the tribesmen and the security forces with the tribesmen withdrawing from their positions, followed by the FC lifting their siege.<sup>161</sup> Incidentally, the strong arm against Bugti was the handiwork of the only Baloch three star general and Corps Commander of Quetta, Lt. General Abdul Qadir Baloch, who like a classic collaborator, joined hands with the Pakistani forces when he was given a position of importance, and became a spokesman of Baloch rights and a critic of Pakistani policies when he was out in the cold. After the assassination of Akbar Bugti in 2006, he had the gall to describe Bugti as a ‘martyr’ to the Baloch cause’!<sup>162</sup> He even went on to say that ‘Bugti is my hero and his vision

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159 ‘Tension in Dera Bugti mounting’, Dawn 20/6/2002, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXX No. 143 pp. 2769-70 (item 15)

160 Shahzada Zulfiqar, ‘The Pipeline to Trouble’, Newline July 2002, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXX No. 213 pp. 4333-35 (item 21)

161 ‘Dera Bugti siege likely to end soon’, Dawn 30/6/2002, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXX No. 153 pp. 2984-85 (item 21); also see ‘FC men end siege to Bugti’s residence’, Dawn 1/7/2002, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXX No. 155 pp. 3023 (item 20)

162 ‘Balochistan’s control on resources urged’, Dawn 15/9/2006, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXIV No. 217 pp. 7-8 (item 2)

is my vision'.<sup>163</sup> Today, Abdul Qadir Baloch is a minister in the Nawaz Sharif cabinet and a defender of the brutal crackdown on Balochistan.

Be that as it may, it wasn't only Bugti country which was in ferment. The Pakistan government claimed at the time that they had unearthed terrorist camps in Kohlu and were not only taking measures to stop the flow of weapons to these camps, but were also contemplating action to eliminate them.<sup>164</sup> In the Marri areas of Barkhan and Kohlu, there was solid resistance to the operations of the oil and gas companies, which they claimed were working for the benefit of Punjab.<sup>165</sup> Starting from the year 2000 to until now, the Baloch nationalists have continued to target the gas infrastructure (*see Table 1*), to cause damage to the Pakistani economy and deny Pakistan the resources of Balochistan, and also to keep their movement alive.

In September 2003, the top nationalist leaders formed a formal alliance, 'Baloch Ittehad', which included among others Akbar Bugti's Jamhoori Watan Party (JWP), Akhtar Mengal's Balochistan National Party (BNP), and the middle-class Baloch nationalist party, Balochistan National Movement (BNM), with the Marris being represented by Balach Marri, son of Nawab Khair Bux Marri. The alliance partners pledged to oppose Gwadar port as it was not in the interest of the Baloch. They also swore to resist the setting up of new army cantonments in Kohlu (where oil exploration concessions were handed out), Gwadar (to protect the port project) and Dera Bugti (to secure the gas pipelines).<sup>166</sup> Even the Balochistan assembly, which was dominated by the lackeys of the Musharraf regime, endorsed the demands of the nationalists and passed a resolution 'calling upon the Federal government to stop its plan of constructing cantonments in Dera Bugti, Kohlu and Gwadar, remove the Frontier Corps-manned checkpoints from the highways and withdraw the Army from border areas'.<sup>167</sup> But all these

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163 'Bugti is my hero: former Corps Commander', Daily Times 1/7/2007, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXV No. 156 pp. 39 (item 7)

164 'Terrorist camps unearthed in Balochistan', Daily Times 1/7/2002, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXX No. 153 pp. 2974-75 (item 6)

165 Shahzada Zulfiqar, 'Pipeline in flames', Newline February 2003, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXI No. 74 pp. 1637 (item 12)

166 'Balochistan Nationalists form new alliance', The News International 15/9/2003, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXI No. 231 pp. 4286 (item 24) ; also see Shahzada Zulfiqar, 'Nationalist uprising in Balochistan', Newline October 2003, POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXII No. 4 pp. 73-74 (item 20)

167 Shahzada Zulfiqar, 'All talk, no action: Analysis', Newline October 2003, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXI No. 298 pp. 5531-32 (item 23)

protestations of the Baloch fell on deaf ears. The Pakistani authorities never realised that what they saw as development projects—incidentally, for the Pakistan Army, even constructing cantonments are a development activity<sup>168</sup>—was seen by the Baloch as a move to tighten the stranglehold of Islamabad on the resources of the province and alter the demographic composition in the province, reducing the Baloch into a minority. The military cantonments were seen as measure to browbeat the Baloch into submission.<sup>169</sup>

**TABLE 1: NUMBER OF ATTACKS ON BALOCHISTAN GAS PIPELINE (2005-2017)<sup>170</sup>**

YEAR	INCIDENTS	KILLED	INJURED
2005	5	10	16
2006	19	0	0
2007	31	1	1
2008	31	2	1
2009	29	0	3
2010	3	0	0
2011	52	3	10
2012	23	0	0
2013	10	0	0
2014	17	0	0
2015	10	0	0
2016	2	0	0
2017	0	0	0

168 Mir Mohammad Ali Talpur, 'Real challenge in Balochistan', Daily Times 23/2/2005, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXIII No. 46 pp. 1745 (item 8)

169 Sushant Sareen, 'Who wants to break up Pakistan?', rediff.com 18/5/2005, accessed at <http://www.rediff.com/news/2005/may/18sareen.htm>

170 Source: South Asia Terrorism Portal, accessed at [http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/pakistan/Balochistan/data/Attacks\\_Gas\\_pipeline.htm](http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/pakistan/Balochistan/data/Attacks_Gas_pipeline.htm)

Note: these numbers are on the lower side considering that these are reports in the Pakistani media. For instance, according to one analysis, in 2004 alone "there were 626 rocket attacks of which 379 rockets landed on the Sui gas fields and some targeted the railway tracks. There were 122 bomb explosions on the gas pipeline. In the first 20 days of year 2005, there have been 1,330 incidents of rocket attacks and bomb explosions; the main targets being Sui gas installations and railways communications", Mir Jamilur Rahman, 'Stage managed turmoil', The News International 29/1/2005, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXIII No. 25 pp. 891-892 (item 18)

## **Bloody Rebellion**

By 2004, Balochistan was in the throes of a full-blown insurgency, which not only continued to escalate in the years ahead, but which also was no longer limited to only a couple of areas and instead engulfed almost the entire province. While the locus of the armed uprising continued to shift over the years, the Bugti-Marri area, central and eastern Balochistan, Quetta region and last but not the least, the Makran belt, have continued to remain disturbed despite all the brutality, scorched earth methods (razing of entire villages), summary executions, and use of aerial platforms such as fighters and gunships by the Pakistani armed forces (*see Chapter 4*).

In the initial years of the uprising, the insurgency was spearheaded by the BLA. Between 2003 and early 2005, the BLA is believed to have fired over 1,500 rockets and carried out over 110 bomb blasts across Balochistan.<sup>171</sup> The insurgents attacked not only physical infrastructure such as power pylons, railway lines, bridges, gas pipelines, and other government installations, but also hit security forces and targeted Chinese engineers working on the Gwadar port project.<sup>172</sup> In August 2004, the BLA ambushed an army van in Khuzdar and killed six soldiers, sending shock waves all over the province and also in Pakistan.<sup>173</sup> A day later, militants attacked the convoy of the Chief Minister in Khuzdar killing two soldiers.<sup>174</sup> A few more days later, on Pakistan's Independence Day, the BLA carried out 10 coordinated bomb blasts in Quetta. Although there were no casualties since these were low-intensity bombs, the message of the militants was loud and clear.<sup>175</sup> The skirmishes and sabotage activities went on throughout 2004, the army continued to expand its footprint in Balochistan and the Baloch political leaders continued to agitate and oppose plans to set up army cantonments.<sup>176</sup>

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171 Op. cit. (Talpur)

172 Op. cit. (Sushant Sareen, 2006)

173 'Five army men among six killed in Khuzdar ambush', *The News International* 2/8/2004, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXII No. 186 pp. 3611-12 (item 5)

174 'Balochistan CM survives attempt on life, two killed', *The News International* 3/8/2004, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXII No. 186 pp 3611. (item 4)

175 '10 blasts rock Quetta', *The news International* 15/8/2004, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXII No. 197 pp. 3833-34 (item 15)

176 'Senators oppose new cantonments in Balochistan', *The News International* 21/8/2004, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXII No. 203 pp. 3965-66 (item 14)

But in 2005, matters deteriorated very sharply. The provocation was the gang rape by Pakistan Army personnel of a lady doctor working in the hospital run by Pakistan Petroleum Limited. While the rape took place on the night of 1 January, the matter came to light a week later after the Balochistan Liberation Front (BLF) blew up a pipeline in Sui and exchanged fire with security personnel and said that it was in reaction to the outrage committed by Pakistan Army personnel.<sup>177</sup> In retaliatory fire, security forces resorted to heavy firing and shelled civilians, killing many people, including women and children. Nawab Akbar Bugti took up cudgels on behalf of the victim and revealed that the rapists included an army captain and three of his subordinates.<sup>178</sup> The authorities, of course, covered up the whole case, which was hardly surprising given that the military dictator Musharraf claimed a few months later that Pakistani women get themselves raped to get money and a visa for the US and Canada!<sup>179</sup> But for the Baloch, the gang rape was utterly unacceptable, and the cover-up was outrageous.

On 11 January 2005, the Baloch let loose a barrage of rocket fire on the gas infrastructure in Sui, killing around 15 soldiers, according to one estimate. To quell the disturbances, the Pakistani security forces pumped in some 3,000 men, along with tanks and artillery, backed by helicopters and gunships.<sup>180</sup> Musharraf was so furious that he threatened the Baloch saying 'don't push us, this isn't the 1970s when you can hit and run and hide in the mountains. This time you won't even know what hit you'. The Baloch were not cowed down and Ataullah Mengal's riposte was that in case the Pakistan Army launched military operations, the Baloch would fight a decisive battle.<sup>181</sup> The impending

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177 'Rocket attack destroys gas pipeline in Sui', Daily Times 8/1/2005, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXIII No. 8 pp. 242 (item 9)

178 'Baloch nation cannot be eliminated, says Bugti', The News International 13/1/2005, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXIII No. 12 pp. 377-78 (item 2)

179 Glenn Kessler, 'Musharraf denies rape comments', Washington Post 19/9/2005, accessed at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/09/18/AR2005091800554.html>

180 'Balochistan crisis deepens, army action likely: Jam', The News International 14/1/2005, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXIII No. 13 pp 416-18. (item 1); Also see 'Our honour cannot be bought: Balochs', Daily Times 4/2/2005, POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXIII No. 30 pp. 1092-93 (item 1)

181 Air Marshal Ayaz Ahmad Khan, 'From sardars to warlords', The Nation 9/3/2005, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXIII No. 58 pp. 2252-53 (item 12)

military operation didn't take place, but tensions remained extremely high and sabotage of government installations and economic infrastructure, and ambushes of security force personnel continued.<sup>182</sup> For instance, in March 2005, Bugti tribesmen ambushed a FC convoy and killed eight soldiers after they had attacked a Hindu settlement in Dera Bugti and killed over 60 civilians.<sup>183</sup>

Although the Pakistan military had launched an undeclared operation against the Baloch nationalists from around 2001–02, by 2003 the Baloch nationalists had started to openly warn against any military escalation by the Pakistani forces that would take the province back to the 1970s.<sup>184</sup> The Pakistan government, however, continued to deny that any operation had been launched in Balochistan.<sup>185</sup> Even years later, when Balochistan was virtually under the control of the Pakistan military and thousands of troops had put Dera Bugti and other Baloch areas under siege, the government disingenuously claimed that only 'focussed action' was being taken by the armed forces and there was no military operation as such in the province.<sup>186</sup> This fiction continued to be peddled even after the military dictator had gone and an ostensibly civilian dispensation came into power in early 2008.<sup>187</sup>

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182 For instance: 'Four FC men killed in Turbat ambush', *The News International* 26/12/2004, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXII No. 310 pp. 6063 (item 12); 'Balochistan plunges into darkness', *The News International* 2/2/2005, POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXII No. 28 pp. 1025-28 (item 2) ; 'Oil pipeline blown up near D.I. Khan', *Dawn* 12/2/2005, POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXII No. 37 pp. 1368-69 (item 6) ; 'PTCL, WAPDA installations attacked', *The News International* 9/2/2005, POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXII No. 34 pp. 1274 (item 5)

183 Rashed Rahman, 'escalating Baloch crisis', *Daily Times* 22/3/2005, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXIII No. 69 pp. 2710-11 (item 7)

184 'Balochistan on the way to 1970 like situation: JWP', *The News International* 29/4/2003, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXI No. 107 pp. 2327 (item 20)

185 'No military operation in Balochistan: Jamali', *The News International* 20/5/2003, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXI No. 125 pp. 2696-97 (item 14)

186 'No military operation in Balochistan, Waziristan: Sherpao', *The News International* 21/3/2006, POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXIV No. 66 pp. 7-12 (item 3)

187 'No military operation in Balochistan, says CM', *Dawn* 23/2/2009, accessed at <https://www.dawn.com/news/345334/no-military-operation-in-balochistan-says-cm>

Meanwhile, by 2004, with the situation deteriorating at an alarming pace, the politicians in Islamabad tried to intercede and seek a political solution to resolve the crisis in Balochistan. The then Prime Minister, Shujaat Hussain, who shared a close relationship with many Baloch *sardars* since his father's time, floated the proposal of a Special Parliamentary Committee to seek a political resolution to the Balochistan problem.<sup>188</sup> In September 2004, a 29-member parliamentary committee was formed 'to examine the current situation in Balochistan and make recommendations to promote inter-provincial harmony and protect the rights of the province with a view to strengthening the Federation'.<sup>189</sup> After eight months of deliberations, one of the sub-committees of the Parliamentary Committee finalised its recommendations, which were fairly far reaching and ostensibly addressed most, if not all the demands of the Baloch nationalists.<sup>190</sup> Although the Pakistani press claimed that 'the "consensual" decisions made in it [Parliamentary Committee] will become a kind of unofficial "magna carta" of the centre-province relations',<sup>191</sup> the Baloch nationalists rejected the recommendations as a farce and claimed that these were 'aimed at depriving the people of Balochistan of their national rights relating to ownership of their resources' and were more about safeguarding Islamabad's interests rather than protecting Baloch interests.<sup>192</sup>

After the political initiative collapsed, the situation continued to deteriorate. By the end of 2005, it was quite clear that the military dictator, General Pervez Musharraf, had run out of patience with the Baloch nationalists, and the Pakistan Army, itching to go after the dissident Baloch, was in no mood for any compromise.<sup>193</sup> The immediate provocation for the hard line was the

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188 'Shujaat for special panel to resolve Balochistan issue', *The News International* 24/8/2004, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXII No. 204 pp. 3975-76 (item 3)

189 '29 member parliamentary body on Balochistan formed', *The News International* 30/9/2004, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXII No. 236 pp. 4628-29 (item 17)

190 'Balochistan panel okays report', see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXIII No. 105 pp. 4016-19 (item 1)

191 'Comments: Is it our Magna Carta?' *Daily Times* 4/5/2005, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXIII No. 106 pp. 4056-58 (item 9)

192 'BNP leader rejects new Balochistan package', *Dawn* 4/5/2005, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXIII No. 106 pp. 1052-56 (item 8)

193 Fahd Husain, 'Govt ready to call Baloch Sardars' bluff', *The News International* 30/12/2005, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXIII No. 309 pp. 11135 (item 1)

rocket attack on a public meeting attended by Musharraf in Kohlu.<sup>194</sup> On the same day and in the same place, Baloch insurgents targeted the helicopter of the IGFC, Balochistan, and injured him and a Brigadier.<sup>195</sup> Within days, the Pakistan Army launched a massive military operation in Balochistan, almost as if it were waging war against another country. Using fighter jets, helicopter gunships, long range artillery and a force of around 20,000 troops, the focus of the operations was the Marri area—Kohlu and its surrounding areas—and Dera Bugti, but there was also heavy deployment all over the province, including in the Noshki, Kalat and Makran regions. Scores of people were killed and dozens of villages destroyed.<sup>196</sup>

In the beginning of 2006, operations were launched in Dera Bugti. Throughout January, behaving like an occupation force, the Pakistan Army targeted civilians and residential areas, and there were allegations that the Pakistanis resorted to carpet bombing of Baloch settlements.<sup>197</sup> Even more serious was the charge that Pakistani forces were using chemical weapons.<sup>198</sup> In early January, the Pakistani forces forcibly occupied the Bugti house in Sui and started shelling Dera Bugti.<sup>199</sup>

By mid-January, with the conflict escalating, it became quite clear that the Pakistan forces were going to stop at nothing to snuff out resistance from the Baloch.<sup>200</sup> They had even started shelling Nawab Bugti's house with mortars

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194 'Saboteurs can't deter progress: Musharraf', *The Nation* 15/12/2005, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXIII No. 296 pp. 10634 (item 9)

195 'General wounded in copter attack', *The Nation* 16/12/2005, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXIII No. 297 pp. 10674 (item 14)

196 'Several killed in Kohlu operation', POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXIII No. 299 pp.10755-60 (item 8).

