

The Baloch Issue**Prof. Dr. Taj Mohammad Breseeg*****Abstract**

The Baloch issue in the contemporary history is becoming more and more salient considering the geopolitical and strategic importance of the region. Particularly in Pakistan this issue becomes crucial for the future of the whole region since almost majority of the worldwide Baloch live in that country. Are the Baloch entitled to have their own state, as it is argued by the Baloch nationalist? To address these questions, this paper seeks to place the current Baloch problem in the broader context of history, regional relations and the geopolitics in the South Asia. Examining the experiences that the Baloch have undergone since the advent of the British Raj, the paper discusses its implications for the Balochs' struggle to the right to self-determination. At last, attempt will be made to explain and analyze, why the Baloch have remained a forgotten people among the world community.

Introduction

Nations are the products of a long historical and evolutionary process. The Baloch have existed in the region for centuries with a well developed sense of ethnic identity. They have their own language and culture; they have an historic territory; and most important of all, they think of themselves as a separate and distinct people. Probably, with this in mind, in the nineteenth century, a British authority, Sir Michael Biddulph opines: "The Beluchis are, it must be remembered, quite distinct from those tribes who have been giving us so much trouble. I regard them as being closely connected with the Arabs and their ideas and instincts are entirely different from those of tribes of the north-west frontier."¹

The Baloch occupy an extremely important region at the heart of the world's oil route. Before the advent of the British in

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1839, Balochistan was an independent state, ruled by the *Khans* of Kalat. In 1928, the western Balochistan (Iranian Balochistan) was occupied by the Iranian armed forces. With the lapse of paramountcy in 1947, the Khanate of Kalat, also known as the State of Kalat, became independent, and was recognized by Pakistan until 1948. On 27 March 1948, Pakistan managed the accession of the country, without the popular consent of the Baloch people. Despite the failure of numerous Baloch rebellions over the past decades in Pakistan and Iran, Baloch question continues to be a source of deep concern to the governments of these countries.

Aroused by the success of surrounding nationalisms – the Indian, the Persian, and the Turkish – and goaded into desperation by its own failures, Baloch insurgencies have in the sixties, seventies and the current uprising, which started in the early 2000, become increasingly radical and uncompromising. For these reasons, the Baloch have come to play an increasingly significant role in Southwest Asian affairs. Their behaviour is one of the important factors in the future stability and security not only of the Baloch-inhabited countries but also of the entire region. Thus, it is important to know the Baloch and to understand their aims, their political orientation, and the course they are likely to pursue. This paper, however, does not intend to cover the events beyond the Musharraf's era.

The Territory

Territory plays an important functional role in defining peoples. It obviously provides a population with their physical location and resources, and shapes their lifestyle, customs and culture. Located on the south-eastern Iranian plateau, with an approximately 600,000 sq. km., an area rich with diversity, that also incorporates within it a wide social variety, Balochistan is larger than France (551,500 sq. km.).² In terms of physical geography, it has more in common with Iranian plateau than with the Indian subcontinent. On the northeast, it is separated from India by the massive barrier of the southern buttresses of the Sulaiman

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Mountains. On the south, there is the long extension from Kalat of the inconceivably wild highland country, which faces the desert of Sindh, the foot of which forms the Indian frontier. The Baloch culture owes much to the geography of the country. The harsh climate and mountainous terrain breeds a self-reliant people used to hardship; the same conditions, however, result in isolation and difficulties in communication. The cultural heartland lies in the interior, in the valleys of Kech, Panjgur and Bampur in the Southern and central Balochistan.³

While Balochistan lacks boundaries in the modern sense of the term, its core region has never been in doubt. Balochistan, which is at present divided politically between three different countries, is physically a compact unit.⁴ The Goldsmid line, drawn in 1871 and demarcated in 1896, gave western Balochistan to Persia, while retaining the larger eastern part for the British. The Durand Line, drawn also by the British in 1894, further divided Balochistan between British Balochistan and Afghanistan, assigning to the latter a small portion of northern Balochistan. As a British colonial legacy, these borders were inherited by Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan and have served to divide the country ever since.

Balochistan lies at such a location where at least three tectonic plates are concurrently interacting, which is indeed a piece of geological wonderland on the Earth. Very few segments of the globe may have so many geological marvels congregated in a piece of land equal in area to that of Balochistan. Due to this, the country boasts vast gas deposits as well as minerals like chromium, copper, iron and coal. Gas is found in commercially viable quantities in Sui and Pirkoh (Pakistan). This is an important factor in the attitudes of the various Central governments regarding the Baloch issue and has strengthened the Balochs' own feeling of being treated unfairly.

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The People

The UN Declaration of Human Rights says that all peoples are entitled to “self-determination”. Therefore the key question is, are the Baloch a ‘people’? The Baloch, probably numbering around 15 million, are one of the largest trans-state nations (people) in southwest Asia.⁵ The question of Baloch origins, i.e., who the Baloch are and where they come from, has for too long remained an enigma. Doubtless in a few words one can respond, for example, that Baloch are the end-product of numerous layers of cultural and genetic material superimposed over thousands of years of internal migrations, immigrations, cultural innovations and importations. Balochistan, the cradle of ancient civilizations, has seen many races, people, religions and cultures during the past few thousand years. From the beginning of classical history three old-world civilizations, Dravidian, Semitic and Aryan, met, formed bonds, and were mutually influenced on the soil of Balochistan. To a lesser or greater extent, they left their marks on this soil, particularly in the religious beliefs and the ethnic composition of the country.⁶ The Baloch myths and memories persist over generations and centuries, forming contents and contexts for collective self-definition and affirmation of collective identities in the face of the other.⁷

In the early 1980s, an American scholar, Selig Harrison noted that Islamabad and Tehran ignore the emergence of Baloch as a people (Nation). He considered that “they tend to think of Baloch society solely in terms of its traditional tribal character and organisational patterns.”⁸ Thus, such an approach towards the Baloch requires support from the army, the mullahs and the Pashtuns ethnic groups in Balochistan.⁹ Islamabad claims that the Baloch insurgency is a result of an oppressive system of tribal authority and has little to do with the self-determination of the Baloch people arising against the government’s oppression in the province.¹⁰ Do the Baloch bear the characteristics of a people (nation) as defined by the scholars of nationalism? A nation as described by the scholars of nationalism is a group of people from the same region of origin who

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share a common history. They may share a common culture, tradition and language and all of this is true of the Baloch. It should be noted that, the Baloch had their own state, the “Khanate of Kalat” until 1948.

As indicated above, on the nationalist account, the forced merger of Balochistan into Iran (1928) and Pakistan (1948) raised the question of the right of self-determination for the Baloch.¹¹ On the other hand, however, most of the Pakistani and the Iranian nationalist scholars by denying the very existence of the Baloch as a people (nation), in practice are rejecting such a right for the Baloch. For example, Najam Sethi, a well known Pakistani scholar, defines the Baloch people as a “confederation of tribes” with mutual jealousies and conflict.¹² According to him, there is no room for an independent Balochistan, because the modern nation state of Pakistan guards its territorial sovereignty and integrity fiercely. Sethi relates the Baloch movement to foreign interference into Pakistan. “The secessionists”, he says, “will cease insurgency only when the external forces that feed and prop them up back off and their safe havens in Afghanistan dry up”.¹³

In Focus on Baluchistan and Pukhtun Question (1975), and Ethnicity and Politics in Pakistan (1998) by Feroz Ahmed (ed.), there is also no abstract theory for the Baloch people. He argues that it is difficult to define what comprises the Baloch. “On the one hand”, Feroz Ahmad points out, “the people of African origin, because of exclusive emphasis on paternal heritage, are considered Baloch... On the other hand”, he adds, “any person of the Baloch ‘race’ who may have culturally, economically and politically assimilated into Sindhis or Punjabis, is still regarded as Baloch and expected to support Baloch nationalism.”¹⁴

Moreover, Ahmed argues that the various Baloch and Brahui tribes are included among the Baloch are not integrated into a larger social or economic structure, and lack a sense of unity beyond the tribal identity. In short, Ahmed rejects any common historical, linguistic, geographical and ethnic basis for the Baloch as a people. Ahmed stresses the social and economic aspects of the Baloch

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question. Notwithstanding, the above factors attach considerable importance to the development of nationalism, but what lies at the root of the Baloch movement, is largely political and psychological in nature. Feroz Ahmed's analysis took its cue from the official Pakistan version of events contained in the White Papers on the Crisis in Balochistan in 1970s.

Similarly, rejecting the ethnic characteristics of the Baloch nation, the Iranian nationalist scholar, Hamid Ahmadi, in his book, Qaumiyyat wa Qaumgarai dar Iran: Az Afsaneh ta Waqiyyat (Ethnicity and Nationalism in Iran: From myth to reality), (1999), emphasises that the Baloch are a part of the Iranian nation. Quoting from Ferdowsi's *Shahnama*, Ahmadi argues that the Baloch are of Iranian origin.¹⁵ He holds the British, the *Sardars* and Reza Shah (the first Pahlavi) responsible for the creation of the present Baloch national feeling in Iranian Balochistan. According to him, the Western orientalists especially the British propagated the idea of nationalism in early 20th century to divide Iran. The reactionary *Sardars*, when resisting the modern state of Reza Shah Pahlavi exploited this idea (nationalism) as a weapon to protect their own interest.¹⁶ Thus, as a result of co-existence and co-operation of these three factors (the British, the *Sardars* and the modern Iranian state), Ahmadi opines, the Baloch nationalism was created.¹⁷

Ignoring the salient features (namely historical experiences, common ethnic bond, common language, religious beliefs, distinct territory, socio-economic structure, and psychological make-up) of the Baloch people, these Iranian and the Pakistani writers blame the external factors such as the propagation of the doctrine of nationalism by the orientalists, the opposition of *sardars* to modernisation process and the elite competition as the main causes for the emergence of Baloch nationalism.¹⁸ By refusing to recognize the Baloch as a people, Pakistan and Iran have consistently denied the right to self determination for the Baloch.

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A Short History

To understand the complexity of the Baloch issue, one must look at their history. Because, the historical ties play an important role in adding depth and legitimacy to national ideas; they also add weight to legal principles. For the principle of self-determination historical ties have been considered particularly significant for establishing a relationship between a population and a territory.

Based on archeological evidences, Balochistan is one of the ancient inhabited lands. Being the native inhabitants of their land, there are no "beginnings" for the Baloch history and people. The Baloch and their history are the end products of thousands of years of continuous internal evolution and assimilation of new peoples and ideas introduced sporadically into their land. Genetically, Baloch are the descendants of all those who ever came to settle in Balochistan, and not any one of them.¹⁹ A people such as the Meds and the Oritans of Alexander's time, as mentioned in the earliest recorded documents, signify not the ancestor of the Baloch but only an ancestor. Balochistan lies on the postulated southern coastal route followed by anatomically modern Homo Sapiens out of Africa, and so may have been inhabited by modern humans as early as 60,000–70,000 years ago. There is evidence of cave dwellers in Balochistan's northeast frontier, but fossil evidence from the Palaeolithic has been fragmentary.²⁰ So, it is highly probable that the early Baloch forefathers settled in the region with the end of the last ice age (20,000– 15,000 BC), which, is also coincided with the early mass migration of modern peoples in the area.²¹

Archaeology marks that some of mankind's earliest steps towards development of agriculture, domestication of many common farm animals (sheep, goats and dogs), record keeping (the token system), development of domestic technologies (weaving, fired pottery making and glazing) and urbanization took place in Balochistan, dating back between 10,000 and 7,000 years. Mehrgarh era is by far the most noteworthy period in this respect, argue archaeologists. Mehrgarh site is situated at the foot of the Bolan Pass,

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is believed to be one of the earliest civilizations, known to the mankind yet. This site pre-dates the civilizations of Egypt and Mesopotamia (3000 BC). Mehrgarh was occupied from 7,000 B.C. up to 2,000 B.C.²²

The archaeological finds continue to document the progressive technological and commercial developments in the Eastern Balochistan, as well as in the Western Balochistan in this period. The Kech valley civilization in central Makkuran (date back to 4000 BC), Bampur valley and the Burned city civilizations in western Balochistan (dates back to 3000 BC) are worth to be named.²³ In this period, according to archaeological evidences, Balochistan served as an intermediary link between the cultures of South Asia and the Middle East.²⁴

Balochistan's geographical location between India and the Mesopotamian civilization had given it a unique position as cross roads between earlier civilizations. By the early centuries of the Christos era, Balochistan has long interacted with ancient civilizations such as Assyria, Mesopotamia, Persian and India, with a trade in precious spices and frankincense and myrrh. The country is also adjacent to the early landscapes recorded in the Jewish Torah.²⁵ The ancient period also marks the coming of the Aryans and the beginning of the transformation of Balochistan into an Indo-European-speaking society, which culminated between 1500 and 1000 BC.²⁶

Thus, by the course of time, a cluster of different religions, languages and cultures coexisted side by side. Similarly in the Islamic era we see the flourishing of different sects of Islam (Sunni, Zikri and Shia), remarkable marriage of tribal and semi-tribal society enriched with colourful cultural and traditional heritage.²⁷ The strength of the Baloch claim is rooted in proud historical memories of determined resistance against the would-be conquerors who perennially attempted, without success, to annex all or part of Balochistan to their adjacent empires. Thus, in seeking to mobilize a nationalist movement today, the Baloch leaders are manipulating the

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powerful historical symbolism of a tortuous struggle for survival stretching back more than two thousand years.²⁸

Balochistan has a long history of conflict and power struggle. The Arabs invaded Balochistan in the seventh century, with far-reaching social, religious, economic and political implications in the surrounding areas. Under the Arab rule, the Baloch tribal chiefs became a part of the privileged Muslim classes, and identified themselves with the Arab caliphate and represented it in the region. The conflicts between the Arab caliphate and the Baloch on the one hand, and the neighboring non-Muslim powers on the other, strengthened the "Muslim" identity of the Baloch, while the conflicts between the Arab caliphate and the Baloch contributed to their "tribal unity and common" consciousness. The threats posed to the Arab Empire and to the Baloch, would gradually narrow the gap between the warlike Baloch tribes. In this process, Islam would function as a unifying political ideology and promote a common culture among the Baloch tribal society and its different social classes as a whole. These developments appear to have played a significant role in enabling the Baloch to form large-scale tribal federations that led to their gradual political and military supremacy in the territories now forming Balochistan during the period of 11th to 13th centuries.²⁹