197 'Opposition stages joint walkout in National Assembly', *The Nation* 31/1/2006, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXIV No. 25 pp. 11-13 (item 6)

198 'Security forces suffered losses: Bugti', *Dawn* 13/2/2006, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXIV No. 36 pp 18. (item 8)

199 'Bugti House in Sui seized, 20 people arrested', see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXIV No. 10 pp. 5-12 (item 2)

200 '6 troops among 35 killed in Dera Bugti, Balochistan in 3 days', see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXIV No. 12 pp. 4-9 (item 2); also see 'Seven persons killed in Dera Bugti shelling', POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXIV No. 19 pp. 30-33 (item 8)

and the Nawab barely escaped one such attack. This sort of attack on the home of the *sardar* of a tribe was clearly an attempt by the Pakistan forces to make an example of the rebellious *sardars* so that the rest of the tribesmen get the message. Before Bugti's house was targeted, the Pakistan Army had destroyed the historic fort of the Marris and residence of Balach Marri, in Kahan.<sup>201</sup> However, Bugti had shifted his family from Dera Bugti and had gone into the hills himself to continue his resistance to Pakistani occupation.<sup>202</sup> With the Nawab gone, the Pakistani forces launched a rocket and mortar attack on his house and badly damaged it. While the Pakistanis claimed that an ammunition dump in the Nawab's house had caught fire and blown up the place, this was denied by the Nawab's men who said that the Pakistan Army had destroyed not just a mosque in the vicinity but also targeted the homes of the Hindu community.<sup>203</sup> By February, Dera Bugti had become a ghost town. A fact-finding mission of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan reported that 85 percent of Dera Bugti residents (i.e., over 20,000 people) had been displaced in the fighting and forced to leave.<sup>204</sup>

The octogenarian Akbar Bugti, accompanied by his grandson Brahamdagh and a few loyal tribesmen, took his fight to the hills and used a satellite phone to reach out to the media in Pakistan, addressing press conferences from his mountainous hideouts.<sup>205</sup> Bugti was joined in the hills by Balach Marri and it was claimed at the time that roughly 2,000 Bugtis in Dera Bugti, and an equal number of Marris in Kohlu, were resisting the Pakistani forces.<sup>206</sup>

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201 'JWP criticises destruction of historic fort', Dawn 19/1/2006, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXIV No. 16 pp. 30 (item 8)

202 Sheikh Asad Rahman, 'Targeting Baloch leadership', Post 10/7/2006, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXIV No. 160 pp. 12 (item 2)

203 'New clashes in Dera Bugti, Nawab's house hit', Dawn 8/2/2006, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXIV No. 32 pp. 5-13 (item 2)

204 'Conflict in Balochistan', Report of HRC fact-finding missions, Dec 2005-Jan 2006, pp 32

205 'Bugti proposes committee to probe charges against him', The News International 26/1/2006, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXIV No. 22 pp. 35-36 (item 12)

206 Carlotta Gall, 'In remote Pakistan province, civil war festers', New York Times 2/4/2006, accessed at <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/04/02/world/asia/02pakistan.html>

Meanwhile, in the rest of Balochistan, attacks on security forces and government installations continued to rise. The government forces were also chasing Bugti and were trying to get a fix on his position by tracing the location of his satellite phone. By late August 2006, Bugti had been tracked down. Brahamdagh managed to escape the dragnet, but the Nawab couldn't. According to Brahamdagh, the Pakistanis assaulted Bugti's position with fighter aircraft and gunships for three days and then finally sent in commandos.<sup>207</sup> On 26 August 2006, Akbar Bugti was assassinated by the Pakistanis.<sup>208</sup>

But if the Pakistanis thought that Bugti's death would bring the Baloch uprising to an end, they had another thought coming. After Nauroz Khan, Balochistan had a new icon for its liberation struggle. And instead of dousing the flames in Balochistan, Bugti's death set fire to the province and the scale of militancy continued to rise in the coming years (*see Table 2*).<sup>209</sup> Some 15 months after Bugti was killed, news came that Balach Marri along with some of his companions had been killed in a military assault in some undisclosed location.

**TABLE 2: MILITANT ATTACKS IN BALOCHISTAN**

YEAR	NUMBER OF ATTACKS	KILLED	INJURED
2006	403	277	676
2007	536	224	564
2008	692	296	807
2009	792	386	1,070
2010	737	600	1,117
2011	640	710	853
2012	474	631	1,032
2013	487	727	1,577
2014	341	375	926
2015	218	257	329
2016	151	412	702

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207 Carlotta Gall, 'Pakistan's bitter, little known ethnic rebellion', New York Times 23/8/2011, accessed at <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/08/24/world/asia/24baluch.html>

208 Saleem Shahid, 'Bugti killed in operation: Six officers among 21 security personnel dead', Dawn 27/8/2006, accessed at <https://www.dawn.com/news/207726>

209 Source: Pakistan Security Report (various years), Pakistan Institute of Peace Studies. (Note: the total number of attacks includes the ones by Radical Islamist groups. But as the next table shows, at least between 2013-16 for which data is available, around 80 percent of the total attacks were carried out by Baloch nationalist groups)

There were conflicting accounts of what exactly had happened. One report claimed that he was killed on the Pak-Afghan border by Pakistani forces. Another report claimed that he was taken out by NATO forces while travelling inside Afghanistan in a convoy.<sup>210</sup> A spokesman of BLA claimed that he had been killed in the Marri area.<sup>211</sup> Once again, the death of a prominent and iconic militant leader didn't quell the Baloch struggle, rather it fuelled it further. The immediate impact of the death of Balach was greater unrest and violence in Balochistan.<sup>212</sup>

In 2009, a Baloch parliamentarian stunned the Pakistan parliament by revealing that the Pakistani national anthem was no longer sung in schools of Balochistan.<sup>213</sup> By 2010, it was reported that in 80 percent of Balochistan, books on 'Pakistan Studies' had been banned, the National Flag could no longer be flown in any school or any other building, and singing the National Anthem had been prohibited by the militants.<sup>214</sup> School students were burning the Pakistani flags and anti-Pakistan wall chalking was rampant.<sup>215</sup> The militants also started targeting settlers from Pakistan. Mostly Punjabis, but also people from other ethnicities, were killed in targeted attacks and businesses and residences of settlers were threatened and attacked.<sup>216</sup>

According to one estimate, until 2011, around 1,200 settlers were killed in Balochistan. Between 2008 and 2011, there was an exodus of anything

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210 'Balach Marri killed in military assault', *The Nation* 22/11/2007, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXV No. 275 pp. 43-45 (item 18)

211 'Mystery surrounds Balach's killing', *Dawn* 23/11/2007, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXV No. 276 pp. 50-56 (item 20)

212 'Gunmen kill three policemen in Quetta', *The News International* 24/11/2007, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXV No. 277 pp. 42-43 (item 19)

213 'Balochistan schools abandon National Anthem, Senate told', *The News International* 30/4/2009, accessed at <https://www.thenews.com.pk/archive/print/664146-balochistan-schools-abandon-national-anthem>

214 Saeed Minhas, 'Balochistan Diary: Army schools: too little, a bit too late', *Daily Times* 4/7/2010, accessed at [http://dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010%5C07%5C04%5Cstory\\_4-7-2010\\_pg7\\_15](http://dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010%5C07%5C04%5Cstory_4-7-2010_pg7_15) on 8/7/2010

215 Op. cit. (Amir Mateen, 2010)

216 Malik Siraj Akbar, 'Punjabi settlers biggest victims of Bugti aftermath', *Daily times* 9/7/2009, accessed at [http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2009\07\09\story\\_9-7-2009\\_pg7\\_13](http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2009\07\09\story_9-7-2009_pg7_13) accessed on 9/7/2009

between 1,00,000 and 2,00,000 settlers from Balochistan to other provinces. Along with settlers, the militants also started targeting teachers, doctors, and lawyers from other provinces. There was a sense among some Baloch activists that the exodus would lead to freedom of Balochistan.<sup>217</sup> But the impact of this exodus was felt less in winning freedom for Balochistan, and more in terms of complete collapse of civic administration and dysfunctionality of essential services such as health and education, so much so that even the elite among the nationalist leadership and those collaborating with the Pakistani state preferred not to stay in Balochistan.<sup>218</sup> Even from the point of view of the Baloch struggle, the campaign against settlers, and its extension to those seen as collaborators, robbed the Baloch separatists of a lot of their sheen and also the sympathy that many Baloch and some non-Baloch had for them. Baloch analysts called this a 'big strategic blunder' that 'blunted their achievements'.<sup>219</sup>

## **New Generation Rebellion**

After the murder of Akbar Bugti, Baloch nationalism underwent a generational shift. While some of the tribal chiefs, namely the children of Khair Bux Marri, Ataullah Mengal and the grandson of Akbar Bugti continued to struggle against Pakistani occupation, a new leadership belonging to the middle-class Baloch also emerged.<sup>220</sup> Perhaps the tallest leader from this new class of nationalists and militants was Dr Allah Nazar, a gold medallist medicine student who took forward the struggle against Pakistan as the leader of the Balochistan Liberation Front (BLF). According to author Mahvish Ahmad, '[Allah] Nazar's rise through the ranks of the province's ethno-nationalists represents a fundamental shift within the hierarchy of the movement. From one led by sardars, or tribal leaders, it is becoming one spearheaded and populated by a non-tribal cohort of middle-class Baloch. [Allah]

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217 Nasir Jamal, 'Settlers caught in crossfire', Dawn 28/6/2011, accessed at <https://www.dawn.com/news/640059>

218 Amir Mateen, 'Balochistan will stay if people stop leaving', 29/5/2012, accessed at <https://www.thenews.com.pk/archive/print/622680-balochistan-will-stay-if-people-stop-leaving>

219 Karlos Zurutuza, 'Understanding Pakistan's Baloch insurgency', The Diplomat 24/6/2015, accessed at <http://thediplomat.com/2015/06/cracking-pakistans-baloch-insurgency/>

220 Op. cit. (Grare 2013) pp 9

Nazar's leadership exemplifies the shift of the movement's epicentre from Balochistan's north-east—home to the Marris and Bugtis, and known for its longstanding separatist sentiments—to the remittance-rich, urbanising south, which is home to a burgeoning educated and professional class, which has historically remained on the sidelines of the province's politics.<sup>221</sup> Unlike other Baloch freedom fighters who found it difficult to operate from inside Balochistan, Allah Nazar has stayed on in Balochistan and challenged the might of the Pakistan Army by force of arms.<sup>222</sup> By 2010, Allah Nazar was seen as the man with the greatest influence on militant Baloch youth, enjoying a sort of cult status among his followers.<sup>223</sup> According to a report, he was seen as a 'mythical figure' by the militants as he dared even *sardars* such as Khair Bux Marri and Brahmadagh Bugti. He was uncompromising and ruthless when it came to dealing with anyone who spoke for Pakistan. The Pakistan Army tried to portray him as someone who was on the Indian payroll, but it had virtually no impact on his popularity. In the entire Makran belt and districts such as Awaran and Kech, Allah Nazar's word was law.<sup>224</sup>

While ostensibly the BLA still remained the most fearsome militant group in terms of attacks attributed to it in Balochistan (*see Table 3*), there are analysts who believe that many of the attacks that were ticked off in BLA's account were actually carried out by BLF cadres. The data in Table 3, therefore, needs to be treated with some caution because there was considerable confusion among many Pakistani journalists between the group that claimed an attack and the one which actually carried out the attack. What is more, the number of attacks attributed is grossly underestimated when compared to other estimates of the operations carried out by these groups. For instance, one estimate puts the number of attacks by United Baloch Army (UBA) at 70.<sup>225</sup> There was, in any case, considerable cooperation and coordination between BLA and BLF

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221 Mahvish Ahmad, 'The changing face of Balochistan's separatist insurgency', *The Caravan* 1/7/2014, accessed at <http://www.caravanmagazine.in/reportage/home-front-changing-insurgency-balochistan>

222 Cyril Almeida, 'A weaker insurgency, but with new contours', *Dawn* 27/6/2011, accessed at <https://www.dawn.com/news/639631>

223 *ibid.*

224 'Special Report', *The News International* 7/8/2010, accessed at <https://www.thenews.com.pk/archive/print/672809-special-report>

225 <http://terrorist-groups.insidegov.com/l/7489/United-Baloch-Army>

until at least 2011–12, when it seems some chasms developed because of the growing prominence and influence of BLF and the fact that it was seen as the more effective force on ground.<sup>226</sup>

**TABLE 3: ATTACKS BY BALOCH MILITANT GROUPS<sup>227</sup>**

YEAR	BLA	BLF	BRA	UBA	LeB
2013	173	85	95	5	60
2014	106	18	97	4	70
2015	80	38	43	5	23
2016	55	27	24	3	8

Despite the fact that the fifth uprising in Balochistan far surpasses previous rebellions in terms of reach, spread (see Table 4) and sweeping sentiment in its favour, not to mention the tenacity of the fighters and the fact that the uprising has managed to sustain itself against all odds and virtually no international support, many Pakistani analysts and journalists, including some credible ones, have tried to play down what has been happening inside Balochistan. For instance, in the series he wrote on Balochistan for *The News International*, journalist Amir Mateen quoted a Pashtun analyst in Quetta as saying that the situation was more anarchy and less insurgency. According to Mateen, as compared to the previous rebellions, the current insurgency didn't match up in terms of organisation, unity and support in the masses!<sup>228</sup>

A year later, almost the same line was peddled by Cyril Almeida, who called it 'a weaker insurgency' and based on his conversations with pro-government politicians, reached the conclusion that round five of the Baloch struggle against Pakistan was much less severe in its intensity than the previous rounds. He quotes the then IG FC, Maj. General Obaidullah Khattak, as saying that there were less than a thousand 'terrorists' out of which only 250-odd

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226 Interview with Dr Ashok Behuria, IDSA (undated)

227 Source: Pakistan Security Reports (various years), Pakistan Institute of Peace Studies; BRA is Balochistan Republican Army, which is allegedly the militant wing of Brahamdagh Bugti's Balochistan Republican Party, though he denies this. UBA is United Baloch Army and is believed to be led by Mehran Marri after he split from his brother, Hyrbyar Marri, who is allegedly the chief of BLA, which he denies; The Lashkar-e-Balochistan (LeB) is allegedly headed by Javed Mengal who is the son of Ataullah Mengal and son-in-law of Khair Bux Marri

228 Op. cit. (Amir Mateen, 2010)

were 'high quality'. Khattak gave his estimate of the strength of the main groups as 200 of BLA, 300–400 of BLF and about 300 Bugtis.<sup>229</sup> Interestingly, a few months later, the same Khattak, who was later sacked from the army on charges of corruption, claimed that there were around 65 training camps of the rebels inside Balochistan and about 2,000 rebels had received training in these camps.<sup>230</sup>

Regardless of the self-serving spin and cultivated nonchalance of security officials who play down the magnitude of the fifth uprising, the fact remains that the Pakistan state fears the Baloch more than it fears the Taliban. After all, the Taliban are their own protégés who have gone astray; the Baloch, on the other hand, are the enemies of the state because they don't want to capture Pakistan; but want to be rid of it.