With the decline of the central rule of the Islamic Caliphate in the 10th century, local rulers and tribal chieftains of Baloch descent like the Saffarid of Sistan, Jalal Khanid of Makkuran, or the Malik of Sarhad and Makkuran began, once again, to reassert their power and influence.³⁰ It is precisely during this period that the Muslim chroniclers took note of the accounts of the Baloch in connection with their conflicts with the rising local Iranian and Turk dynasties in Kirman. The Baloch are reported to have been dealt a devastating blow in Kirman by the Dailami ruler Azdu-al Doula (949-982 AD) and his uncle Muizzu-Doula in second half of the 10th century.³¹ They were also defeated around Khabis by the troops of

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Ghaznavid Sultan Mahmud and his son Masud, at the beginning of the 11th century.³²

From the 12th century onward the powerful Baloch chieftains, such as Mir Jalal Han, Mir Shaihak and Mir Chakar, forcefully extended their rule over most of Balochistan. In 13th century, the Venetian traveler, Marco Polo, who sailed along the Balochistan coast on his way home, describes, “Kesmacoran [Kech-Makkoran, the Present Balochistan] is a kingdom having a king of its own and a peculiar language. [Some of] the people are Idolaters, [but the most part are Saracens]. They live by merchandize and industry, for they are professed traders, and carry on much traffic by sea and land in all directions”.³³ During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, a number of regional state formations, in which the feudalizing aristocracy of the Baloch tribes was in the ascendant, arose in the territory of Balochistan. Of these the Malik dynasty of Kech and Bampur, Buledai dynasty, the Dodai Confederacy of Derajat and the Khanate of Kalat are the most important.

In 1734, the Iranian conqueror, Nadir Shah Afshar, invaded the subcontinent. In order to save his realm, the Khan of Kalat paid tribute to Nadir Shah. On the death of Nadir in 1747, the Khan of Kalat acknowledged the superiority of Ahmed Shah Durrani for some years. In 1758, however, the Khan declared himself entirely independent, upon which the Afghan forces under the command of Ahmad Shah himself invaded Balochistan and besieged the Kalat fortress for forty days. This expedition terminated in a treaty of peace, by which the Khan agreed to furnish troops to assist the Kabul armies, and the Afghan King in return, agreed to pay cash allowance.³⁴

The Baloch were at the zenith of their power, during the reigns of Abdullah Khan (1717-1734) and Nasir Khan I (1747-1795 A.D), the fourth and sixth Khans of Kalat, respectively. Nasir Khan I, according to Dr Baloch, paid much attention to his state’s foreign policy. He exchanged ambassadors with Iran, Afghanistan, and the Sultanate-Imamate of Oman as well as with Ottoman Turkey.³⁵ The Ottoman Sultan as the Caliph of Islam awarded him the titles of the

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Ghazi-e Din (religious fighter) and the *Naser-e Mellat-e Mohammadiyah* (supporter of the Mohammedan nation).³⁶ Dr Baloch views, even the title of *Beiglar Beigi* (the Beig of Beigs or the “chef of chefs”), was also awarded to Nasir Khan by the Ottoman Sultan.³⁷

Up to the mid-19th century, the Baloch state, then generally known as the Khanate of Kalat, embraced the present day Balochistan provinces of Iran and Pakistan including some areas now forming parts of Punjab and Sindh provinces in Pakistan, and was an independent state. Being an important player in the regional power politics, the Baloch were considered as a major security upholder in the region. They were governing not only their own country, Balochistan, but also had a say in the politics of Sindh and Sistan, their two richest neighbours.³⁸

The big-power rivalry in central Asia, which resulted in the British invasion of Afghanistan, also brought its forces into the Baloch region. In 1809-10, the East India Company’s army had sent a Captain, Christie and a Lieutenant, Pottinger to explore Balochistan. British frontier policy in the early 19th century was motivated by an urge to consolidate the colony and reduce perceived threats to its security. This demanded acquisition of information, creation of allies, dependencies or buffers, delimiting and then demarcating frontiers and finally, the deployment of resources to maintain the impermeability of the frontiers. Threats from an equally expansionist Czarist Russia led to an era of intrigue and conspiracy along the border.³⁹

Thus, the roots of Baloch question can be roughly traced back to the middle of the nineteenth century when the region became a victim of foreign aggression from both eastern and western sides. The British occupation of Balochistan in 1839 was perhaps the greatest event and a turning point in the history of the Baloch nation, which changed their destiny dramatically. The painful consequences for the Baloch were the partition of their land and perpetual occupation by foreign forces. In 1849, an Iranian army defeated Baloch forces and captured Bumpur. The Baloch political status was

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changed further, when in 1871, the British and the Persians divided Balochistan into the spheres of influences, between the British Empire in India and the Persian Kingdom. Since then, according to Mir Ghaus Baksh Bizenjo, "The Khan's title of *Khan-e-Baluch* was changed into *Khan-e-Kalat*, thus virtually restricting Khan's suzerainty to Katal City."⁴⁰ The Anglo-Afghan wars and the subsequent events in Persia in respect of "the great game" which, was played between the Tsarist Russia and the British Empire, marginalized the Baloch people further.⁴¹

Opposing to cross his territory, Mehrab Khan, the Khan of Kalat was killed by the British troops on 13 November 1839. Gradually, Balochistan came under British influence by the treaties of 1854, and 1876. In 1854, the British entered into an agreement with Nasir Khan II, the ruler of Kalat, which was subsequently renewed and affirmed in another treaty in 1876, in which the British government once again committed itself to respect the independence of Kalat, and to aid the Khan in case of need in the maintenance of a just authority and protection of territories from external attack.⁴²

In the early twentieth century, Bahram Khan Baranzai gained control of almost the entire central and southern region of the Western Balochistan, ending the occupation of Iranian forces. In 1916, the British recognized him as the effective ruler of Western Balochistan.⁴³ His successor, Mir Dost Mohammad Khan's attempts to consolidate his power coincided with the rise to power of Reza Shah in Iran. In 1928 the Iranian army defeated the Baloch forces in western Balochistan. Dost Mohammad Khan's defeat marks the beginning of a thirteen-year crusade by Reza Shah against the Baloch, until the Shah had flirted with the Axis powers, and the Allies removed him from office in 1941.⁴⁴

Since then, successive Iranian governments denied the Baloch not only their national identity, but also subjected them to political, economical, cultural and military domination. The Persian-dominated governments have turned their state-building strategies into a "Persianization" campaign aimed at socio-cultural assimilation and the absorption of subordinate nationalities into the Persian-

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dominated state structure, culture and society. All decisions in respect to the Baloch were made in Tehran and carried out through provincial bureaucracies dominated overwhelmingly by the Persians.⁴⁵

With the beginning of the twentieth century, Baloch discontent found new forms of expression. Political unrest took various forms and there was an increase of sporadic uprisings both in eastern and western Balochistan. Inspired by the political upheavals in Iran, Turkey, Afghanistan, and Russia, as well as the anti-colonial movement in British India itself, Baloch nationalism became established in the 1920s. In 1920, an underground organisation, called the “Young Baloch” was formed by a group of Baloch nationalists under the leadership of Yusuf Ali Magasi, educated in India, and Abdul Aziz Kurd son of a Kalat state official.⁴⁶ A few years later, the movement changed its name to the “Anjuman-e Ittehad-e Balochan” (Organisation for Unity of the Baloch) and its direction from being a clandestine organisation to being an open political party, under Magasi’s leadership in 1931.⁴⁷