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229 Op. cit. (Cyril Almeida 2011)

230 '65 camps providing training to 2,000 Baloch rebels: Balochistan FC chief', Pakistan Today 19/2/2012, accessed at <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2012/02/19/65-camps-providing-training-to-2000-baloch-rebels-balochistan-fc-chief/>

**TABLE 4: MILITANT ATTACKS BY DISTRICT<sup>231</sup>**

District	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Awaran	8	13	16	7		10	6	7	6
Barkhan	7	10	2	3		7	1		2
Bolan	15	34	22	30		24	10	4	3
Chaghi	3	10	8	4		7	1	1	
Dera Bugti	188	140	37	103		44	53	29	20
Gwadar	4	25	20	9		16	10	16	6
Harnai	2	1		1		1		1	
Jafarabad	45	23	16	27		12	19	13	1
Jhal Magsi				1		4		2	
Kalat	14	28	41	22		13	5	3	2
Kech	6	37	46	48		37	33	20	15
Kharan	4	2	14	1		14	1	3	
Khuzdar	43	80	130	51		35	27	2	8
Kohlu	78	18	17	9		12	9	3	2
Lasbela	26	13	26	22		6	3	5	1
Loralai	3	9	6	17		5	5	6	1
Mustang	23	28	61	53		34	10	5	11
Naseerabad	24	30	17	45		24	22	14	7
Noshki	14	18	6	4		5	3	7	
Panjgur	7	9	18	20		20	25	12	3
Qila Abdullah	4	7	21	13		15	9	5	3
Quetta	145	239	189	124		112	71	48	49
Sibi	17	6	11	10		12	7	5	4
Zhob	2	1	4	3		6	2	2	3
Pishin		5	2	4		5	3	3	1
Washuk		1				1	1	1	
Musakhel		2	2	3					
Qila Saifullah		1		2		1		1	
Ziarat			3	1		2	2		

231 Source: Pakistan Security Reports (various years), Pakistan Institute of Peace Studies

## V. REPRESSION

Pakistan's human rights record in Balochistan has been abysmal from the time that the province was annexed. But the conduct of Pakistan's military establishment in Balochistan since the beginning of the new millennium is nothing short of atrocious, with the scale of atrocities mounting over the years as the vicious circle of violence continues to spiral upwards. Every atrocity by the Pakistani forces has led to retaliation by the incensed Baloch, which in turn has led to reprisals by the Pakistani state. The general approach adopted by Pakistan towards Balochistan, whether it is in the exploitation of resources or in quelling disturbances in the province, is that of a colonial power. There are broadly two prongs in the Pakistani policy on Balochistan: bribe, and if that doesn't work, bludgeon the Baloch. The Pakistan Army has, of course, preferred to use the military option to force the Baloch into submission instead of trying to politically win them over. The reason is simple: the Baloch numbers are so small, they can be crushed militarily quite easily!<sup>232</sup> This is borne out by the fact that in 2006, the soldier to civilian ratio in Balochistan was 1 soldier for every 36 Baloch.<sup>233</sup>

The military approach has included using scorched earth policies against the Baloch. The Pakistan Army often targets the economic lifeline of the Baloch—their livestock—and forcibly expel the Baloch from their areas.<sup>234</sup> Baloch activists accuse the Pakistan Army of destroying and depopulating villages.<sup>235</sup> Among the most brutal acts of the Pakistan Army has been the targeting of family members of the activists. Anybody who is associated even remotely

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232 Cyril Almeida, 'A security prism, not a human one', Dawn 30/6/2011, accessed at <https://www.dawn.com/news/640593/a-security-prism-not-a-human-one>

233 'Nationalists justify extreme actions by angry Baloch', Daily Times 4/2/2006, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXIV No. 29 pp. 6 (item 2)

234 Sheikh Asad Rahman, 'Define anti-state elements', Post 11/9/2006, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXIV No. 213 pp. 13-15 (item 2)

235 D. Baloch, 'Notes on the Awaran operation in Balochistan', Naked Punch 21/8/2015, accessed at <http://www.nakedpunch.com/articles/236> ; Also see 'Military Operations in Tump & Sui; Baloch musician's house burned down, two killed', Crisis Balochistan 25/5/2013, accessed at [http://www.crisisbalochistan.com/secondary\\_menu/news/military-operations-in-tump-sui-baloch-musicians-house-burned-down-two-killed.html](http://www.crisisbalochistan.com/secondary_menu/news/military-operations-in-tump-sui-baloch-musicians-house-burned-down-two-killed.html)

with the Baloch freedom struggle, or even sympathises and identifies with the cause of Baloch nationalism—journalists, doctors, lawyers, students, teachers, poets, politicians—has had to face unspeakable cruelty at the hands of the Pakistani state. Even if they themselves managed to survive, they have had a close relative either taken into illegal custody by the Pakistan forces, or killed by the men in khaki.

A report by Reuters in 2013 profiled some of the cases of people who were abducted by Pakistani intelligence agencies and their brutalised and tortured bodies found dumped either in the wild or on the roadside or even in some wasteland. One of these victims was Abdul Razzaq Baloch, a proof-reader in the nationalist Baloch newspaper, *Daily Tawar*, who disappeared while on his way back home after work. His body was dumped in a Karachi suburb with a chit carrying his name stuffed in his pocket. He had been strangled.<sup>236</sup> Even 40 years earlier, it was the same story. In 1973, the Baloch poet laureate Gul Khan Naseer's house was attacked and his brother killed.<sup>237</sup> In 2015, the brother and nephew of Dr Allah Nazar were killed by the FC.<sup>238</sup> Brahamdagh Bugti's sister and niece were gunned down in Karachi in 2012, apparently to pressurise him to surrender.<sup>239</sup> The son of Mohammad Anwar Baloch, a senior member of Brahamdagh's Baloch Republican Party, who fled Pakistan in 2011, was kidnapped in 2013. The son was brutally tortured (the Pakistanis ran an electric drill on his torso) and his body found in the same place where Razzaq's body had been dumped.<sup>240</sup> Even top political leaders have been arrested on trumped up charges and humiliated during their trial to break them. The case of former chief minister Akhtar Mengal is an example. In November 2006, Akhtar Mengal was arrested in Karachi on the charge of kidnapping

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236 Matthew Green, 'Special Report: The struggle Pakistan does not want reported', Reuters.com 24/9/2013, accessed at <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-pakistan-disappearances-specialreport-idUSBRE98N00A20130924>

237 Op. cit. (Cyril Almeida 30/6/2011)

238 Mohammad Zafar, 'Awaran operation: BLF chief's brother, nephew among 13 killed', Express Tribune 1/7/2015, accessed at <https://tribune.com.pk/story/912709/awaran-operation-blf-chiefs-brother-nephew-among-13-killed/>

239 Saher Baloch, 'Bugti's family terms killing of women political', The News International 1/2/2012, accessed at <https://www.thenews.com.pk/archive/print/344185-bugtis-family-terms-killing-of-women-political>

240 Op. cit. (Matthew Green)

and torturing two Military Intelligence personnel who were tailing Mengal's car in which his children were also present. While being tried in Central Jail Karachi, Mengal was 'forced to sit in an iron cage away from his counsel' and according to his counsel, '[he] was denied even the most basic amenities, such as bedding and a pillow, medical treatment, home food and permission to see his relatives'.<sup>241</sup>

## **The Case of the Disappearing Baloch**

The atrocities being visited on Baloch political activists—many of whom are highly educated and belonging to the middle class—are treated in a very matter-of-fact way and with stunning nonchalance, even by senior politicians. On 22 May 2012, in reply to a question by a TV anchor on whether a 'missing' Baloch political activist, Zakir Majeed Baloch, will meet a fate similar to that of Sindhi nationalist, Muzaffar Bhutto who was abducted and later found dead on the roadside, the President of the then ruling PPP in Balochistan, Sadiq Umrani, without batting an eyelid said this is exactly what will happen.<sup>242</sup> While Zakir Baloch, a student leader from the Balochistan Students Organization (BSO) remains 'missing'—he was picked up by intelligence agents in 2009<sup>243</sup> and hasn't been found despite a very spirited campaign mounted by his sister Farzana Majeed,<sup>244</sup> the mutilated dead bodies of three other Baloch political activists whose habeas corpus petitions were being heard by the Supreme Court were found 'dumped' in a bag in a Quetta neighbourhood.<sup>245</sup> A couple of days later, the Supreme Court bench holding hearings on the law and order situation in the restive province of Balochistan observed that whenever the

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241 Ardeshir Cowasjee, 'Man in the iron cage', Dawn 14/1/2007, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXV No. 13 pp. 35-36 (item 6)

242 Capital Talk on Geo TV 22/5/2012 accessed at <http://www.paknewstv.com/capital-talk-with-hamid-mir-22nd-may-2012-geo-news/>

243 Asad Hashim, 'Pakistan's unending battle over Balochistan', Aljazeera.com 16/4/2013, accessed at <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2013/04/2013415113250391656.html>

244 Mohammad hanif, 'Baloch missing persons: A sister's vigil', Dawn 14/2/2013, accessed at <https://tribune.com.pk/story/507171/baloch-missing-persons-a-sisters-vigil/>

245 Saleem Shahid, 'Seven bodies found in Balochistan', Dawn 29/5/2012, accessed at <https://www.dawn.com/news/722068>

court asks the law enforcement agencies to recover a 'disappeared person', his dead body is found instead.

In this particular case, the finger-prints of the notorious FC were found all over the place. The advocate general of Balochistan informed the court that there was adequate evidence—both in the form of CCTV footage and eyewitness accounts—that the three men had been picked up by the FC.<sup>246</sup> But such is the culture of impunity under which death squads of the Pakistani state operate in Balochistan that despite strong evidence against officials, there has been no worthwhile action against any security force official—a lot of legalistic bombast and expressions of anger by the judges, but very little in terms of bringing the guilty to justice.

Not surprisingly, tortured and mutilated bodies of young Baloch political activists continue to be recovered all over the province. Journalist Declan Walsh reported in *The Guardian* in 2011 that 'the victims were generally men between 20 and 40 years old—nationalist politicians, students, shopkeepers, labourers. In many cases they were abducted in broad daylight—dragged off buses, marched out of shops, detained at FC checkpoints—by a combination of uniformed soldiers and plain-clothes intelligence men. Others just vanished. They re-emerge, dead, with an eerie tempo—approximately 15 bodies every month...'<sup>247</sup>

Since 2010, around 400 (and by some accounts over 500) bullet-riddled bodies with marks of brutal torture have been found 'dumped' on the roadsides in Balochistan.<sup>248</sup> An overwhelmingly large number of these are of Baloch political and student activists, most of whom have been reported 'missing', some for a few weeks and others for even a couple of years. Invariably, the Pakistani security agencies—FC, ISI and MI—are accused of being responsible both for the 'enforced disappearance' and subsequent murder of these activists,

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246 Nasir Iqbal, 'Court takes FC to task over disappearance', Dawn 1/6/2012, accessed at <https://www.dawn.com/news/723179>

247 Declan Walsh, 'Pakistan's secret dirty war', *The Guardian* 29/3/2011, accessed at <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/mar/29/balochistan-pakistans-secret-dirty-war>

248 Zahid Gishkori, 'Kalat emerges top place for dumping corpses', *Express Tribune* 26/6/2012, accessed at <https://tribune.com.pk/story/399248/kalat-emerges-top-place-for-dumping-corpse/>

some of them barely out of their teens. The case of a young boat-maker Yousaf Arman is emblematic of this trend. Yousaf was 16 when the FC men picked him from his house. Three years later, his father was asked to collect his dead body from the local hospital in Pasni. Later, the FC issued a statement that two terrorists, including Yousaf, were killed in an exchange of gunfire.<sup>249</sup> In merely four months between November 2015 and February 2016, the FC reported the killing of 87 suspected militants in 31 operations.<sup>250</sup>

Worryingly, despite the outcry from human rights organisations such as Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP); Baloch political parties (both federalist and nationalist/separatist); reams of columns in print media and large number of TV talk shows highlighting the dismal state of affairs; hearings conducted by a Supreme Court bench headed by the Chief Justice; a judicial commission appointed to investigate and recover the 'missing persons'; and sanctimonious statements from top echelons of government and security services about stopping this massacre, the body count of political activists and suspected militants who have been summarily executed after being abducted by Pakistani security forces has only risen. In 2010, a total of 103 bodies were recovered.<sup>251</sup> By 2016, according to government data, the total number of 'kill and dump' cases had reached a figure of 936. The independent human rights body, Voice for Baloch Missing Persons (VBMP), claims to have recorded 1,200 cases of dumped bodies, and many more which it hasn't been able to record.<sup>252</sup> And this number doesn't include the scores of political workers, student leaders, Baloch intellectuals, journalists and civil society activists who have been killed in 'targeted attacks' for no other reason except that they were raising their voice against the brutality of Pakistani security forces.

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249 Maqbool Ahmad, 'Worrying development: Field notes on war and peace in Balochistan', Herald April 2016, accessed at <http://herald.dawn.com/news/1153381/worrying-development-field-notes-on-war-and-peace-in-balochistan>

250 *ibid.*

251 *Op. cit.* (Zahid Gishkori 2012)

252 'Balochistan war: Pakistan accused over 1000 dumped bodies', BBC.com 28/12/2016, accessed at <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-38454483>

Even as the numbers of victims of the 'kill and dump' policy continue to rise, the numbers of 'missing persons' also shows no signs of coming down. According to VBMP, an organisation that is in the vanguard of highlighting the gross and wanton violation of basic human rights in Balochistan and is relentlessly campaigning for the recovery of the 'missing persons', over 14,000 people, including nearly 150 women and 169 children, have gone 'missing' since 2001.<sup>253</sup> The VBMP claims to have compiled details of around 1,300 of these cases and has offered to present relatives of these 'missing persons' before the Supreme Court.<sup>254</sup> In 2016 alone, according to VBMP, there were over 650 cases of 'enforced disappearances' and 116 mutilated bodies were recovered in various parts of Balochistan.<sup>255</sup>

The US-based Human Rights Watch (HRW) doesn't put a figure on the total number of 'missing persons' and only documents around 50 cases of 'enforced disappearances', almost all from the vicinity of Quetta and a couple of other regions in the province. HRW, however, accepts that there were reports of a large number of disappearances from other parts of Balochistan that it was unable to document because of the 'hazardous security situation' that made it impossible for HRW to travel to places like Dera Bugti, where the reported violations of human rights were very high. In its report, HRW also quotes the HRC as giving a figure of around 140 missing persons.<sup>256</sup> Interestingly, in a testimony before the US House Committee on Foreign Affairs on 8 February 2012, the HRW representative in Pakistan quoted the Pakistan Interior Minister, Rehman Malik, that in 2008 over 1,100 people had disappeared in

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253 'Hundreds of children, women missing in Balochistan', *The News International* 17/1/2012, accessed at <https://www.thenews.com.pk/archive/print/341616-%E2%80%98hundreds-of-children-women-missing-in-balochistan%E2%80%99>

254 'Dismissing official figures: "Relatives to reveal true number of missing persons"', *Express Tribune* 9/4/2012, accessed at <https://tribune.com.pk/story/361801/dismissing-official-figures-relatives-to-reveal-true-number-of-missing-persons/>

255 'Pakistan: VBMP's annual report on Enforced Disappearances, Extrajudicial Killings', accessed at <http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/WO1701/S00005/pakistan-vbmpps-annual-report-on-enforced-disappearances.htm>

256 'We can torture, kill, or keep you for years': Enforced disappearances by Pak sec forces in Balochistan, Human Rights Watch July 2011, pp 24, accessed at <https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/pakistan0711WebInside.pdf>

Balochistan during the regime of the former military dictator General Pervez Musharraf.<sup>257</sup> In an interview to a Pakistani newspaper a few days later, the HRW representative termed as ‘nonsense’ the claim of Rehman Malik that four years later only 51 people were missing in Balochistan when the HRW’s own research suggested that a ‘considerably’ higher number of people were subjected to enforced disappearances in Balochistan.<sup>258</sup> Not surprisingly, the Balochistan government figures of 47 persons missing were almost similar to the estimate given by Malik.<sup>259</sup>

It is precisely this sort of downplaying, if not complete obfuscation, of the unremitting brutality that is being inflicted on the Baloch that seems to have permeated even in the judicial commission appointed to investigate ‘enforced disappearances’ and recover the ‘missing persons’. Far from providing any succour, much less delivering justice, to either the victims of state repression or their family members, the head of the commission very conveniently, if also unconvincingly, blamed the ubiquitous ‘foreign agencies’ for being responsible for disappearances of individuals. Worse, the commission came up with a ludicrous figure of only 57 ‘missing persons’ in Balochistan<sup>260</sup>, which led the VBMP and family members of ‘disappeared’ to boycott the commission’s proceedings. Challenging the commission chairman’s charge that a ‘baseless propaganda’ had been unleashed on the numbers of ‘missing persons’, the HRCP said that the list it had forwarded to the commission had been meticulously compiled and all information contained in it was in

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257 Testimony of Ali Dayan Hasan before the US House Committee on Foreign Affairs regarding Human Rights in Balochistan, 8/2/2012, accessed at <http://www.hrw.org/news/2012/02/08/testimony-ali-dayan-hasan-us-house-committee-foreign-affairs-regarding-human-rights->

258 Dawn.com exclusive interview: Ali Dayan Hasan, Dawn.com 28/2/2012, accessed at <https://www.dawn.com/news/698882/hoping-for-pakistan-to-be-a-rights-respecting-democracy>

259 ‘Dismissing official figures: “Relatives to reveal true numbers of missing persons”’, Express Tribune 9/4/2012, accessed at <https://tribune.com.pk/story/361801/dismissing-official-figures-relatives-to-reveal-true-number-of-missing-persons/>

260 ‘Foreign agencies behind Baloch disappearances: Justice Javed’, The News International 10/6/2012, accessed at <https://www.thenews.com.pk/archive/print/622948-foreign-agencies-behind-baloch-disappearances-justice-javed>

accordance with the UN pro forma for enforced disappearances.<sup>261</sup> With the government going all out to brush the gross violation of human rights in Balochistan under the carpet just so that it can stay on the right side of the all-powerful military establishment, it is hardly surprising that death squads operated by the security agencies operate with complete impunity.