Dreaming for a unified, greater Balochistan, on 27 December 1932, the Anjuman leaders organised a “Balochistan and All India Baloch Conference”, at Jacobabad, Sindh. The conference commenced with the Presidential address by Mir Ali Nawaz Khan Talpur, the ruler of Khairpur State, in which he called on the Baloch for unity. The deliberations of this first Conference lasted for three days.⁴⁸ More than 200 delegates from Balochistan, Sindh and Punjab, including the non-Baloch Abdus Samad Achakzai participated in it.⁴⁹

With Magasi’s sudden death in the Quetta earthquake in 1935, the Anjuman’s supporters decided to reorganise. In February 1937, the “Kalat State National Party” emerged with the Anjuman’s objective articulated more ardently. The Baloch nationalists had based themselves on the argument that the Kalat state like Nepal had direct treaty relationships with London.⁵⁰ They declared their goal as

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being the restoration of an independent, unified Balochistan, to which the British must revert the forcibly leased area of northern Balochistan and the self-made principalities of Las-Bela and Kharan.⁵¹

The next major incident that catalyzed the Baloch national feeling was the forced annexation of the Khanate of Kalat to Pakistan, after the partition of India. With the departure of the British Empire from the Indian sub-continent 1947, the Khan of Kalat, Ahmad Yar Khan, declared the independence of his country on the 15th August 1947. A parliament was formed, elections were held. The national forces became dominant in the parliament. This was the first instance of elections in Balochistan's history. Although the National Party was still an illegal organisation, it participated indirectly in the elections through its members as individual candidates. The National Party's members won 39 seats out of the total 52.

The independence of Kalat, however, did not last for more than eight months. On 27th March, 1948, the Khan was forced to accept the incorporation of his state into Pakistan. Though the elected *diwan* (parliament) of the Khanate had noted what the leaders of the movement wanted: a sovereign independent Balochistan. The Baloch political movement began by Yusuf Ali Magasi, Abdul Aziz Kurd, and some others in the 1920s continued through the 1930s and 1940s. In 1947-48, however, the ambitions of the Baloch national movement failed to materialise. However, the surviving leaders and their new adherents continued the same movement on various lines after 1948 when the party was outlawed by the government of Pakistan.

Obviously, the Baloch nationalists never even entertained the merger idea with Pakistan.⁵² The independence case was best articulated by 29 year old Aligarh educated, Mir Ghaus Bakhsh Bizenjo, then an assembly member from the majority party, the Kalat State National Party, who argued in the *diwan* meeting of December 1947 that: "We have a distinct culture like Afghanistan and Iran, and if the mere fact that we are Muslims require us to

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amalgamate with Pakistan, then Afghanistan and Iran should also be amalgamated with Pakistan. They say we Baloch cannot defend ourselves in the atomic age. Well, are Afghanistan, Iran and even Pakistan capable of defending themselves against the superpowers? If we cannot defend ourselves, a lot of others cannot do so either".⁵³ Rejecting the merger proposal with Pakistan, Bizenjo continued, "This mean signing the death-warrant for 15 million Baloch in Asia. We cannot be guilty of this major crime to humiliate the Baloch nation to a merger with a non-Baloch nation."⁵⁴

The merger of the Khanate into Pakistan in 1948 resulted in unrest and anti-Pakistan rallies throughout Balochistan.⁵⁵ The National Party, which had espoused the cause of a "Greater Balochistan" incorporating all Baloch areas into an enlarged Kalat state, rejected accession and was behind much of the agitation. Its leaders, Mir Gaus Bakhsh Bizenjo, Mir Abdul Aziz Kurd and others were arrested.⁵⁶ This first encounter between the Baloch and the forces of the Pakistan state was crucial in shaping nationalist insecurity and fear of repression at the hands of foreigners. Under the Raj, Baloch affairs outside of British Balochistan had been left to the Baloch; now, centralising forces appeared that the Baloch tribes could not easily accept.

On 15 April 1948, Agha Abdul Karim, brother of the Khan of Kalat, Mir Ahmad Yar Khan (1933-1948) started an armed movement in the Jhalawan area backed by some nationalist leaders and with the secret approval of the Khan. Agha Abdul Karim was educated in Karachi, and served as the governor of Makkoran province until March 1948. He invited the leading members of the nationalist parties (the Kalat State National Party and the Baloch League) to join him in the struggle against Pakistan. "The showdown between Kalat and Pakistan" Harrison wrote, "came in April 1948, when the Pakistani army ordered its garrison Commander in Baluchistan to march on Kalat and arrest the Khan unless he signed an agreement of accession."⁵⁷

In 1950s, the One-Unit system and the Parity formula

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invoked a sharp reaction among the Baloch, and the demand for its dissolution took a violent turn. Agha Abdul Karim, who was released in 1955, laid the foundation of a new political party, Ustaman Gall (People's Party). Its nucleus was the former "National Party" (Kalat State National Party) and its manifesto declared that it would establish a "Baloch province on linguistic and cultural lines" with Balochi as the official language. In 1956, the Ustaman Gall joined the Pakistan National Party that merged in the National Awami Party (NAP).⁵⁸

The legacy of the forced annexation after partition in 1948, the One-Unit, the continued unfair treatment, the problem of economic inequalities, lack of participation in decision-making, denied access to employment opportunities, colonization of newly irrigated land by Punjabi migrants and domination of Punjabi civil and military bureaucracy, raised the Baloch discontent to the extent that led to the revolts of the 1950s and 1960s, commonly known also as the "second Baloch uprising".⁵⁹

Much of the political opposition to the One-Unit was channelled through the NAP (National Awami party), a coalition of left-wing and ethnic-nationalist parties from East and West Pakistan. Because it was an alliance of parties, the programme of NAP was broad and addressed both national and international issues. Of special concern to Baloch and other West Pakistanis in the NAP was the replacement of One Unit with four ethnically defined provinces. The NAP's platform called for "cultural-ethnic" and geographical boundaries to coincide, and for those provinces to have maximum autonomy in a federal structure.

In 1970, Balochistan became a full-fledged province after the fall of Ayub Khan, and Yahya's decision to dismantle the One-Unit system and the Parity formula. However, he did a great harm to the country by not demarcating the provinces on the basis of language and ethnic geography. Balochistan was declared a separate province but a large number of Pashtuns in the three districts of Loralai, Zhob and Pishin were included in the province, while the Baloch living in adjacent districts of Sindh and Punjab (Jacobabad and Dera Ghazi

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Khan) were excluded against the wishes of the Baloch. In the following general elections, the Baloch nationalists emerged as the majority in the provincial assembly and formed their first representative government in the history of Pakistan in 1972. However, in a pre-planned and well-orchestrated show the Pakistani Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and the Pakistan army dismissed Balochistan's elected government on dubious grounds.⁶⁰

The dismissal of the Balochistan government resulted in one of the bloodiest wars in the history of Balochistan, known as the third Baloch uprising. To crush the Baloch movement, the Prime Minister of Pakistan appointed the infamous 'Butcher of Bangladesh', General Tikka Khan. The third confrontation lasted four years (1973-77) and involved at its height more than 80,000 Pakistani troops and at least 55,000 Baloch guerrillas. It erupted when Zulfikar Ali Bhutto dismissed the elected government of Balochistan on 12 February 1973 under the pretext that it had been involved in a conspiracy to begin an armed rebellion. Bhutto obtained US\$200 million in emergency military and financial aid from Iran to crush the rebels. Iran even dispatched 30 Huey Cobra helicopters to assist the Pakistani military.⁶¹ The Baloch fighters found sanctuary in Afghanistan from where they launched surprise attacks on the Pakistani army.

According to one estimate some 5300 Baloch were killed or wounded. The army casualties were 3300. While accounts of some major battles, such as in Chamalang in September 1974, had reliable observers, it seems that in addition thousands of Baloch civilians were killed by bombardments and various military actions. At the peak of the war 8,000 to 10,000 Baloch (mostly from the Marri tribe) fled to Afghanistan. Numerous reports have testified that torture was common practice.⁶²

The 1973-77, insurgency radicalized the Baloch political awareness. Observing this in 1980s, Harrison wrote: "In mid-1980, I found a pervasive mood of expectancy among the Baluch, a widespread desire to vindicate Baluch martial honour, and a

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readiness to renew the struggle when and if circumstances appear to be favourable".⁶³ With the dismissal of provincial government, the federal troops were inducted in the province to help the provincial administration in "restoring law and order", but the situation kept on deteriorating. The radical elements in the NAP took part in the militant struggle and were joined by the Marri and Mengal tribes, who had taken the central government's decision as an assault on their "national rights". In 1977, General Ziaul Haq overthrew the Bhutto Government. One of the first measures taken by the General was to declare a cease-fire to release the NAP leaders jailed in Hyderabad and to open negotiations.⁶⁴

The longest stretch of democratic rule in Pakistan was the period between 1988 and 1999. But this 11-year period of democracy was marred by the dismissal of four elected governments and the installation of a similar number of interim un-elected governments in between. This period has also been described, as one of "controlled" democracy where the President, empowered by the 1985, 8th Amendment, could dismiss the elected government at will.⁶⁵ It should be remembered, it was in this period that Balochistan became also the testing centre for weapons of mass destruction including nuclear tests, causing environmental hazard to humans, livestock, and soil. Thus the so-called democratic period of Pakistan's existence, like that of its military rule has led to further alienation of the Baloch from the central government of Pakistan.

The current uprising, in Balochistan is the fourth since the region became a part of Pakistan in 1948. It started in the early 2000, around the same demands of greater autonomy and control over the province's natural resources. On 12 October 1999, General Musharraf dismissed Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, justifying his coup on the grounds of democratic reform, including the removal of provincial grievances through the devolution of power. Instead the Punjabi-dominated military government, bent on regime survival and consolidation, moved quickly to concentrate all powers in its hands. By seizing power, General Musharraf revived the operationally of

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more centralized rule over Balochistan, which led to a gradual deterioration of the situation in the province.⁶⁶ Musharraf's constitutional manipulations made the president, the symbolic head of the federation, all powerful, reducing the national parliament to a rubber stamp and depriving the Baloch of the voice they had gained in the 1990s.

With Musharraf wearing the dual hats of president and army chief, centralised authoritarian rule also deprived the provinces of the rights, imperfect as they were, guaranteed by the 1973 constitution. Two assassination attempts on Musharraf, in 2005 and 2006, during visits to Balochistan, resulted in crackdown on Baloch nationalists by the armed forces. Since then, with a military government in power, the fight against a 'common enemy' acquired more urgency than the group interests. In return, Musharraf's forces systematically targeted the Baloch nationalists, students and political leaders.⁶⁷

The Musharraf regime labeled the Baloch nationalists and their insurgency to seek an independent Balochistan as a band of 'miscreants' - undermining the development process in Balochistan and intend to keep the vast tribal province "backward" so that the feudal tribal leaders in the region maintain their control and power upon their people.⁶⁸ Furthermore, Musharraf contemplated utilising the historical Pushtun-Baloch divide in Balochistan to offset Baloch nationalist strength. A great number of Afghan refugees flooded into Balochistan during the anti-Soviet resistance and the later internecine Mujahideen civil wars. A number of these Afghan refugees have acquired Pakistani nationality, bought properties in Balochistan, and strengthened the demographic weight of the Pushtuns in the province. This 'invasion', however, was bitterly opposed by the Baloch nationalists, pointing this phenomenon as a practical demonstration of their fears regarding being swamped by waves of outsiders in the wake of the government's so called mega development projects. It should be noted that attempts to exploit Pushtun-Baloch rivalries have come to grief in the past, notably

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during Bhutto's failed campaign to suppress Baloch nationalism by military force in the 1970s.⁶⁹

The situation worsened further in the wake of the killing of Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti, a leading political leader in August 2006, which was followed by bloody riots. This pushed many young Baloch to turn to support the armed struggle. In his death and the manner in which it was carried out, Bugti became a martyred hero and a role model for nationalists fighting for autonomy or independence from Pakistan. Contrary to what the central government of Pakistan has indicated, the violence in Balochistan intensified since then, with attacks, aimed at the army and at government officials and buildings. Mir Balach Marri, another leading figure of insurgency, reportedly headed the Balochistan Liberation Army, was assassinated by the Pakistani agents a year later in November 2007.⁷⁰

On 18 August 2008, when General Parviz Musharraf, in accordance with his advisors, resigned from the presidency, ended the era of military dictatorship (1999-2007). With the February 2008, general election, Asif Ali Zardari was elected as the president of Pakistan. There were expectations that the return of democracy would alleviate the Baloch and the peace would return to the troubled province. The Pakistan People's Party publicly apologised for the past "atrocities and injustices" and Asif Ali Zardari travelled to Quetta to try to bring the dissidents on board. In December 2009 the PPP government, in an effort to bring about political reconciliation in the province, passed the *Aghaz-e-Haqooq-e-Balochistan* ("Beginning of Rights in Balochistan") package of constitutional, political, administrative, and economic reforms.⁷¹ Practically, however, the apology from the President and the packages given by the PPP government has not worked. It should be noted that the February 2008 provincial elections were boycotted by the moderate Baloch parties such as the BNP and NP.

The subsequent killing of Baloch nationalists indicated that the military establishment takes its own decisions, independent of their 'political masters'. Baloch guerrillas declared a unilateral

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ceasefire in September 2008, but the absence of any meaningful initiative by the Pakistani government forced them to resume their armed struggle. As a result, there was a sudden increase in violence and in the number of attacks in Balochistan during 2009.⁷² Taking into account the changing political and strategic circumstances as well as the future likelihoods of the region, in 2006, Harrison wrote, “The big difference between earlier phases of the Baluch struggle and the present one is that Islamabad is no longer able to play off feuding tribes against each other and faces a unified nationalist movement.”⁷³

As discussed above, during the past 60 years, there have been at least four occasions when the Baloch have clashed with the state of Pakistan on ethnic identity issue. Over the years, however, the harder the state tried to suppress the Baloch demand, the more cautious this community became about the preservation of its identity.