The phenomenon of Pakistani security forces 'picking' up people and keeping them in illegal custody is as old as the country itself. There have also been a number of incidents in the past when political activists have been abducted and killed. Among the most notorious cases is that of Asad Mengal, son of the former chief minister of Balochistan, Ataullah Mengal, who was abducted by the security agencies in the mid-1970s and whose body was never found. The Pakistani authorities had washed their blood-stained hands by claiming at that time that Asad Mengal had escaped to Afghanistan even though his corpse had been buried in a secret location near Thatta in Sindh.<sup>262</sup> Decades later it was revealed by the former ISI chief, Hamid Gul, that Asad Mengal had been killed by the Pakistan Army during interrogation in the infamous Dulai camp in Muzaffarabad, PoK.<sup>263</sup> Nearly 40 years after Asad Mengal's murder by the Pakistan Army, the same modus operandi continues to be used, what with the security agencies claiming that many of the 'missing persons' are desperadoes who are either in hiding or have taken refuge outside Pakistan, with India being added to Afghanistan as the place where these people are supposed to be present.<sup>264</sup>

The fact that Pakistan was enlisted as an ally of the US after 9/11, has allowed the security agencies to use heavy-handed measures to contain growing unrest in Balochistan without too much concern over how the international

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261 'Case of missing persons, HRCP questions Justice Javed Iqbal's assertion', Dawn 11/6/2012, accessed at <https://www.dawn.com/news/725797>

262 Hamid Mir, 'Pakistan dushman soch', Daily Jang 23/2/2012, accessed at <http://www.urducolumnonline.com/hamid-mir-columns/119336/pakistan-dushman-soch>

263 Hamid Gul interview in the TV programme Off the Record 20/2/2012 ARY NEWS, accessed at <http://www.awaztoday.pk/News-Talk-Shows/20113/Off-The-Record-20th-February-2012.aspx>

264 'FC boss contests figure of missing persons', Express Tribune 10/3/2012, accessed at <https://tribune.com.pk/story/348018/fc-boss-contests-figure-of-missing-persons/>

community would react to the violation of human rights in the province. Until the murder of Nawab Akbar Bugti by the Pakistan Army in August 2006, the cases of forced disappearances and extra-judicial killings of Baloch activists did not figure very prominently on the radar screen, and if they did, they were reported in a very perfunctory manner by the Pakistani media. Media reports acknowledged that the trend of keeping Baloch activists in extrajudicial custody had picked up momentum after 2000. Despite evidence of intelligence agencies torturing activists to death, and testimonies about such incidents in court, a virtual *carte blanche* was given to the security agencies to curb dissent.<sup>265</sup> Even though there were signs of a great storm brewing in Balochistan, an informal blackout was imposed on media reporting of events in Balochistan by the quasi-military regime of the Pakistani dictator General Pervez Musharraf, which meant that not too much information was coming out in public domain.<sup>266</sup>

All this changed after Akbar Bugti's murder. Balochistan erupted in fury and the separatists got a lot more traction and public support than they had in the past. It was no longer possible to push reportage on Balochistan completely under the carpet. Between 2006 and 2009, there was a massive spike in abductions and extra-judicial killings of Baloch activists. The Pakistan Army was often accused of reprisal killings of innocent villagers after an attack on their troops by the insurgents.<sup>267</sup> But the outcry in Balochistan remained somewhat muted because it was more or less ignored by the so-called mainstream media. According to Asad Rahman, 'the media's censoring of the Balochistan issues is probably not being done by itself. The insidious silence is more than likely on the strict instructions of the ISPR, ISI, MI and FC. The conduct of the Islamabad journalists was a very good indication of the strict censorship imposed by the military establishment. This blackout of news is very much reminiscent of 1970/71 when the East Pakistan debacle took place...over the last 63 years the genocidal military operations in Balochistan

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265 Shahzada Zulfiqar, 'Guilty without charge', *Newsline* August 2005, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXIII No. 220 pp. 7933-34 (item 15)

266 *Op. cit.* (Open letter to Government by Hameed Haroon); Also see Sheikh Asad Rahman, 'Balochistan: continuing military operations', *Post* 15/1/2007, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXV No. 13 pp. 34-35 (item 6)

267 *Op. cit.* (Carlotta Gall, 2006)

in 1948, 1958, 1962-68, 1973–77 and the ongoing operations since 2006 are being blacked out'.<sup>268</sup>

During this period, some of the abducted activists lived to tell the tale of the torture they were subjected to in custody. One of the survivors of 'Pakistan's Gestapo' was journalist and TV entrepreneur Munir Mengal, who gave a detailed account of the torture administered on him by the Military Intelligence.<sup>269</sup> Mengal described in bone-chilling detail the various indignities that were heaped on him during his nearly one-and-a-half year in captivity. His crime was that he wanted to set up the first Baloch language TV station. He claimed that none other than General Pervez Musharraf tried to buy him out and after he refused, the MI thugs once again went to work on him. After his release, Mengal escaped from Pakistan and is today one of the most prominent campaigners in international forums for Balochistan's independence from Pakistani occupation.

Another case is of the top leadership of Balochistan Student's Organization (BSO), who were picked up in 2005 from Karachi. After an outcry and widespread protests, some of these leaders, including the chairman Imdad Baloch and the president Dr Allah Nazar were released. They had been tortured in an unspeakable manner—beaten by clubs, hung upside down, body parts cut with blades, kept in dark rooms—and they took months to recover from the mental and physical torment that they underwent.<sup>270</sup> But soon after regaining strength, Dr Allah Nazar rebelled and went underground. He formed the Balochistan Liberation Front (BLF), which is today arguably the most lethal and potent separatist outfit in the province. It is also the most popular, drawing youth, cutting across tribal divisions. Most of the cadre is

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268 Sheikh Asad Rahman, 'Free and independent media?' Daily Times 21/3/2011, accessed at <http://dailytimes.com.pk/opinion/21-Mar-11/free-and-independent-media>

269 Rahimullah Yusufzai, 'The man who survived Pakistan's Gestapo', The News International 13/12/2008 accessed at <https://www.thenews.com.pk/archive/print/150354-the-man-who-survived-pakistan-s-gestapo>

270 Malik Siraj Akbar, 'Tales of the missing', The Friday Times 16-22 June, 2006, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXIV No. 141 pp. 20-21 (item 17) ; Also see 'Dr Nazar's perspective on Balochistan situation', Daily Times 13/4/2011, accessed on 13/4/2011 at [http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2011%5C04%5C13%5Cstory\\_13-4-2011\\_pg7\\_16](http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2011%5C04%5C13%5Cstory_13-4-2011_pg7_16)

middle-class, challenging the stereotyping of the Baloch national movement as an expression of dissent by a few tribal *sardars*. The lesson that the Pakistani security agencies drew from Dr Allah Nazar's rebellion was not that they needed to reach out to the disaffected Baloch, but that they needed to adopt an even more brutish policy to suppress bubbling resentment in Balochistan.

In April 2009, however, an incident took place that changed the entire complexion of the problem. While on the one hand, this incident provided a template for the Pakistani security forces in their brutal crackdown that was unleashed to smother the yearning for an independent Balochistan; on the other hand, the dance of death by the security forces became so macabre that not only could it no longer be ignored by the so-called mainstream media, but it also became the rallying cry for Baloch nationalists to highlight the repression in Balochistan and try to shake the conscience of the international community.

On 3 April 2009, FC personnel in plainclothes entered the law office in Turbat of the former leader of opposition in the Balochistan Assembly, Kachkol Ali, and forcibly dragged away three top Baloch political activists belonging to the Balochistan National Movement (BNM) and Balochistan Republican Party (BRP). These three men were the Chairman of BNM, Ghulam Mohammad Baloch, his associate Lala Munir and a senior BRP leader Sher Mohammad Baloch.<sup>271</sup> A week later, the mutilated bodies of the three men, all of whom had been shot point-blank, were recovered from a desolate area outside Turbat. Massive protests erupted all over the province. The puppet regime of Chief Minister Aslam Raisani along with other pro-Pakistan politicians issued pro forma statements condemning the incident. Not to be left behind, the then Chief Justice of Balochistan High Court took a pro forma 'suo moto notice' of the incident.<sup>272</sup> But far from taking any meaningful action against the culprits who murdered the three Baloch political activists, Kachkol Ali, the sole eyewitness to the abduction of these men, was issued death threats from

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271 'Putting the dots together', Dawn 10/4/2009, accessed at <https://www.dawn.com/news/893532/putting-the-dots-together>

272 Bari Baloch, 'Riots spread in Balochistan', The Nation 10/4/2009, accessed at <http://nation.com.pk/politics/10-Apr-2009/Riots-spread-in-Balochistan>

intelligence agencies which forced him to eventually flee into exile—end of the case!<sup>273</sup>

That the government had no intention of pursuing the case became crystal clear after Interior Minister Rehman Malik blamed ‘foreign elements’ for these murders, a theme that has been constantly parroted by top security and government officials. It should, therefore, come as no surprise that since the murder of these three icons of Baloch nationalism, the ‘kill and dump’ policy adopted by the Pakistani state to bludgeon the Baloch into submission has reached epidemic proportions. A number of other well-known and popular nationalist leaders such as Sana Sangat, Rasool Baksh Mengal, Agha Abid Shah, Jalil Reki—it’s an endless list—have met the same fate. In a very poignant piece, author Mohammad Hanif described the horrible and heart wrenching ordeal of Jalil Reki’s old father and his little son after they learnt of his cold-blooded and brutal murder at the hands of Pakistani security forces.<sup>274</sup> After the murder of his son, the septuagenarian father of Jalil Reki, Qadeer Baloch, better known as Mama Qadeer, made it his life’s mission to campaign against the ‘enforced disappearance’. In 2013, along with Zakir Majeed Baloch’s sister, Mama Qadeer led perhaps the most remarkable protests in Pakistani history—a 2,000-km ‘Long March’ (on foot and not in a luxury SUV, as is normally done by Pakistani politicians) from Quetta to Islamabad to protest enforced disappearances. Such was the indefatigable commitment of the 25 people who walked the entire route, that despite threats and attacks, they continued to march to Islamabad.<sup>275</sup> Unfortunately, his attempts to bring the attention of the international community to the plight of the Baloch received very little traction among the diplomats in Islamabad.

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273 ‘Kachkol receives threats’, Dawn 4/5/2009, accessed at <https://www.dawn.com/news/944221>

274 Mohammad Hanif, ‘The Baloch who is not missing’, Dawn 11/2/2012, accessed at <https://www.dawn.com/news/694708> ; A more detailed account by Hanif of the missing persons crisis in Balochistan is available at <https://www.scribd.com/doc/127280475/The-Baloch-Who-is-Not-Missing-Others-Who-Are-By-Mohammed-Hanif>

275 Hamid Mir, ‘72 year old Mama Qadeer Baloch breaks record of Gandhi after 84 years’, The News International 25/2/2014, accessed at <https://www.thenews.com.pk/archive/print/636350-72-year-old-mama-qadeer-baloch-breaks-record-of-gandhi-after-84-years>

The *modus operandi* in most of the extrajudicial murders is almost always identical. According to a doctor who carried out autopsies on many of the corpses, 'all the victims were shot in the forehead and a bullet passed through the skull besides signs of torture on their faces, hands and other parts of their bodies. Their hands were also tied to the back of their body with ropes'.<sup>276</sup> The same doctor, Baqir Shah, was later murdered after he testified that five foreigners who were killed in a Quetta suburb by FC and police personnel were shot in cold blood. Reporting in 2011, journalist Cyril Almeida described the *modus operandi* of the 'kill and dump' operations: it begins with security and intelligence personnel in uniform and plain clothes arriving in convoys of two to six vehicles outside the homes of victims or sometimes snatching them from nearby shops or roads. A few days later—sometimes several weeks later—the bodies turn up in adjoining districts, dumped at a distance from the nearest road or population centre but in places where the bodies are likely to be found eventually. The victims are usually shot in the temple once. Known locally as 'mutilated bodies', the signs of torture are often hard to determine because many of the bodies have already begun to decompose when discovered.<sup>277</sup>

## **License to Kill**

Having received a virtual 'license to kill', the Pakistani security establishment has been quite brazen about the extrajudicial killings. The notorious IGFC, Obaidullah Khattak, openly expressed his endorsement of cold-blooded murder of activists and said, 'I have no problem with encounters as long as they are taking out murderers. Yes, a murder is a murder, but in your heart you feel less pain if a murderer is killed.'<sup>278</sup> No surprise then that the Pakistan Army has gone about this grisly task using either its own men, or through 'officially deniable' death squads. The objective clearly is to instil fear and

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276 Shezad Baloch, '21 missing persons killed in identical fashion', *Express Tribune* 4/10/2010, accessed at <https://tribune.com.pk/story/58164/21-missing-persons-killed-in-identical-fashion/>

277 Cyril Almeida, 'Insurgents suffer bloody reprisals', *Dawn* 26/6/2011, accessed at <https://www.dawn.com/news/639427>

278 *ibid.*

terror in the minds of the Baloch through sheer impunity to do what HRW has called 'we can torture, kill or keep you for years'.

One hint of these death squads is given by the Pakistani journalist and author, Ahmed Rashid, in his book *Descent into Chaos*. According to him, Pakistan's military establishment created 'a new clandestine organisation that would operate outside the military and intelligence structure, in the civilian sphere. Former ISI trainers of the Taliban, retired Pashtun officers from the army and especially the Frontier Corps, were rehired on contract. They set up offices in Peshawar, Quetta and other cities'. Rashid also claims that this organisation was structured very loosely without any hierarchy or a 'traceable command and control system'. No records were kept and the logistics and expenses were provided by the FC.<sup>279</sup> Although Rashid's focus is on the double-game being played by Pakistan in the US-led War on Terror, surrounding facts, circumstances and testimonies leave little doubt that either this or a somewhat similar organisation(s) had been set up by the FC to carry out its macabre plan of mass murdering Baloch nationalist politicians, intellectuals, lawyers, doctors, academicians, poets and journalists.

This is a time-tested tactic of the Pakistani security establishment, one that allows for 'plausible deniability' by state agencies for acts of murder of political opponents. There have been the odd instances when the assailants have been caught red-handed and identity cards of intelligence agencies have been found on them.<sup>280</sup> But even in these cases, no action whatsoever was taken. In fact, the apprehended criminals were in no time spirited away from the police station by senior military or FC officials. The emergence of shadowy outfits like the Baloch Musalla Defai Tanzeem (BMDT), Sipah-e-Shuhda-e-Balochistan (SSB) and the Islamist-sounding Ansarul Islam seems to only confirm that the Pakistani state has set up dummy vigilante groups to claim responsibility for some of the killings, both of 'missing persons' as well as 'targeted killings' of political workers, human rights activists, etc. Even more sinister is the plan of the Pakistani authorities to unleash charities like Falah-i-Insaniyat Foundation and Al Khair Trust associated with jihadist terror groups like the Lashkar-e-Taiba/Jamaatud Dawa and Jaish-e-Mohammad in

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279 Ahmed Rashid, 'Descent into Chaos', Allen Lane (2008), page 221-22

280 Malik Siraj Akbar, 'The redefined dimensions of Baloch Nationalist Movement' (2011), pp. 296

Baloch areas. These front organisations of jihadist groups are given a free run in Balochistan even as international NGOs are refused permission to operate in the province.<sup>281</sup> Obviously the plan is to make 'proper' Muslims of the Baloch!

According to one analyst, these two organisations have claimed responsibility for around 120 of the murders of 'missing persons'.<sup>282</sup> The justifications' that they give for their actions—the suspected head of the BMDT who is the son of a former federal minister for petroleum in General Pervez Musharraf's regime calls the Baloch nationalists 'anti-Islam and anti-Pakistan' and press statements of the organisation openly accuse the Baloch nationalists of being 'Indian agents'.<sup>283</sup> An SSB spokesman has claimed that the organisation is made up from relatives of people killed by Baloch separatists<sup>284</sup>, which leaves no doubt about their pro-state leanings and confirms suspicions that they are operating with the full support of the state. Pointing out the state's complicity with these organisations, a prominent Baloch columnist has wondered how people who have been picked up by the FC and intelligence agencies end up in the hands of these outfits who claim their killing!<sup>285</sup>

There are testimonies from top figures in government that implicate the FC directly in the killings. One such testimony comes from none other than the aforementioned Sadiq Umrani, who on the floor of the Balochistan Assembly, revealed that he was an eyewitness to the FC shooting dead three people in cold blood, whose bodies were later found 'dumped' in Mastung.<sup>286</sup> Sometime

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281 Naziha Syed Ali, 'Fear and loathing in Awaran', Dawn 26/11/2013, accessed at <https://www.dawn.com/news/1058586>

282 'A lasting solution for Balochistan', Dawn 25/4/2011, accessed at <https://www.dawn.com/news/623682>

283 <http://www.thebalochhal.com/2011/12/bla-bombing-kills-15-injures-30-in-quetta/>; also see <http://www.thebalochhal.com/2011/01/disappearances-and-assassinations/>

284 Op. cit. (Shezad Baloch 2010)

285 Mir Mohammad Ali Talpur, 'Old saga: dangerous new dimensions', Daily Times 15/8/2010 accessed on 19/8/2010 at [http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010\08\15\story\\_15-8-2010\\_pg3\\_5](http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010\08\15\story_15-8-2010_pg3_5)

286 'Balochistan ministers eye-witnessed three execution style slayings: Umrani', accessed at <http://www.examiner.com/article/balochistan-ministers-eye-witnessed-3-execution-style-slayings-umrani>

before this statement, the Balochistan Advocate General, Salahuddin Mengal, informed a Supreme Court bench headed by the Chief Justice that the 'FC and police are lifting people in broad daylight at will' and pleaded helplessness in putting an end to this practise by saying 'who can check the FC'.<sup>287</sup> Needless to say, a few days later Mengal suddenly resigned. There were reports that the security forces had leaned on Chief Minister Aslam Raisani to sack Mengal for his indiscretion in front of the Supreme Court. It is quite another matter that months earlier, Raisani himself had admitted that the FC was running a 'parallel government' in Balochistan.<sup>288</sup> What is more, in an interview to BBC, he even accepted that there could be instances where the FC had picked up people who had gone 'missing'.<sup>289</sup> Of course, given that the CM and the governor are nothing more than show-boys in the province where the real power is wielded by the security establishment, their lament of being powerless to do anything to stop the killings can easily be ignored by the security establishment.

While both the federal and provincial governments have completely failed in putting an end to the FC killing machine in Balochistan, the so-called 'independent' judiciary hasn't fared much better. Despite overwhelming evidence against the FC, the Chief Justice of Pakistan has himself observed that the court had evidence against the FC<sup>290</sup> and pointed out that 90 percent of the people are accusing the FC of enforced disappearances<sup>291</sup>—the Supreme Court has been able to do little more than pass strictures against the 'breakdown of constitutional order' in the province and threaten action against guilty officials. None of the zeal and tall talk of delivering justice even if the heavens fall, which has been the hallmark of Pakistan's apex court against the elected civilian government, is on display when it comes to the military

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287 'FC involved in abducting people, SC told', Dawn 2/3/2011, accessed at <https://www.dawn.com/news/610269/fc-involved-in-abducting-people-sc-told>

288 'FC running parallel government, says Raisani', Dawn 21/1/2010, accessed at <https://www.dawn.com/news/515422/fc-running-parallel-govt-says-raisani>

289 [http://www.bbc.co.uk/urdu/pakistan/2010/11/101124\\_raeesani\\_baloch\\_interview\\_zz.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/urdu/pakistan/2010/11/101124_raeesani_baloch_interview_zz.shtml)

290 'Missing persons case: Supreme Court adamant on FC's involvement', Express Tribune 11/7/2012 accessed at <https://tribune.com.pk/story/406526/missing-persons-case-supreme-court-adamant-on-fcs-involvement/>

291 Nasir Iqbal, 'SC grills Frontier Corps in missing persons case', Dawn 15/5/2012 accessed at <https://www.dawn.com/news/718440>

establishment. If anything, the courts are becoming a tool for whitewashing the crimes against humanity being committed by the Pakistani forces and their proxies in Balochistan. The starkest example of this was the clean chit given to the security agencies by the judicial tribunal that investigated the mass graves that were discovered in Khuzdar.<sup>292</sup>

The blatant defiance of the court's orders by the FC and army is breath-taking. Not only have top FC officials ignored the summons of the court on a number of occasions, they have been openly committing perjury by denying any involvement in either the disappearances or the murders of political activists, or of intimidating witnesses and destroying evidence. But instead of throwing the book at the FC and intelligence agency officials, the Supreme Court has preferred to let discretion be the better part of valour. In fact, the apprehension of the court over how the army might react if it precipitated matters in the human rights cases in Balochistan became clear after a senior judge of the Supreme Court begged off from summoning the chiefs of ISI and MI by saying that 'the last time when we tried to summon them we were sent home for almost 16 months'.<sup>293</sup> The same judge, Javed Iqbal, was later appointed head of the judicial commission inquiring into the missing persons case. That this commission has been a dismal failure and inspires absolutely no confidence among the relatives of the 'disappeared' is a no-brainer.

With all avenues of succour for the victims of Pakistan's 'pick and torture, kill and dump' policy being practically shut, the only hope lies in the international community intervening to stop the bludgeoning of the Baloch. The problem is that in spite of international human rights organisations like HRW, Amnesty International and Asian Human Rights Commission repeatedly highlighting the plight of the hapless people of Balochistan, it appears as though the great votaries of human rights around the world become deaf the moment the word Balochistan is mentioned. The first time the US State Department said anything about the state of affairs in Balochistan was earlier this year when the State Department spokesperson tweeted that 'the United States is deeply

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292 Saleem Shahid, 'No evidence found against anyone in mass graves case', Dawn 21/8/2014, accessed at <https://www.dawn.com/news/1126706/no-evidence-found-against-anyone-in-mass-graves-case-tribunal>

293 'Missing persons issue more serious than NRO, says Judge', Dawn 6/1/2010, accessed at <https://www.dawn.com/news/851850>

concerned about the ongoing violence in Balochistan, especially targeted killings, disappearances and other human rights abuses' adding that 'this is a complex issue. We strongly believe that the best way forward is for all the parties to resolve their differences through peaceful dialogue'.<sup>294</sup>

But this intervention, if at all it can be called that, was prompted less out of concern for the plight of the Baloch and more as a result of the sharp downturn in US-Pakistan relations. In other words, the Baloch were used as a pawn, or if you will, a pressure point against Pakistan. This became apparent after the Defence Intelligence Agency cancelled at the last minute a seminar it had organised on Balochistan.<sup>295</sup> Clearly, the matter of thousands of disappearances and hundreds of extra-judicial killings in Balochistan was a minor matter in the larger strategic calculus of the US government's relations with Pakistan. This is precisely why even when a US Congressman, Dana Rohrabacher, held a hearing on Balochistan and later tried to move a resolution in Congress calling for recognition of the right to self-determination by the Baloch, he did not receive much traction either from the Obama administration or from his colleagues in the US Congress. Demands for invoking the Leahy Amendment which prohibits any US military assistance to a foreign army that blatantly violates human rights, have also fallen on deaf ears.

Emboldened by the blind eye that the international community has turned to systematic elimination of political activists in Balochistan, the Pakistani security forces have started adopting the same techniques and tactics in other parts of the country. Cases of 'enforced disappearances' are now being reported not just from the troubled FATA region and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province but also from parts of Punjab, Gilgit Baltistan region of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, and Sindh. The situation in Sindh is in fact rather troubling.<sup>296</sup> But the more the Pakistani establishment tries to cow down people with the heavy- and ham-

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294 Anwar Iqbal, 'US urges Pakistan to hold dialogue in Balochistan', Dawn 15/1/2012, accessed at <https://www.dawn.com/news/688297>

295 Anwar Iqbal, 'US cancels Balochistan seminar to avoid worsening of ties', Dawn 11/6/2012, accessed at <https://www.dawn.com/news/725551>

296 Z Ali, 'Missing persons: As Supreme Court listens to families from Balochistan, disappearances rise in Sindh', Express Tribune 19/5/2012, accessed at <https://tribune.com.pk/story/380988/missing-persons-as-supreme-court-listens-to-families-from-balochistan-disappearances-rise-in-sindh/>

handed methods of the Pakistani security forces, and by committing atrocities on ordinary people fighting for their rights, it is creating more bitterness among the people and provoking a huge reaction especially from those who are on the firing line. By committing unspeakable atrocities on the Baloch, Pakistan might have for now managed to physically retain Balochistan but emotionally and psychologically the people have already seceded from Pakistan. Already a revolution of sorts has taken place in the socially conservative province of Balochistan, with women activists—mothers, daughters, sisters and wives of the disappeared taking to the streets in a show of defiance against Pakistani authorities. Add to this the fact of a generational and class shift in the ranks of the Baloch freedom fighters, chances are that the movement is unlikely to die out any time soon.

## VI. DEPRIVATION

Balochistan's disaffection and alienation from Pakistan stems from politics and not economics. The armed rebellion in 1948 against Pakistan emerged from a refusal to accept the forced annexation of Kalat state. Subsequent rebellions in the 1950s and 1960s were also caused by political factors like the One Unit scheme. But from the 1970s, economic exploitation and deliberate deprivation of the province got added on to the political issues that were agitating the Baloch. In many ways, economics has increasingly provided the justification and become one of the main drivers of political demands for autonomy, even independence. The Pakistani state's normal response has been to announce 'development packages' to placate the Baloch. Musharraf laid out a fancy development plan based on mega projects like Gwadar port, Mirani dam and the coastal highway. The Pakistan People's Party government not only came up with the Aaghaz-e-Huqooq-e-Balochistan package,<sup>297</sup> but also introduced major reforms in the constitution which gave greater autonomy to the provinces and also overhauled the Finance Commission award in which it gave more resources to the provinces at the cost of the central government.<sup>298</sup> But invariably, these packages have proved to be non-starters in winning over the disaffected Baloch. If anything, these development packages and schemes are seen by the Baloch as vehicles for even greater exploitation of Balochistan's 'sahil and wasail' (coast and resources).<sup>299</sup> Worse, on the ground the *de jure* changes in the power structure through constitutional and financial reforms packages did not quite translate into *de facto* changes in the exercise of power on the ground level, certainly not in case of Balochistan where the military establishment continued to call the shots, not just in the realm of security, but also administrative and judicial issues as well as in the political sphere.

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297 Shahid Hamid, 'The Aaghaz-e-Huqooq-e-Balochistan Package: An Analysis', Pildat.org, pp 17-21, accessed at <http://www.pildat.org/publications/publication/FPLGS/PILDATBalochistanPackageAnalysis101209.pdf>

298 Report of the National Finance Commission 2009, Government of Pakistan, National Finance Commission secretariat, December 30, 2009, accessed at [http://finance.gov.pk/nfc/reportofthenfc\\_2009.pdf](http://finance.gov.pk/nfc/reportofthenfc_2009.pdf)

299 The reference to 'sahil and wasail' is a common refrain of BNP(M) chief Akhtar Mengal. see <https://twitter.com/KharanOnline/status/670182612158169088>

Compared to other provinces, Balochistan's development indicators have consistently been the worst. In the mid-1970s, while the per capita income in Punjab was \$80, in Balochistan it was \$54. The literacy rate in the province was between 6–9 percent as against a national rate of 16 percent. When life expectancy in Pakistan was 60 years, in Balochistan it was only 48.<sup>300</sup> Gas was discovered in Sui in the early 1950s and for the next almost four decades, almost 70–80 percent of Pakistan's gas supplies came from Balochistan. But not only was Balochistan deprived of the benefits of this resource which was pumped to industries and residences in Sindh and Punjab, it was also denied a fair price for the gas. Other minerals like coal, marble, copper, and gold were also mined in Balochistan but with very little benefit either in terms of money or jobs or even developmental activity coming the way of the Baloch. The developmental model followed by Pakistan in Balochistan was typically colonial, i.e., suited to the priorities and interests of the colonial power rather than of the colony.<sup>301</sup> For instance, the roads that were constructed in Balochistan in the 1970s were primarily aimed at facilitating oil drilling or for facilitating army movement into strongholds of the Baloch insurgents. In the civil services, the Baloch were grossly under-represented even in the province. According to Selig Harrison, only 181 of 830 higher civil service posts were manned by the Baloch in Balochistan, and even these were not top positions. In the police, 70 percent of the force was non-Baloch. The Baloch regiment of the Pakistan Army was Baloch only in name.<sup>302</sup>

The one constant refrain of the Baloch has been how they have been short-changed on the issue of natural gas. According to former Senator Sanaullah Baloch, until the early 1990s Balochistan was supplying 70 percent of the total natural gas being consumed in Pakistan. Gas well discoveries were later made in Sindh in the 1990s and have subsequently reduced Balochistan's share to only 17 percent now. But the price paid for gas from Balochistan was a fraction of what was being paid for gas produced in Sindh. This, according to Senator Baloch, was economic exploitation and strangulation of Balochistan.<sup>303</sup>

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300 Op. cit. (Selig Harrison) pp. 161

301 Sanaullah Baloch, 'Endless discrimination', *The Nation* 8/5/2007, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXV No. 109 pp. 25-27 (item 10)

302 *ibid.* 162-66

303 Op. cit. (Sanaullah Baloch, 2004) pp 32-33

The former governor of the State Bank of Pakistan, Shahid Kardar, clarified that the reason for this was that the well-head prices of the gas fields in Balochistan had been fixed on a cost-plus formula, which was well below the well-head prices of new gas fields.<sup>304</sup> Sanaullah Baloch has also pointed to the profit sharing agreements that Pakistan works out with foreign companies to mine Balochistan's natural resources as an example of the exploitation of the province. According to him, while in Gwadar, lands worth billions of rupees were allotted to outsiders for peanuts, in the mining contracts only 2 percent of profit was allocated to Balochistan, while Islamabad and the foreign company got 48 percent and 50% of the profits, respectively. Quoting data of the Social Policy and Development Centre (SPDC), he pointed out that 92 percent of districts in Balochistan were classified as 'high deprivation' and 63 percent of the population was below the poverty line.<sup>305</sup> In 2006, while there were over 6,700 factories in Punjab, there were only 47 in Balochistan. In the federal government, the Baloch got only 4,500 jobs out of their allotted quota of 20,500 jobs. The province had only one university out of the 92 in the entire country.<sup>306</sup>

According to Sanaullah Baloch, the nearly decade-long rule of General Pervez Musharraf from 1999 to 2008 was an unmitigated disaster for the Baloch who not only suffered a brutal military operation but also saw a sharp fall in their social and developmental indicators. This, despite tall claims by Musharraf of initiating mega development projects in the province. Between 1999 and 2005, rural poverty in Balochistan increased by 15 percent. The infant mortality rate in Balochistan was 130, while the Pakistan average was just 70. Only 25 percent of the Baloch population had access to electricity as compared to 75 percent in the rest of Pakistan. On virtually every other parameter, Balochistan was severely lagging behind the rest of Pakistan. There were only two things in which the growth rate in Balochistan scored over other parts of

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304 Shahid Kardar, 'Bitterness of people', Dawn 27/1/2005, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXIII No. 23 pp. 791-94 (item 4)

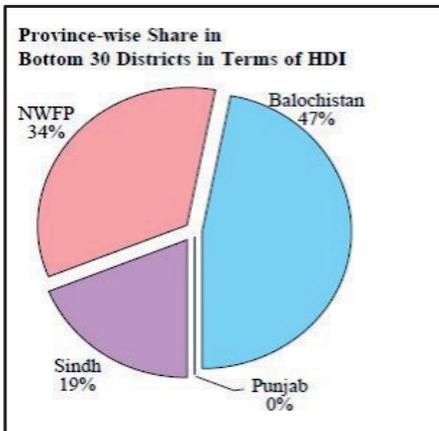
305 Op. cit. (Sanaullah Baloch, 8/5/2007)

306 Op. cit. (Daily Times 4/2/2006)

Pakistan during the Musharraf years: the numbers of *madarassas* and that of police stations!<sup>307</sup>

According to a UNDP report published in 2003, 47 percent of the 31 districts with the lowest Human Development Indicators were in Balochistan, while not a single district of Punjab fell in this category (*see Figure 1*).

**FIGURE 1**<sup>308</sup>



By 2016, despite the passage of the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment in 2010 that gave new powers to the provinces and despite the 7<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission award that increased the share of the provinces in general and Balochistan in particular, in the sharing of the divisible pool of resources, very little difference was seen in the development profile of Balochistan. According to a SPDC report that was released in 2016, 11 out of the 15 districts in Pakistan with the lowest HDI ranking were in Balochistan (*see Table 6*). Shockingly, in 2016, all the districts in Balochistan qualified as 'low-level human development' districts (*see Table 7*).