Baloch and the Geopolitical Game

In his memoir, the last prime minister of Kalat State, Douglas Fell notes, “It had not seemed to me that there was a place in the modern world for an extensive backward and defenseless state in complete independence in such an important strategic area as Kalat occupied”.⁷⁴ The specificity of Balochistan geography and geopolitics has affected the Balochs’ political destiny. Since the colonial times, the strategic location of Balochistan has made it a target of external manipulation and interference. It was sought after by both the British and the Russians during the “Great Game”. It is generally believed that the whole question of Balochistan and its division, as it exists today, is rooted in that era, which, until the beginning of the twentieth century, was to set Great Britain and the Czarist Empire against one another for supremacy in south-central Asia, including Balochistan.⁷⁵

Concerning India’s defence, the differing political perceptions of British politicians and officials gave rise to two

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antithetical policies: the so-called “Close Border Policy” (or Masterly Inactivity Policy), and the “Forward Policy”. In 1860s, with the Russian advancement southwards, and the creation of the Russian Province of Turkistan (1867), increased the British concern of a Czarist invasion of India. From then on, the second approach, the “Forward Policy” became dominant. According to the supporters of the “Forward Policy”, the defence of India should be undertaken not from within her own frontiers, but by challenging the enemy in the Iranian plateau.⁷⁶

The “Great Game” brought Balochistan under the hegemony of Britain as her forward base for securing Iran and Afghanistan as buffer states in order to prevent further Russian advances toward the British Indian Empire.⁷⁷ Under the Forward Policy, the India’s best defence lay in its unique geographical setting – bordered by towering mountainous ranges, mighty rivers, waterless deserts and warlike tribes.⁷⁸ A Russian army, which reached India after overcoming all these obstacles, would be so weakened by then that it would be no match for a waiting British Army.

Thus, from a British point of view, the Russo-British tug of war in Central Asia, Afghanistan and Iran during the 19th century; fear of German activities during the two great wars, uncertainties created by anti-western upheavals in Afghanistan and the Middle East in the early 20th century; and the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, could not allow the border Baloch territory to enjoy the luxury of a relaxed policy. Constitutional, political, economic and educational reforms allowed to British India could not be extended to the Khanate and the leased territories (British Balochistan).⁷⁹

In 2006, in a pamphlet, the Foreign Policy Centre, a leading European think tank, launched under the patronage of the British Prime Minister Tony Blair, revealed that it was British advice that led to the forcible accession of Kalat to Pakistan in 1948. Referring reliable British government archives, the Foreign Policy Centre argues, that the Secretary of State Lord Listowell advised Mountbatten in September 1947 that because of the location of Kalat, it would be too dangerous and risky to allow it

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to be independent. The British High Commissioner in Pakistan was accordingly asked “to do what he can to guide the Pakistan government away from making any agreement with Kalat which would involve recognition of the state as a separate international entity”.⁸⁰

The geopolitics of Balochistan has effectively precluded the formation of an independent Baloch state since the British advent. A glance at a map of Southwest Asia quickly explains why strategically located Balochistan and the fifteen million Baloch who live there could all too easily become a focal point of superpower conflicts. The Baloch case, according to Inayatullah Baloch, is not a case of an ethnic minority in Pakistan or Iran but “is a sad and tragic story of a nation and independent state that has been occupied by its powerful neighbours with the assistance of British and American imperialism”.⁸¹ Thus, in the view of the Baloch nationalists, the Baloch suffered their unhappy fate simply because they happened to live in an area of vital military importance to the British, in contrast to the more fortunately situated Afghans.⁸²

Confirming the above view, the head of the Italian Historical-Anthropological and Archaeological Mission in Makkoran (southern Balochistan), Valeria F. Piacentini wrote: Baluchistan lies in a central position, at the crossroads of two “axes”, east-west and north-south, of three macro-regions: Asia, Africa and the Mediterranean basin. It is, in fact, at one and the same time (a) the hinge between the Indian sub-continent, Central Asia and the Euro-Asiatic steppes and the Iranian plateau; (b) the link between those regions which give on to – or gravitate towards – the Indian Ocean and its two western “sea routes”, namely, the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea. For this reason, it is still of vital importance from a geo-strategic and geo-economic point of view.⁸³

The international community, as indicated above, has other strategic interests that are intertwined with the Baloch political claims on Balochistan. The military defeat of the Baloch in the

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1960s and 1970s was significantly assisted by the geopolitical alignment of Pakistan with the west, especially, the US. The West, whilst opposing the armed struggle of the Baloch and its secessionist goal, places faith in the containment process that was enacted, which focused on stabilizing the situation to a peaceful equilibrium favorable to their interests. Thus, the Baloch and their fate in the 21st century must be understood within the context of power politics among the world super powers and their shifting points of interest.

Baloch and the Cold War

In a cold-war perspective the US and the West viewed the Baloch aspiration for autonomy as extensions of Soviet influence. They supported the Persian and Pakistani military and political campaigns against the Baloch. After 9/11 drastic changes are being observed in international relations in general and central and south Asia in particular. The dynamics of post September polity are bound to effect the Baloch national question. Because, Balochistan as mentioned above, is geographically and strategically important in respect of oil and gas game which being played in Middle East and Central Asia at present.

During the Cold War, the superpowers sought to expand their spheres of influence worldwide actively. This rivalry affected the Baloch question quite early when Pakistan and Iran entered into military pacts with the West in the mid-1950s. In the post-war world, the Americans replaced the British as the predominant players in the region's politics, as shown by the American role in returning the Shah of Iran to power in 1953, and including Pakistan as a part of Western strategy of encircling the Soviet Union in the mid-1950s.⁸⁴ To protect American interest abroad while reducing American commitments, President Richard Nixon developed the Nixon doctrine. The president called for additional American financial and material support of its allies, rather than promising to send American troops to the world's trouble spots. The allies, and not the United States, would then become the major actors in their respective regions of the world. Thus in building up the Shah of Iran as one of

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the United States' major allies in the region, Nixon enmeshed America in Middle East politics.

The United States had no national security interests at stake in the Baloch question other than a desire to maintain the territorial integrity of Iran and Pakistan. The U.S. support, however, for strengthening Iran and Pakistan, took a seemingly indifferent posture toward the Baloch issue. For instance, when in Pakistan on an official visit in 1962, the former secretary of state, Henry Kissinger, then a Harvard professor, was asked by a reporter about the then growing Baloch insurgency in Balochistan. His reply was that "I would not recognise the Baluchistan problem..."⁸⁵ An arrogant response reflecting the overall United States attitude toward the small nationalities and their quest for self-rule. Similarly, the Soviet Union also did not show any direct interest at least publicly nor did it become involved directly in the Baloch issue, in spite of the fact that the Baloch movement was always suspected by Iran and Pakistan of being supported by Moscow through her friends in Kabul and Baghdad.⁸⁶

Having occupied the landmass of Balochistan, the two countries of Iran and Pakistan have viewed the Baloch quest for self-rule as a threat to their territorial integrity. Thus they always dealt the Baloch issue with their joined forces. To suppress the Baloch nationalism, the emergence of Pakistan in 1947 was an event of great significance for Iran.⁸⁷ Both Iran and Pakistan treated the Baloch as a "subversive" and "anti-status quo" force, suspected of being part of an overall Soviet plot for gaining access to the Indian Ocean and controlling the Persian Gulf through Balochistan.