307 Sanaullah Baloch, 'Balochistan: myth of development', Dawn 2/11/2008, accessed at <https://www.dawn.com/news/845263>

308 Source: Pakistan National Human Development Report 2003, pp 13

**TABLE 5<sup>309</sup>: HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX FOR BALOCHISTAN DISTRICTS**

District	Literacy Ratio % 1998	Enrolment Ratio % 1998	Immunization Ratio % 1998	Infant Survival Ratio %	Real GDP per capita (PPPS) 1998	Educational Attainment Index	Health Index	Income Index	HDI
Awaran	14.8	12.2	31.3	96.4	1,490	0.139	0.769	0.234	0.381
Barkhan	15.7	18.0	52.6	96.4	1,652	0.165	0.83 $\beta$	0.261	0.420
Bolan	15.7	17.7	48.9	96.4	664	0.164	0.822	0.095	0.360
Chagai	26.9	27.7	63.1	96.4	1,688	0.272	0.864	0.267	0.468
Dera Bugti	11.7	7.5	27.3	96.4	78	0.103	0.757	(0.004)	0.285
Gwadar	25.5	28.8	65.5	96.4	337	0.266	0.871	0.040	0.392
Jaffarabad	18.5	17.5	49.4	96.4	2,230	0.182	0.823	0.359	0.454
Jhalnagsi	12.3	4.1	32.1	96.4	1,093	0.096	0.771	0.167	0.345
Kalat	19.8	15.3	50.8	96.4	1,437	0.183	0.827	0.225	0.412
Kech	27.5	34.2	63.2	96.4	2,321	0.297	0.864	0.374	0.512
Kharan	15.1	14.1	49.2	96.4	503	0.148	0.822	0.068	0.346
Killa Abdullah	16.1	14.9	49.9	96.4	1,159	0.157	0.825	0.178	0.387
Killa Saifullah	17.5	21.2	46.3	96.4	2,254	0.187	0.814	0.363	0.455
Kohlu	12.2	5.2	22.7	96.4	1,303	0.099	0.743	0.202	0.348
Lashela	22.3	19.7	43.6	96.4	3,206	0.214	0.806	0.523	0.514
Loralai	20.5	18.1	58.2	96.4	3,798	0.197	0.849	0.623	0.556
Mazung	27.6	22.5	54.3	96.4	2,992	0.259	0.838	0.487	0.528
Nasirabad	12.7	8.2	52.6	96.4	3,253	0.112	0.833	0.531	0.492
Panjgur	31.4	36.8	65.9	96.4	1,783	0.332	0.873	0.283	0.496
Sibi	25.5	19.1	32.2	96.4	1,452	0.234	0.771	0.228	0.411
Zhob	16.8	14.8	53.3	96.4	1,889	0.161	0.835	0.301	0.432
Ziarat	34.3	41.6	71.6	96.4	5,046	0.367	0.890	0.833	0.697

309 Source: *ibid.*, pp. 137

TABLE 6<sup>310</sup>: DISTRICTS WITH LOWEST HDI VALUES

Districts with Lowest HDI Values			
Province	District	HDI Value	National Rank Order
Balochistan	Dera Bugti	0.297	113
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	Tor Ghar	0.323	112
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	Kohistan	0.330	111
Balochistan	Jhal Magsi	0.330	110
Balochistan	Killa Abdullah	0.332	109
Balochistan	Chagai	0.332	108
Balochistan	Nasirabad/ Tamboo	0.336	107
Balochistan	Sheerani	0.338	106
Sindh	Kashmore	0.343	105
Balochistan	Harnai	0.350	104
Balochistan	Barkhan	0.356	103
Balochistan	Bolan/ Kachhi	0.360	102
Balochistan	Kohlu	0.360	101
Balochistan	Jaffarabad	0.361	100
Sindh	Tando Mohammad Khan	0.361	99

Source: Estimates are based on PSLM, 2014-15 data.

310 Source: Haroon Jamal, 'Research report No. 96, Quantifying Sub-National Human Development Indices from Household Survey Data', May 2016, Social Development and Policy Centre, pp.6, accessed at <http://www.spdc.org.pk/Data/Publication/PDF/RR-96.pdf>

**TABLE 7<sup>311</sup>**

Balochistan	
Low Level HD	
Dera Bugti	0.297
Jhal Magsi	0.330
Killa Abdullah	0.332
Chagai	0.332
Nasirabad	0.336
Sheerani	0.338
Harnai	0.350
Barikhan	0.356
Kohlu	0.360
Bolan/ Kachhi	0.360
Jaffarabad	0.361
Washuk	0.372
Killa Saifullah	0.378
Ziarat	0.388
Awaran	0.388
Kharan	0.392
Musakhel	0.400
Khuzdar	0.400
Nushki	0.402
Zhob	0.403
Sibbi	0.413
Lashbela	0.415
Pishin	0.416
Loralai	0.424
Kalat	0.432
Mastung	0.443
Gwadar	0.492
Quetta	0.496

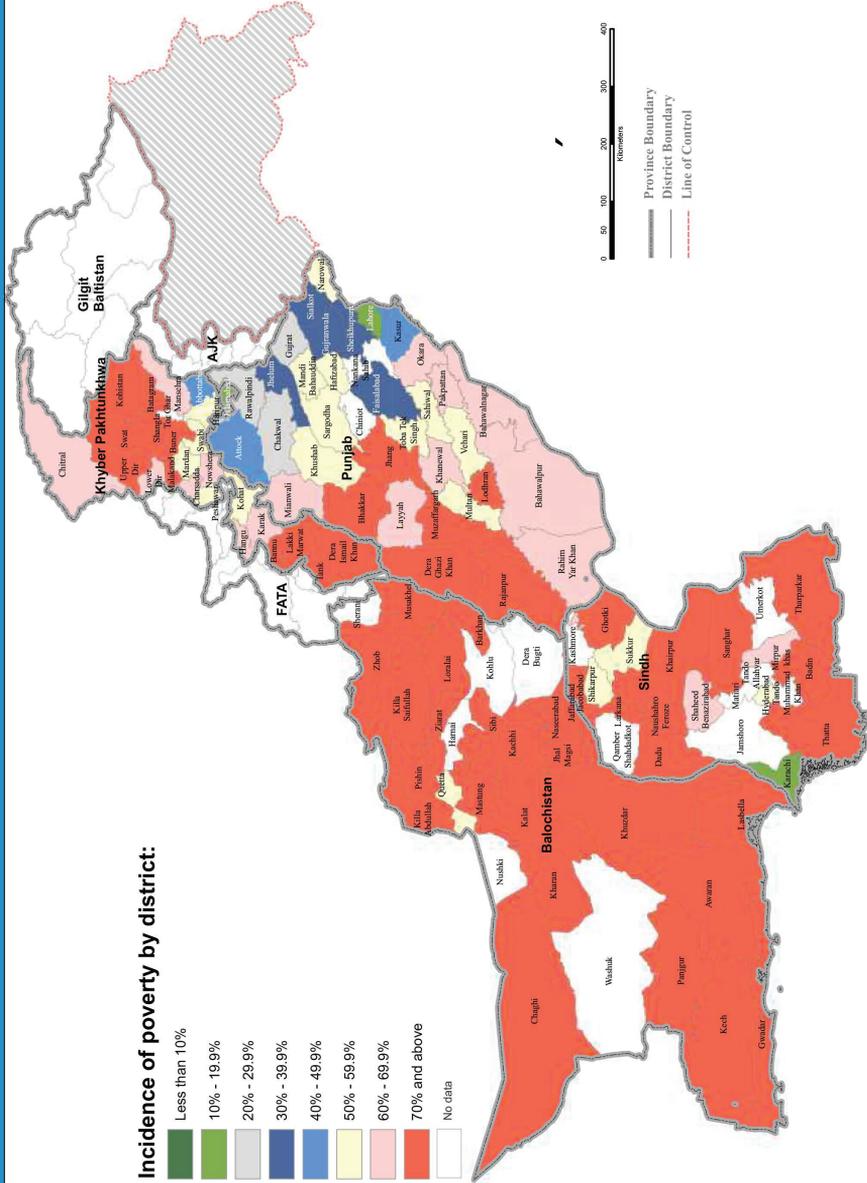
Two maps explain the story of Balochistan province as compared to the rest of the country. The first (*Map 3*) is the poverty map of Pakistan in 2004–05 and the second (*Map 4*) is a similar map for 2014–15. The colour coding shows that all the districts of Balochistan suffered an incidence of poverty of 70 percent and above in 2004–05. The second map shows that a decade later, the bulk of Balochistan’s districts continued to suffer acute poverty, but even the few districts that had improved their incidence of poverty, over 50 percent of the people were living below the poverty line. Compare the state of affairs in Balochistan with the state of affairs in Punjab, from where the overwhelming number of army men come, as does the bureaucracy, and where the real power in Pakistan lies, and it is clear why Balochistan has become so restive and why economics is today fuelling the grievances of the already-alienated and disaffected Baloch.

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311 *ibid.*

# Incidence of Poverty 2004-05

District Map

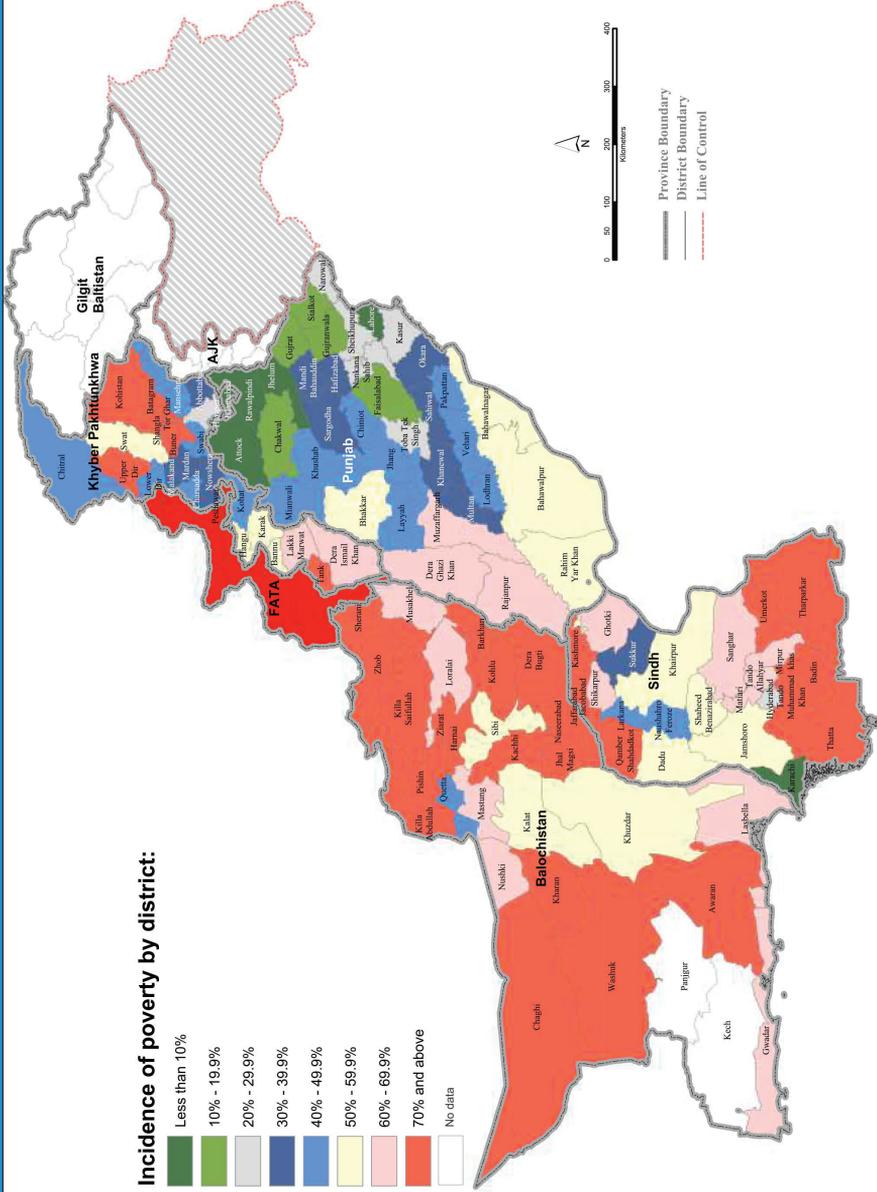


312 Source: Multidimensional Poverty in Pakistan, 2016, accessed at [http://www.pk.undp.org/content/pakistan/en/home/library/hiv\\_aids/Multidimensional-Poverty-in-Pakistan.html](http://www.pk.undp.org/content/pakistan/en/home/library/hiv_aids/Multidimensional-Poverty-in-Pakistan.html)

MAP 4<sup>313</sup>

Incidence of Poverty 2014-15

District Map



## VII. COLONISATION

On November 11 2016, the first convoy carrying Chinese goods reached Gwadar in Balochistan from Kashgar in Xinjiang.<sup>314</sup> The convoy was part of a 200 container caravan, most of them sent by China for onward export to African and other countries from the newly constructed Gwadar port.<sup>315</sup> The decision to showcase the much-vaunted China-Pakistan Economic Corridor by conducting a test run by moving cargo from China to Gwadar had been taken seven months earlier. The then Pakistan Army chief, Gen Raheel Sharif, had declared in a seminar on 'Prospects for Peace and Development in Balochistan' that the first cargo from China would reach Gwadar later in the year, and would not just fulfil Pakistan's dream but also bring the most benefit to the people of Balochistan.<sup>316</sup> Welcoming the convoy, an exultant Sanaullah Zehri, who had by now become the Chief Minister of Balochistan, called it 'a milestone in our history' and hoped that Gwadar would soon become a major transit port for all countries in the region. He also tried to put at rest the controversy over the route of CPEC by welcoming the use of the Western route, which connects Quetta to Gwadar, for the first convoy.<sup>317</sup>

The economic viability of the so-called Western Route is extremely dodgy. This is borne out by the fact that almost half of the containers that reached Gwadar to herald the start of trade activities through Gwadar were empty. In fact, the entire exercise of sending cargo through Gwadar was carried out just to demonstrate the cargo handling capacity of the port and was a 'forced push...to dampen some of the despondency that was beginning to surround

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314 'Chinese ship, trade convoy reach Gwadar port', Dawn 12/11/2016, accessed at <https://www.dawn.com/news/1295895/chinese-ship-trade-convoy-reach-gwadar-port>

315 Sharif Khan, 'China trade convoy reaches Quetta via CPEC', The Nation 9/11/2016, accessed at <http://nation.com.pk/national/09-Nov-2016/china-trade-convoy-reaches-quetta-via-cpec>

316 'First cargo from China to reach Gwadar this year: Gen Raheel', Express Tribune 13/4/2016, accessed at <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1083729/first-cargo-from-china-to-reach-gwadar-this-year-gen-raheel/>

317 'Zehri hails use of western route by first transit trade convoy', Dawn 17/11/2016, accessed at <https://www.dawn.com/news/1296879/zehri-hails-use-of-western-route-by-first-transit-trade-convoy>

the project'.<sup>318</sup> But this was something that was lost in all the hyperbole used to describe the so-called start of trade through Gwadar. What wasn't lost in the rhetoric were the Freudian slips made during the inauguration ceremony to commemorate the start of trade through Gwadar. One video proclaimed that with the CPEC, Pakistan was now the 'Jewel in the Crown', a clear colonial construct which aptly describes the emerging status of Pakistan vis-à-vis China.<sup>319</sup> Just like Pakistan is the 'Jewel' in China's crown, the Pakistan Army, which most Baloch see as a colonial occupation force, has titled Gwadar as the 'crown of CPEC'.<sup>320</sup> The critical importance that is now being attached to Gwadar and CPEC as part of Pakistan's economic survival strategy, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has declared that Pakistan's future is closely linked to development in Balochistan and that a 'developed' Balochistan means a developed Pakistan<sup>321</sup>, which has meant only more trouble for the Baloch because the stranglehold of Pakistan's oppressive rule has only tightened. Development for the Pakistani PM and the Pakistan Army essentially means building infrastructure that allows for Balochistan to become a thoroughfare for the Pakistanis and the Chinese. Only the crumbs from this traffic will go to the Baloch.

The Baloch nationalists have always known this and this is the reason that almost two decades ago when the military dictator Pervez Musharraf announced mega projects in Balochistan, there were very few takers among the Baloch for these projects, which they saw as part of the exploitative system put in place by the Pakistanis. Gwadar, which is the centre of gravity, the pivot and the fulcrum behind the entire CPEC programme, has for long been seen as Pakistan's ticket to geo-economic relevance. During the Musharraf period,

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318 Khurram Husain, 'Has CPEC now kicked off?' Dawn 20/12/2016, accessed at <https://www.dawn.com/news/1296727/has-cpec-now-kicked-off>  
<https://www.dawn.com/news/1296262/first-ship-leaves-gwadar-amid-fanfare>

319 Khurram Husain, 'First ship leaves Gwadar amid fanfare', Dawn 14/11/2016

320 Salim Bokhari, 'Crown of CPEC to bring prosperity', The Nation 14/12/2016, accessed at <http://nation.com.pk/national/14-Dec-2016/crown-of-cpec-to-bring-prosperity>

321 Salim Shahid and Behram Baloch, 'A developed Balochistan means a new Pakistan, says PM', Dawn 15/12/2016, accessed at <https://www.dawn.com/news/1302424/a-developed-balochistan-means-a-new-pakistan-says-pm>

a deal was signed with the Chinese to develop Gwadar port. Even as the construction of the port started, a storm was brewing in Balochistan. Musharraf was aware of this and had earlier tried to sell Gwadar to the Baloch by saying that once the port and highway were developed, Balochistan would become the best developed area of the economy.<sup>322</sup> Baloch nationalists remained unconvinced and mounted a series of protests, not just against Gwadar port, but also the cantonments that the army was building in Balochistan which were seen as a tightening of Pakistan's colonial grip over the province.

The port that was developed during the Musharraf era remained a non-starter. It was a White Elephant and wasn't of much utility for anyone. The PPP government which came into office in 2008, once again tried to revive the Gwadar port project, this time by handing over control of the port to the Chinese. In July 2010, during a visit to Beijing, President Asif Zardari had tried to revive the proposal for connecting Gwadar to China by rail and pipeline.<sup>323</sup> Gwadar was also being seen by Chinese companies as an option for shipping copper and gold that they planned to mine in Afghanistan.<sup>324</sup> The Government of Pakistan also announced its intention to seek Chinese involvement in making Gwadar operational during the visit of Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao to Pakistan.<sup>325</sup> In May 2011, the Defence Minister of Pakistan, Ahmed Mukhtar, who had accompanied Prime Minister Yusuf Raza Gilani on his visit to China, revealed that China had agreed to Pakistan's request to take over the port's operations once the agreement with Port Singapore Authority (PSA) expired.

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322 'Cabinet okays promulgation of MFIs ordinance', *The News International* 06/09/2001, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXIX No. 214 pp 3717-18

323 'Pak to build rail link, pipeline from Gwadar to China', *Nation* 09/07/2010, accessed at <http://nation.com.pk/Politics/09-Jul-2010/Pak-to-build-rail-link-pipeline-from-Gwadar-to-China/1>.

324 'Chinese dragon: Counterproposal submitted for Reko Diq project', *Express Tribune* 16/12/2010, accessed at <http://tribune.com.pk/story/90678/chinese-dragon-counterproposal-submitted-for-reko-diq-project/>

325 'Gilani for Chinese help in making Gwadar port effective', *The News International* 16/12/2010, accessed on 16/12/2010 at <http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-13-2694-Gilani-for-Chinese-help-in-making-Gwadar-Port-effective>

What really raised eyebrows was Mukhtar's comment that Pakistan would be even more grateful if China constructed a naval base at Gwadar.<sup>326</sup>

The Baloch were of course seething at the fact that they had virtually no say in what happened at Gwadar. Right from the time the proposal for developing Gwadar port was floated, there has been a tussle between the provincial government of Balochistan and the federal government on who would control the land and by extension, the port.<sup>327</sup> The federal government controls 'communications' and has been running the show in Gwadar. After the 18<sup>th</sup> amendment and devolution of powers to provinces, Balochistan once again tried to get a major say in what happens in Gwadar. But the control remains with the federal government, though the provincial government has been given some sops in the form of its nominee being appointed the chairman of the port authority. A major reason for the clamour inside Balochistan over getting control of the port was political. The province has been restive for decades and one of the main grievances of the Baloch nationalists is that they fear that Gwadar port would see an influx of outsiders and reduce them to the status of 'Red Indians'.<sup>328</sup> There was also the sense of alienation, deprivation and oppression that the Baloch suffered and which became even more acute with the growing feeling that they would once again be short-changed and denied the benefits of their own '*sahil*' and '*wasael*' (coast and resources).<sup>329</sup>

The 'anti-development' sentiment in Gwadar is quite understandable given the roughshod treatment meted out to the citizens of the port city. In 2003, when the Chinese took over the construction of the port and work commenced on the coastal highway to link Gwadar to Karachi, hardly any local labour was hired, not even for low-skilled manual labour, thereby fuelling resentment. What is more, with Gwadar being billed as the biggest thing to happen in

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326 Jeremy Page, 'Beijing agrees to operate a key port, Pakistan says', Wall Street Journal 23/05/2011, accessed at <http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052702303654804576339323765033308>

327 Shahzada Zulfiqar, 'Hook, line and sinker', Newline January 2004, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXII No. 75 pp 1397-99

328 'Balochistan, the other side: Sanaullah', The Post 05/03/2006, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXIV No. 55 pp 26-29

329 Nicholas Schmittle, 'To live or perish forever: Two tumultuous years in Pakistan', (2009) pp 100-110, offers a succinct description of the sentiment in Gwadar

Pakistan, people from all over the country made a bee-line for the city in a bid to get the early bird advantage. Newspapers in Lahore, Islamabad and Karachi were full of advertisements of land sales in Gwadar. Speculation in land sent prices sky-rocketing but very few locals benefitted. Most of the land was cornered by civil and military officials and politicians.<sup>330</sup> According to one report, half the land was occupied by the Pakistan Navy and the rest comprised housing and commercial schemes in which virtually the who's who of Pakistan had invested.

Land was taken/bought from locals for a pittance and then repackaged and sold at 10 to 20 times the price. In addition, government land was handed out to cronies who made a massive killing by re-selling the land to investors.<sup>331</sup> There were also plans to relocate the entire population of the city to facilitate construction.<sup>332</sup> But since the port was a non-starter, it wasn't long before the bottom fell out of the land market. Prices crashed and a lot of people lost a lot of money in the boom-bust cycle that Gwadar had come to signify.<sup>333</sup> By 2011, the port of dreams had become a port which was used for smuggling in oil and smuggling out narcotics and human trafficking.<sup>334</sup> Even after the Chinese moved back in around 2014 and construction activity picked up, there isn't much optimism among the local community because port development

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330 Aqil Shah, 'The brewing storm of discontent', Dawn 21/06/2003, accessed at <http://www.dawn.com/news/1064691>

331 Muhammad Ejaz Khan, 'Massive corruption unearthed in Gwadar land allotments', The News International 13/11/2006, accessed at <http://archive.thenews.com.pk/TodaysPrintDetail.aspx?ID=4177&Cat=13&dt=11/10/2006>

332 Op. cit. (Shahzada Zulfiqar)

333 Malik Siraj Akbar, 'Gwadar's real estate boom busts', Daily Times 29/11/2008, accessed at <http://archives.dailytimes.com.pk/national/29-Nov-2008/gwadar-s-real-estate-boom-busts>

334 'The global Afghan opium trade: A threat assessment', UNODC July 2011, pp 79-80, accessed at [https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/Studies/Global\\_Afghan\\_Opium\\_Trade\\_2011-web.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/Studies/Global_Afghan_Opium_Trade_2011-web.pdf) ; also see Moign Khawaja, 'Gwadar: An unfulfilled dream', Express Tribune 27/02/2011, accessed at <http://tribune.com.pk/story/122720/gwadar-an-unfulfilled-dream/>

projects that have already commenced, such as jetties and breakwaters, have devastated the livelihoods of local fishermen.<sup>335</sup>

The Makran belt has also seen massive support for the Baloch insurgents. For years, there were many areas which had become virtual no-go areas for the Pakistani state authorities. But the earthquake in Awaran in 2013 changed the security dynamics. Under the garb of rescue and relief operations, the Pakistan military mounted a major offensive to re-establish its oppressive control in the area.<sup>336</sup> This was also the time when the CPEC plan was taking off the ground and the Chinese were not pulling their punches in telling the Pakistanis that they needed to ensure the safety and security of Chinese workers because the security conditions in and around Gwadar left a lot to be desired.<sup>337</sup> Because of the 'game changing' Chinese investment under CPEC as well as the fact that Pakistan had neither any inclination to reach out to the 'angry' Baloch nor faced any international opprobrium in brutally crushing the Baloch insurgents, a massive but undeclared military operation was launched against the Baloch freedom fighters. Of course, for Pakistan, India served as the convenient bogey that is used to justify the most unspeakable human rights violations as well as rationalise expenditure on security, in addition to playing upon the fears of the Chinese and exploiting the wariness with which China and India see each other.<sup>338</sup> It wasn't long before Pakistan

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335 Shazia Hasan, 'Footprints: Of unplanned jetties', Dawn 09/01/2015, accessed at <http://www.dawn.com/news/1155815/footprints-of-unplanned-jetties>

336 Mahvish Ahmad, 'Army forces its way into Mashky-Gajjar, distributes aid', Dawn 16/10/2013, accessed at <http://www.dawn.com/news/1049951>

337 'Growing insecurity: China demands solid steps for workers safety', Dawn 19/09/2013, accessed at <http://tribune.com.pk/story/606303/growing-insecurity-china-demands-solid-steps-for-workers-safety/>

338 Zahid Gishkori, 'Pak-China corridor: China concerned over Balochistan security', Express Tribune 23/05/2015, accessed at <http://tribune.com.pk/story/890995/pak-china-corridor-china-concerned-over-balochistan-security/>

started hurling malicious and baseless allegations against India, blaming it of setting up a special cell at the cost of \$300 million to sabotage the CPEC.<sup>339</sup>

In addition to the military operation, Pakistan also started putting in place mechanisms for protecting the CPEC and Chinese workers, engineers and businessmen who would be working and investing in the projects. Pakistan announced the setting up of a 12,000-strong force called 'Special Security Division' (SSD) comprising both civilian and military personnel which would be led by, needless to say, a Lt. Gen. rank officer. The mandate of the force was to provide protection to the entire CPEC.<sup>340</sup> The security plan was further expanded by making it a four-layered plan in which some 32,000 security personnel (including the SSD) would guard around 14,000 Chinese working in different capacities on projects in Pakistan. The force would include over 500 Chinese security personnel as well. In the words of a former Pakistani official, it was a do-or-die situation for Pakistan.<sup>341</sup> But the most disturbing aspect of this four-layered plan was the repercussion it would have on residents of Gwadar, whose worst fears regarding Chinese involvement in the port project could well be coming true, with arrangements being made for issuing of residence cards to local inhabitants and all outsiders coming into the city that would be registered at entry points with records of outsiders maintained and updated regularly.<sup>342</sup>

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339 'Special cell set up in RAW to foil Economic Corridor', The News International 11/05/2015, accessed at <http://www.thenews.com.pk/print/12423-special-cell-set-up-in-raw-to-foil-economic-corridor> ; also see 'Covert war: RAW sets up special team to sabotage CPEC', Express Tribune, accessed at [http://epaper.tribune.com.pk/DisplayDetails.aspx?ENI\\_ID=11201507090117&EN\\_ID=11201507090059&EMID=11201507090015](http://epaper.tribune.com.pk/DisplayDetails.aspx?ENI_ID=11201507090117&EN_ID=11201507090059&EMID=11201507090015)

340 Ismail Dilawar, 'SSD to guard CPEC projects', Business Recorder 13/05/2015, accessed at <http://www.brecorder.com/top-stories/0:/1185408:ssd-to-guard-cpec-projects/?date=2015-05-13>

341 Zahid Gishkori, 'Economic Corridor: Pakistan, China agree on four-layer security', Express Tribune 01/11/2015, accessed at <http://tribune.com.pk/story/983033/economic-corridor-pakistan-china-agree-on-four-layer-security/>

342 'Gwadar to be made weapon free city', Dawn 01/11/2015, accessed at <http://www.dawn.com/news/1216753/gwadar-to-be-made-weapon-free-city>

The arrangement is being described as the Pakistani version of apartheid era pass laws—referred to by the blacks as ‘Dompas’ (stupid pass)—which was meant to keep the black population under control by restricting and regulating their movement. According to a veteran supporter of Baloch nationalism, ‘the entire aim of residence passes in Gwadar is to create an area where Baloch entry can be restricted and controlled at will to ensure that the Chinese are safe even if that safety comes at the cost of employing apartheid mechanisms in Balochistan.’<sup>343</sup> Soon after this article was published, the author was told that the newspaper will no longer be carrying his articles!

Balochistan’s chief minister, Sanaullah Zehri, has held out assurances that laws will be passed by the provincial government to address the concerns of Gwadar residents and protect their rights. Rather bombastically, Zehri declared that the first right over the port city would be that of the residents, followed by people of Balochistan and then the rest of the country. Apparently the Chinese overlords figure nowhere in the CMs list even though it is clear that they are the ones whose word will be law in Gwadar. Nevertheless, Zehri insisted that the law would not allow settlers to be included in the voting lists of Gwadar.<sup>344</sup> More than a year later, not a single step has been taken to fulfil the commitment made by Zehri.

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343 Mir Mohammad Ali Talpur, ‘Dompas’, Daily Times 15/11/2015, accessed at <http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/opinion/15-Nov-2015/dompas>

344 ‘Proposed legislation: Govt to protect rights of Gwadar’s citizens, says Zehri’, Express Tribune 3/3/2016, accessed at <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1058476/proposed-legislation-govt-to-protect-rights-of-gwadars-citizens-says-zehri/>

## VIII. INDIA'S CONCERN

If, since independence, Balochistan has either been simmering or has occasionally burst into flames, the arsonist has always been Pakistan and the policies it has pursued in that province. But as is the wont of an arsonist, Pakistan has looked for alibis to deflect blame and absolve itself of wrongdoing. Like in everything else, Pakistan's favourite whipping boy has been India. Blaming India for the mistakes and blunders committed by the political-military-bureaucratic establishment in Balochistan is helpful because attaching an Indian label to something not only helps to deflect focus from the Pakistani establishment's own acts of omission and commission, it gives the Pakistani deep state a *carte blanche* to do whatever it wants to restore a semblance of 'normalcy'.

The Indian bogey was used to forcibly annex Kalat in 1948. This despite the fact that the Indian leadership had shown no interest or inclination to muddy the waters by even flirting with the idea of accepting Kalat's accession, much less backing Kalat's claim to independence. In the 1970s, the autocratic Bhutto couldn't countenance the National Awami Party (NAP)-led government in Balochistan. When he dismissed the government, he needed an alibi. India came in handy. Bhutto instituted the Hyderabad Conspiracy case against the NAP leadership. One of the allegations against the accused was that the top leaders of NAP 'were supporters of united India and Indian nationalism [and] are still unreconciled to Pakistan's existence, integrity and sovereignty'.<sup>345</sup> Earlier, in October 1974, a White Paper issued by the Government of Pakistan on Balochistan had also insinuated the close links between NAP and India's Congress party. According to the White Paper, 'It may be said without unfairness that if the National Awami Party as led by Mr. Abdul Wali Khan were to have a generic name, it would be the Indian National Congress. This is indicated by among many other utterances, the statements made by Mr. Abdul Ghaffar Khan in March 1972, in Kabul that NAP was in fact a continuation of the Indian National Congress...' and went on to quote a letter of the Frontier Gandhi to the Mahatma that he wanted a free Pathan state within India.<sup>346</sup> Bhutto also

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345 Islamic Republic of Pakistan, An Amnesty International report including the findings of a mission to Pakistan 23 April – 12 May, 1976, pp 75, accessed at <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/204000/asa330081977en.pdf>

346 Op. cit. Pakistan government White Paper on Balochistan

accused the NAP leaders of not just receiving 'moral and political support' from New Delhi, but also maintaining contact with India in London and New Delhi.<sup>347</sup> But the Hyderabad Conspiracy case was built on lies, and it was withdrawn soon after Bhutto's government was overthrown in a military coup by General Zia-ul-Haq. According to Selig Harrison, 'since 1974, as Pakistani leaders acknowledge, New Delhi has refrained from such tactics (supporting Baloch, Sindhi and Pashtun separatists to put pressure on Pakistan) as part of its post-Bangladesh efforts to stabilise relations with Islamabad'.<sup>348</sup>

For over three decades, India scrupulously adopted a hands-off approach in Balochistan. Despite the fact that most of the Baloch nationalists had close pre-partition associations with Indian leaders, the quest for normalisation with Pakistan made India refuse even the most innocuous of requests from the dissident Baloch leaders. This was seen as a slight by the Baloch leaders and rankled them so much that they lost all faith in India. In a meeting with the author in September 2000 in his London apartment, Sardar Ataullah Mengal said that since he was in exile in London, he wanted to hold the wedding reception of his son in New Delhi in 1980, but was refused the visa by Indian authorities because they wanted to reach out to General Zia-ul-Haq and didn't want to offend the Pakistani military dictator by facilitating visas for Mengal's friends and family.<sup>349</sup>

As the troubles in Balochistan started mounting at the turn of the century, Pakistan once again fell back on its time-honoured bogeyman—India. The pet Pakistani refrain was that India was using its consulates in Afghanistan, particularly the ones in Kandahar and Jalalabad, to create trouble inside Pakistan. In January 2003, Pakistan's ambassador to the US expressed Pakistan's misgivings about the establishment of four Indian consulates in Afghanistan close to Pakistan's border and alleged that they had been set up for political and 'other purposes'.<sup>350</sup> The next month, Pakistani Prime Minister Mir Zafarullah Jamali, said in an interview to Al Jazeera that Indian

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347 'Mr Bhutto alleges Indian interference in Balochistan', see POT Pakistan Series Vol. II No. 5 pp. 38 (item 2)

348 Op. cit. (Selig Harrison) pp 204

349 Author's interview with Ataullah Mengal, September 2000

350 'US-Pak ties have worked: Jehangir', Daily Times 17/1/2003, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXI No. 26 pp. 568 (item 5)

consulates in Afghanistan should not be allowed to surpass the established diplomatic limits.<sup>351</sup> It wasn't long before the Pakistani accusations against the Indian consulates became completely bizarre. For instance, in March 2003, the Pakistani media claimed that after the opening of Indian consulates in Kandahar and Jalalabad, heroin production had spiked and the proceeds of the narco-trade would be used by India for development of missile and nuclear technology!<sup>352</sup> A couple of months later, for both the terrorist attack on a Quetta Imabargah (Shia mosque) and the storming of the Pakistan embassy in Kabul by a mob, India was accused of using Afghanistan to sponsor terrorism against Pakistan.<sup>353</sup> Pakistan's Interior Minister, Faisal Saleh Hayat, said that the involvement of Indian consulates in Kandahar and Herat in the Quetta attack 'could not be ruled out' and alleged that the Indian missions were involved in activities other than of diplomatic nature.<sup>354</sup>