Throughout the Cold War, the Baloch would revolt against the governments in which they lived. There was an unbridgeable gulf between the social and political ideologies of the Baloch leaders and the Pakistan ruling elite during the Cold War years. The Baloch were pro-Soviet Union and active members of the Leftist National Awami Party (NAP) and the BSO, which were critical of the US global

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policies, especially those concerning this region. Baloch parties were secularists and didn't swear by the two-nation theory. On the other hand, the Pakistan ruling elite was an ally of the USA and it took a distinct anti-Soviet stand during the whole Cold War era.⁸⁸

Being fearful of Baloch separatism, the Iranian rulers and their Pakistani counterparts followed a common suppressive policy toward the Baloch national movement in the CENTO and other military pacts. The essence of their policies was best underlined by the Shah's Foreign Minister, Khalat-bary, also an ex-director-general of CENTO. During an interview with Selig Harrison in 1977, he bluntly stated that, "In Cento, we always assumed that the Baluch would attempt to create their own independent state some day, with Soviet support, so it was desirable to keep them as politically weak, disunited, and backward as possible".⁸⁹

During the U.S.-Iran-Pakistan alliance in CENTO (1954-1979), the Baloch nationalists were highly critical of that Pact. The Baloch nationalists both in Pakistan and Iran opposed political and military support for the two countries because they feared that such help would serve to further strengthen the two countries in their attempts to suppress the Baloch demand for self-rule.⁹⁰ Of course, the U.S.-engineered CENTO military alliance was designed in accordance with her global strategy for containing the Soviet expansion in the region and, as such, it was not directed against the Baloch national movement per se. But in practice, it had the same effect because the U.S. supplied arms were repeatedly used by Iran and Pakistan to put down the Baloch national movement in both countries. In this regard, the most striking example was deployment of the sophisticated U.S. made weapons by the Shah's regime against the Baloch insurgents in Pakistan from 1973 to 1977.⁹¹

In 1973, during Bhutto's visit to Tehran, the Shah declared in a public declaration that what happens to Pakistan "is vitally important to us, and should another event befall that country we could not tolerate it. The reason for this is not only fraternal affection for you as a Muslim nation, but of Iranian interests; we would not be able to tolerate other changes or

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difficulties in Pakistan ... We will not close our eyes to any secessionist movement-God forbid-in your country".⁹² Prime Minister Bhutto told the American author, Selig Harrison in 1977 that the Shah of Iran had been very insistent, even threatening and had promised Pakistan all sorts of economic and military help. He felt strongly that letting the Baloch have provincial self-government was not only dangerous in itself, for Pakistan, but would give his Baloch dangerous ideas.⁹³

However, the Shah's hard-line policies did not completely succeed in crushing nationalist activity, which erupted in the 1957-1958 Dad Shah incident and in an Iraqi-assisted insurgency from 1968 to 1975 in Iranian Balochistan⁹⁴. The Shah became concerned that his continuing troubles with the Baloch would be aggravated by unrest in the Pakistani Baloch areas, especially after the secession of Bangladesh. Moreover, he was obsessed with a geopolitical nightmare: that Moscow would solidify its foothold in Afghanistan and would then synchronise support for the already powerful Baloch nationalist forces in Pakistan with related attempts to intensify Baloch disaffection in Iran.

Discussing with his court minister Asadollah Alam, on 14th May 1972, the Shah said, "By seeking a weak and independent Baluchi state, they [the Russians] hope to get access to the Indian Ocean more easily than by going through Bangladesh, or through Iraq which has only a short coast-line at the far end of the Persian Gulf."⁹⁵ The only way to be sure that his own Baloch problem would not get out of hand, the Shah concluded, was to treat Pakistani Balochistan as a virtual Iranian protectorate. Pressures from the Shah were largely responsible for Bhutto's decision to oust the Baloch provincial government in 1973 and to use air power as well as ground forces in crashing the Baloch insurgency.⁹⁶

Being frightened by the Baloch movement in Eastern

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Balochistan, the Shah concentrated more than 80 thousand troops in Iranian Balochistan in early 1973. As declared openly by the monarch himself, it was the fear of further dismemberment of Pakistan, which made the rulers in Tehran sit up and decide on a show of strength in Western Balochistan. While talking about the maintenance of law and order, the real aim of the Shah according to the nationalist paper, People's Front, was to take advantages of the depleted state of the state machinery of Islamabad, which had resulted from its defeat by Bangladesh freedom movement and the later developments in the Eastern Balochistan, to expand his empire eastwards.⁹⁷

The Cold War began to wind down after Mikhail Gorbachev assumed power in March 1985. With the cooperation of the American president Ronald Reagan, Gorbachev wound down the size of the Soviet Armed Forces and reduced nuclear arms in Europe, while liberalizing the economy. In 1989-90, the communist regimes of Soviet satellite states collapsed in rapid succession in Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Bulgaria, Romania, and Mongolia. East and West Germany united, Czechoslovakia peacefully split into Czech Republic and Slovakia, while in 1990 Yugoslavia began a violent break up into its former 6 sub-unit republics. Kosovo, which was previously an autonomous unit of Serbia, declared independence in 2008.

With the end of the Cold War the world is rapidly becoming accustomed to conflicts that are no longer encumbered with superpower rivalries. The ability of the successor states of the Soviet Union, primarily Russia, to work in cooperation with the United States has had a powerful impact on how America defines its national interests in the Third World. Local conflicts between client states of the Cold War protagonists are no longer seen as surrogate battles; the United States can choose to ignore outbreaks of violence in Africa, Latin America, or Asia if it so desires. After the withdrawal of the Soviet forces from

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Afghanistan in 1988, and the subsequent fall of Dr. Najibullah's government, Pakistan not only lost its generous Western economical support but also its geo-political importance. When asked to comment on the current situation in Pakistan, notable political activist, Noam Chomsky stated, "I'm afraid to say Pakistan is the paradigm example of a failed state and has been for a long time. It has had military rule, violence and oppression".⁹⁸

Conclusion

What came to be known as the Kalat State in the contemporary times was the independent sovereign country of Balochistan before the colonial incursions of the British. To its east was Hindustan, to the north Afghanistan, to its west Persia and to the south Arabian Sea. Like the country, the shared history and descent add depth to the Balochs' national ideas and provide a connection to a glorious past.⁹⁹

The Baloch people are one of the many stateless and divided nations in the contemporary world. Relations between the Baloch and the state of Pakistan are the outcome of a historical accident of colonial arrangements, regulated by the game of conflict somehow managed to produce a balance of power. Such balance of power has no basic virtues of its own and liable to frequent violence conflicts and serious breakdown between the Baloch and the Pakistani state.

The trajectory of the Baloch nationalist movement is rather similar to that of the Kurdish nationalist movement. Like the Kurds, the Baloch are spread over several countries, not only Pakistan and Iran, but also Afghanistan and Oman. Since the British occupation (1839) and the forced merger (Iran-1928, and Pakistan-1948) of their land, the question of the right to self-

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determination is raised. The Baloch did not willingly join the new State of Pakistan. They are a people, who shares objective elements such as a common language and which has acquired a subjective political consciousness of oneness, by living within a relatively well-defined territory, and by its struggle against the alien domination.

Pakistan's creation is very unique in nature. The pre-partition strategy of the Muslim League was to struggle for provincial autonomy and lose centre for the rights of the Muslims. But after partition all the political parties, army, and civil bureaucracy had become the champion of a strong centre. Throughout its history, the Pakistani state has denied the Baloch people fair representation in the political system and the army. By constitutional amendments, Pakistan has prohibited the Baloch demand for self-determination as unlawful and has unleashed a fully-fledged war against the Baloch to suppress their struggle for political independence. Pakistan has condemned and accused the Baloch nationalists of communalism, separatism and terrorism for engaging in an armed struggle to assert the right of the Baloch to freely choose their political destiny. As a result, the Baloch people find it difficult to identify themselves as a part of Pakistan and Pakistani identity. The same attitude of strong centre and the refusal of provincial autonomy has played vital role in the creation of Bangladesh in 1971.