By 2004, with the security situation in Balochistan deteriorating alarmingly, the bogey of Indian hand behind the uprising in Balochistan became a convenient excuse for the Pakistani military establishment and its political lackeys in the province. In April 2004, the then Chief Minister of Balochistan, Jam Mohammad Yusuf, a man who was more interested in playing video games and with his mobile phones than with administering the province,<sup>355</sup> addressed a press conference in which he alleged that the Indian external intelligence service, Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW), was running between 30 and 40 terrorist camps in Iran and Afghanistan. According to him, around 30 people were trained in each camp and each of them was paid

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351 'Jamali rejects anyone's hegemony in region', *The News International* 16/2/2003, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXI No. 47 pp. 1040 (item 1)

352 'Indian consulates in Jalalabad promoting Heroin', *Daily Tiles* 30/3/2003, POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXI No. 80 pp. 1760 (item 15)

353 Tariq Butt, 'Attack on embassy blow to Afghan-Pak ties: Analysis', *The News International* 9/7/2003, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXI No. 169 pp. 3329-30 (item 2)

354 'Faisal sees Indian hand in Quetta killings', *The News International* 11/7/2003, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXI No. 172 pp. 3368-69 (item 2)

355 Ansar Abbasi, 'Balochistan Chief Minister ignoring crisis', *The News International* 19/4/2007, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXV No. 93 pp. 38-42 (item 13)

Rs. 10,000 every month.<sup>356</sup> This presser came after the killing of some Chinese engineers in Gwadar.<sup>357</sup> The Afghans, of course, rubbished the allegations and asked Pakistan to share evidence of Indian use of Afghan soil to create trouble in Pakistan. They continually assured Pakistan that if indeed there was such evidence against India, they would not only take it very seriously but also act upon it.<sup>358</sup> But as usual, the Pakistanis, who were quick to manufacture and hurl accusations against India through 'embedded journalists' like Kamran Khan, faltered because the accusations were never backed by any credible evidence.<sup>359</sup> It wasn't only India that was blamed for the disturbances in Balochistan. The Pakistanis also cast aspersions on Iran.<sup>360</sup> Then there were the grand conspiracy theories about splitting Balochistan from Pakistan to create an energy corridor for oil and gas from Central Asia to flow to the US.<sup>361</sup> There were also insinuations against countries like the UAE that allegedly did not relish the prospect of competition from Gwadar port. And, of course, there was the usual bit about a Zionist-Hindu conspiracy.<sup>362</sup>

In December 2005, for the first time, the Indian Ministry of External Affairs spokesman while responding to a question on Balochistan expressed 'concern over the spiralling violence in Balochistan, including the use of helicopter gunships and jet fighters' and hoped that the Pakistan government would 'exercise restraint and take recourse to peaceful discussions to address the

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356 'RAW camps in Balochistan: CM', Dawn 31/8/2004, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXII No. 211 pp. 4127-28 (item 14)

357 'Probe ordered into Gwadar killings', The News International 5/5/2004, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXII No. 108 pp. 2024

358 Ahmad Rashid, 'Karzai, Musharraf new regional equation', The Nation 15/10/2004, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXII No. 250 pp. 4908-09 (item 16)

359 Khaled Ahmed, 'A moral weakness of our TV channels', Daily Times 13/12/2005, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXIII No. 294 pp. 10579-80 (item 20)

360 'Comments: Balochistan crisis: accusing Iran', Daily Times 27/1/2005, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXIII No. 23 pp. 785-95 (item 4)

361 Irfan Husain, 'One hand clapping', Dawn 2/4/2005, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXIII No. 79 pp. 3155-57 (item 15)

362 Prof. Khurram Shahzad, 'What ails Balochistan?', The Nation 15/2/2005, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXIII No. 39 pp. 1472-73 (item 2)

grievances of the people of Balochistan'.<sup>363</sup> The Pakistanis immediately latched on to this statement as 'evidence' of Indian involvement in Balochistan. Speaking to Pakistani editors a couple of days after the MEA spokesman's remarks, General Pervez Musharraf said that the concerns expressed by India 'revealed the channel providing funds for hiring mercenaries and supplying arms for carrying out subversive activities in the province'.<sup>364</sup> In an interview given to a very friendly Indian journalist a few days later, Musharraf pressed the point further and claimed that there was 'reasonable amount of evidence', mostly relating to financial support and support in kind, being given to Baloch insurgents by India.<sup>365</sup> But while Musharraf and his cronies were treating the statement of the MEA spokesman as a *mea culpa*, Baloch nationalists were enthused by the concerns expressed by India over the situation in Balochistan.<sup>366</sup>

In 2006, the MEA spokesman once again mentioned Balochistan, this time in response to a question related to the assassination of Nawab Akbar Bugti by the Pakistani Army. The Indian advice to Pakistan was that 'the heavy casualties in the continuing military operations in Balochistan underline the need for peaceful dialogue to address the grievances and aspirations of people of Balochistan. Military force can never solve political problems'.<sup>367</sup> In 2007,

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363 'In response to a question on Balochistan', Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 27/12/2005, accessed at <http://www.mea.gov.in/media-briefings.htm?dtl/4834/in+response+to+a+question+on+balochistan>

364 'Musharraf sees foreign hand in Balochistan', *The News International* 30/12/2005, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXIII No. 309 pp. 11132-38 (item 1)

365 'Get out of 3 towns, we'll help you fight terror: Musharraf', *The Nation* 8/1/2006, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXIV No. 8 pp. 2-9 (item 1)

366 'Baloch nationalist leader welcomes Indian concerns', *Dawn* 31/12/2005, see POT Pakistan Series Vol. XXXIV No. 1 pp. 14 (item 4)

367 'In response to questions on the killing of Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti, the Baloch leader', Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 28/8/2006, accessed at <http://www.mea.gov.in/media-briefings.htm?dtl/3579/in+response+to+questions+on+the+killing+of+nawab+akbar+khan+bugti+the+baloch+leader>

Indian insisted it had nothing to do with developments in Balochistan.<sup>368</sup> But a remark by Brahmdagh Bugti, grandson of the slain Nawab Akbar Bugti, in an interview to BBC in 2008 where he said that the Baloch had a right to accept foreign aid from anywhere including from India, was once again construed by the Pakistanis as ‘evidence’ that India was indeed behind the Baloch freedom struggle.<sup>369</sup> In 2009, the MEA spokesman dismissed Pakistani allegations that India was supporting the BLA and said ‘These are entirely baseless allegations and we see no reason to dignify them with a response.’<sup>370</sup>

But in an act of shooting oneself in the foot, within a couple of months of rubbishing Pakistani allegations, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh allowed a reference to Balochistan in a joint statement issued after a meeting with his Pakistani counterpart in Sharm-el-Sheikh, Egypt. The controversial sentence in the Joint Statement was that ‘Prime Minister Gilani mentioned that Pakistan has some information on threats in Balochistan and other areas.’<sup>371</sup> The Pakistanis were jubilant and saw this as an acceptance by India of its guilt. But Manmohan Singh had a completely different take on the reference to Balochistan. Making a statement in Parliament he said, ‘[Prime Minister Gilani] mentioned to me that many Pakistanis thought that India meddled in Balochistan. I told him that we have no interest whatsoever in destabilising Pakistan nor do we harbour any ill-intent towards Pakistan. We believe that a stable, peaceful and prosperous Pakistan living in peace with its neighbours is in India’s own interest...I told Prime Minister Gilani that our conduct is an open book. If Pakistan has any evidence—and they have not given me any

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368 ‘On the first meeting of the India-Pakistan Anti-Terrorism Mechanism held in Islamabad’, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 7/3/2007, accessed at <http://www.mea.gov.in/media-briefings.htm?dtl/2930/on+the+first+meetin+g+of+the+indiapakistan+anti+terrorism+mechanism+held+in+islamabad>

369 Sajjad Shaukat, ‘Foreign elements in Balochistan’, Post 13/11/2008

370 ‘Response of Official Spokesperson on alleged “Indian support” for Balochistan Liberation Army’, MEA, Government of India, 23/4/2009, accessed at <http://www.mea.gov.in/media-briefings.htm?dtl/5368/response+of+official+spokesp+erson+on+alleged+indian+support+for+balochistan+liberation+army>

371 ‘Joint Statement Prime Minister of India Dr. Manmohan Singh and the Prime Minister of Pakistan Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani’, MEA, Government of India, 16/7/2009, accessed at <http://www.mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/4855/joint+statement+prime+minister+of+india+dr+manmohan+sin+gh+and+the+prime+minister+of+pakistan+syed+yusuf+raza+gilani>

evidence, no dossier was ever supplied—we are willing to look at it because we have nothing to hide'.<sup>372</sup> While Manmohan Singh couldn't convince India of his blunder and naiveté in giving Pakistan a handle against India by allowing a reference to Balochistan, his statement did put a lie to Pakistani claims that a voluminous dossier had been handed by Gilani to the Indian Prime Minister. The reverberations of the damage caused by the Sharm-el-Sheikh Joint Statement continue to be felt to this day. The travesty and tragedy is that without giving any material help whatsoever to the Baloch freedom fighters, by including a reference to their struggle, India harmed their cause immensely.

By 2010, India was not just denying that it had nothing to do with Balochistan but was also calling Balochistan 'an internal affair of Pakistan' and assuring the Pakistanis that India had no desire to interfere on this issue.<sup>373</sup> This position was reiterated by the External Affairs Minister S.M. Krishna in an interview with *The Tribune*. The minister said in reply to a question that Balochistan was no longer an issue. They have not given us any proof about India's involvement in Balochistan and added 'in the absence of proof, it would not be fair to accuse India. The Indian Government's position is that we will not interfere in the internal affairs of Pakistan'.<sup>374</sup>

In 2016, India once again started talking about Balochistan. This was not so much a major policy shift, but a payback to Pakistan for raking up Kashmir in the aftermath of the killing of the terrorist, Burhan Wani. Addressing an All Party Conference in New Delhi on 12 August 2016, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that the time had come to expose Pakistan's brutalities in

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372 'Prime Minister's statement in Lok Sabha on the debate on the PM's recent visit abroad on July 29, 2009', MEA, Government of India, 29/7/2009, accessed at <http://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/1083/prime+ministers+statement+in+lok+sabha+on+the+debate+on+the+pms+recent+visits+abroad+on+july+29+2009>

373 'Media Briefing by Foreign Secretary on her discussions with Pakistani Foreign Secretary', MEA, Government of India 25/2/2010, accessed at <http://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/443/media+briefing+by+foreign+secretary+on+her+discussions+with+pakistani+foreign+secretary>

374 'Interview of External Affairs Minister to The Tribune', MEA, Government of India 20/5/2010, accessed at <http://www.mea.gov.in/interviews.htm?dtl/4880/interview+of+external+affairs+minister+to+the+tribune>

Balochistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.<sup>375</sup> A few days later, addressing the nation on Independence Day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi once again spoke about Balochistan, but this time in the context of the messages he had been receiving from the Baloch, thanking him for highlighting their plight. As was to be expected, the Pakistanis of course went apoplectic over the reference to Balochistan.<sup>376</sup> The Baloch were greatly enthused but also cautioned that this shouldn't be a tactical move, and India must start putting its weight behind the Baloch freedom struggle.<sup>377</sup> At the UN General Assembly, the Indian External Affairs Minister took aim at Pakistan and said that 'those accusing others of human rights violations would do well to introspect and see what egregious abuses they are perpetrating in their own country, including in Balochistan. The brutality against the Baloch people represents the worst form of State oppression.'<sup>378</sup>

But despite making a show of taking the battle to the enemy by highlighting the unspeakable brutalities that Pakistan has visited upon the Baloch, there doesn't appear to be any major policy shift by the Government of India in terms of material assistance. Even the asylum request of Brahmdagh Bugti is in a limbo, and no decision has been taken on it. For all intents and purposes, it seems that talking about Balochistan was merely to pushback against Pakistan's strident references to Kashmir.

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375 Saubhadra Chatterji and Aurangzeb Naqshbandi, 'Kashmir all-party meet: Modi discusses atrocities in PoK, Balochistan', *Hindustan Times* 12/8/2016, accessed at <http://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/at-kashmir-all-party-meet-modi-talks-on-pok-balochistan-atrocities/story-PpIDoIx7YjYH4FhDjEnGxH.html>

376 Anand Mishra and Shubhajit Roy, 'Narendra Modi's Independence Day speech: PM throws down Balochistan gauntlet', *Indian Express* 16/8/2016, accessed at <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/pm-narendra-modi-balochistan-independence-day-congress-pakistan-salman-khurshid-2977554/>

377 'Balochistan leaders welcome PM Narendra Modi's speech', *Indian Express* 16/8/2016, accessed at <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/balochistan-leaders-welcome-pm-narendra-modis-speech-2978410/>

378 'Speech by Minister of State for External Affairs M.J. Akbar at the UN Refugees and Migrants Summit during the 71st Session of UNGA', MEA, Government of India, 20/9/2016, accessed at [http://www.mea.gov.in/Uploads/PublicationDocs/27419\\_MoS\\_UN\\_Speech.pdf](http://www.mea.gov.in/Uploads/PublicationDocs/27419_MoS_UN_Speech.pdf)

## IX. UNCERTAIN FUTURE

The Baloch face a very uncertain future. The fifth uprising, while still continuing, is faltering. The balance of power is just too loaded against the Baloch. Militarily, the Baloch are no match for the Pakistan Army. Economically, the Baloch freedom struggle has been virtually running on empty. It is just the passion and commitment of the Baloch that is keeping the struggle alive.

Without solid external assistance and intervention, it is unlikely that the Baloch will ever be able to win their independence from Pakistan. Surprisingly, despite the fact that the so-called strategic location of Pakistan is almost entirely because of Balochistan—take away Balochistan, and Pakistan loses whatever little strategic relevance it has—yet the strategic aspect of supporting the Baloch has been completely overlooked and neglected by not only the Great Powers such as the US, but also by mid-level powers such as India.

More than the lack of international support, it is the failure of the Baloch to forge a united front against Pakistani occupation that has been a bigger problem. Most of the *sardars* are too pliant, too easy to bribe, too effete, and too egotistical to forge a common front. The Khan of Kalat's efforts had some potential, but soon ran out of steam, partly because he himself was trying to run things by remote control from his base in the UK, and partly because the Pakistani state bought many of the big *sardars*—Raisani and Zehri, to mention just two—and outmanoeuvred the Khan. The bulk of the fighting is being done by the middle-class youth who are forging a new front that cuts across tribal lines. The young Sarmachars don't have much faith in their *sardars*, except for a notable few (and even they are suspected of being ready to cut deals if they get them). For the first time, young women are coming out on to the streets and protesting against Pakistani occupation and brutalities.

Apart from the failure to forge a united front, there is also the failure to come up with a coherent ideological framework under which the struggle can be carried out. In a sense, the struggle is driven more by negatives—Pakistani oppression, exploitation, injustice etc.—rather than by positives—the sort of state and society that the freedom fighters envisage for the people once they shake off the yoke of Pakistan. In other words, the Baloch nationalist movement is 'insufficiently imagined'. There is a lot of rhetoric that is mouthed ad nauseam by those who are in favour of an independent Balochistan but once you cut through the rhetoric, you realise that these people are offering

only slogans and nothing else. There is no over-arching vision of what sort of a state they want, no road map on how they propose to achieve nationhood, no thinking of how the state will be run, what sort of government it will have, how they will utilise the natural resources of the province for the welfare of the people, what sort of developmental model the new state will adopt, will the new state be a tribal confederacy in which the tribal order and customs will rule supreme or will it be based on rule of law and progressive ideals, what will be the status of women in the new state—will honour killing be acceptable or will it be treated as murder, will women be allowed to study and work, or will they be cloistered behind the walls of their houses and bought and sold like chattels?<sup>379</sup> Without this clarity, the Baloch struggle will continue to flounder. While efforts have been made in the past both to unite under a single party and to come up with a constitutional scheme for an independent Balochistan, neither effort has really managed to succeed.

Time is clearly running out for the Baloch. Their worst fears of being reduced to a minority in their own province could come true in many parts of the province if the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor becomes a driver of growth in Pakistan. At the very minimum, there are parts of the province in which the indigenous Baloch will be reduced to the status of Red Indians. A proud people, who despite their economic backwardness and social and cultural conservatism are secular and progressive, are becoming an 'endangered species' that could soon be over-run by the Pakistanis.

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379 Sushant Sareen, 'Balochistan is no Bangladesh', IDSA 19/1/2010, accessed at [http://www.idsa.in/idsacomments/BalochistanisnoBangladesh\\_ssareen\\_190110](http://www.idsa.in/idsacomments/BalochistanisnoBangladesh_ssareen_190110).

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