The Balochs' demand for the right to self-determination evolved as a result of illegal occupation of the Baloch land and subsequent subjugation by the Pakistani and Iranian states. Peaceful and non-violent protests against injustice and discrimination were responded with military oppression, paving way to the armed struggles and uprisings. Prior to the current insurgency, the Baloch rose in revolt thrice more: in 1948, 1958-69 and 1973-77. Their history represents an unending saga of treachery and discrimination by the ruling elite in Islamabad.

Not surprisingly, in comparing today's insurgency with its 1970s forerunner, we find numerous continuities. Conspicuous among them are the government's persistent refusal to concede any

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legitimacy to Baloch nationalism or to engage the Baloch nationalists in serious political negotiations. These refusals run in company with its parallel tendency to secure its aims in Balochistan mainly by military means.

With this background in mind, the only way to deal with the problem is to give the Baloch, the rights that have been denied to them for more than half a century. Discussing with the author in 2011, the National Party leader and a senator, Dr Abdul Malik Baloch said, “We are not seeking a total divorce from the rest of Pakistan, just a wider separation in the mold of Iraqi Kurdistan”.¹⁰⁰ The Kurds, who have lived for decades as a people apart from the rest of Iraq, have their own parliament and president, command their own security forces and have signed dozens of lucrative oil deals with foreign companies without consulting with Baghdad. The use of brute force will only cause further alienation, leaving the Baloch with no option but to fight for their genuine economic and political rights. Pakistan’s history, however, has shown that the state has been unwilling to devolve power to the Baloch. A renowned scholar on the Baloch nationalism, Selig Harrison opines, “Current situation in Pakistan will grow instable for a longer period to come and democratization is not on the cards of Pakistan”.¹⁰¹ It seems that unless the state recognizes the Baloch as a separate people and accepts their rights to self-determination, a peaceful solution to the ongoing vendetta is unlikely in the foreseeable future.

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Notes:

¹ The Rising in Baluchistan, Glasgow Herald (Glasgow Scotland), Saturday, January 15, 1898; Issue 13, in: Baloch, Hameed, Makran Affairs, Sayad Hashmi Reference Library, Karachi 2009, p. 125.

² Inayatullah Baloch, The Problem of Greater Baluchistan, 1987, pp. 19-23; See also Janmahmad, Essays on Baloch National Struggle in Pakistan, p. 427.

³ It was in Makkuran that the early middle ages saw the first emergence of a distinctive Baloch culture and the establishment of the Baloch principalities and dynasties.

⁴ Inayatullah Baloch, The Problem of Greater Baluchistan, p. 19

⁵ The exact number of the Baloch populatoin is difficult to determine. As of 2010, the Baloch are 5% of Pakistan's 177,276,594 million people. Similarly, some estimates put the Baloch population in Iran at over four million (<http://www.unpo.org/members/7922>). See also, Taj Mohammad Breseeg, 2004, pp. 66-70.

⁶ Gergory L. Possehl, Kulli: An Exploration of Ancient Civilization in Asia, pp. 58-61.

⁷ Muhammad Sardar Khan Baluch, History of Baluch Race and Baluchistan, Quetta: Khair - un -Nisa, Nisa Traders, Third Edition 1984, p. 26.

⁸ Harrison, Selig S., "Ethnicity and Politics in Pakistan: The Baluch Case", p. 298.

⁹ Alexander Atarodi, " Insurgency In Balochistan And Why It Is of Strategic Importance", FOI, Swedish Defence Research Agency, FOI-R- -3110- -SE, Stockholm, January 2011 (Defence Analysis, Report, 55 Pages).

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¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Feroz Ahmad, Ethnicity and Politics in Pakistan, Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1998, p. 180.

¹⁵ Hamid Ahmadi, Qaumiyat wa Qaumgarai dar Iran: Az Afsaneh ta Waqiyyat (Ethnicity and Nationalism in Iran: From myth to reality), Tehran, 1378/1999, pp. 112-113.

¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 182-85.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 375.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Shiraz University of Medical Sciences, Immunology Department, "Molecular analysis of HLA allele frequencies and haplotypes in Baloch of Iran compared with related populations of Pakistan". In: Tissue Antigens: Volume 64, Issue 5, Shiraz, Iran, November 2004, pp. 581–587.

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- ²² Ibid.
- ²³ Besenval, R. and Sanlaville, P., Cartography of ancient settlements in Central southern Pakistani Makran: new data. **Mesopotamia** -- Florence, 1990, Vol. 25:pp. (79-146).
- ²⁴ Gergory L. Possehl, Kulli: An Exploration of Ancient Civilization in Asia, pp. 58-61.
- ²⁵ <http://hashem1.net/index.php?p=361&sn=GogMagogLocatingMagog.htm>
- ²⁶ The Aryan migration has been steady and taken place in successive waves. The first to arrive on the Iranian plateau, around the middle of second millennium BC, are termed Indo-Iranians. They moved from the region of the Oxus and Laxartes rivers. The Indo-Iranian appear to have lived in settled communities and spoken an Indo-European tongue (for more information see, Yu. V. Gankovsky, The People of Pakistan, p. 146).
- ²⁷ Gergory L. Possehl, Kulli: An Exploration of Ancient Civilization in Asia, pp. 74-77.
- ²⁸ For more information see, Taj Mohammad Breseeg, 2004, chapter 3.
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- ³⁰ C.E. Bosworth, The History of the Saffarids of Sistan and the Maliks of Nimruz (247/861 to 949/1542-3). Costa Mesa, California and New York: Mazda Publishers in association with Bibliotheca Persica, 1994, pp. 463-65.
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- ³⁵ Inayatullah Baloch, The Problem of Greater Baluchistan, p.120.
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⁴⁴ Taj Mohammad Breseeg, 2004, p. 186.

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⁴⁶ Monthly, Azad Baluchistan, No 6, December 1984

⁴⁷ It also is known by some sources as the "Anjuman-e Ittehad-e Balochan wa Balochistan" (Organisation for the Unity of the Baloch and Balochistan), see Riccardo Redaelli, The Father's Bow: The Khanate of Kalat and British India, 19th – 20th Century, Firenze: Il Maestrale, 1997, p. 143.

⁴⁸ Janmahmad, Essays on Baloch National Struggle in Pakistan, p. 169.

⁴⁹ Baluchi Dunya, Multan, June-July, 1968: Malik Ramazan, who later became a member of the Movement and survived as a local journalist, had mentioned that 200 delegates from Karachi, Sindh, Punjab and Balochistan proper attended the Conference; See also A. B. Awan., Baluchistan, p. 165

⁵⁰ Munir Ahmad Marri, Balochistan: Seyasi Kash-makash, Quetta: Gusheh-e Adab, 1989, p. 86.

⁵¹ Inayatullah Baloch, "Baloch Qaumi Tahrik Men 'Kalat State National Party' Ka Kerdar", in Monthly, Azad Baluchistan, December 1982, London, p. 4.

⁵² Ibid., 24.

⁵³ Malik Allah-Bakhsh, Baluch Qaum Ke Tarikh ke Chand Parishan Dafter Auraq, Quetta:, Islamiyah Press, 20 September, 1957, p. 43.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Gul Khan Nasir, Tarikh-e-Balochistan, pp. 525-26..

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 522.

⁵⁷ Selig S. Harrison, In Afghanistan's Shadow, p. 25.

⁵⁸ Taj Mohammad Breseeg, 2004, p. 286.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid. p. 266.

⁶¹ Selig S. Harrison, In Afghanistan's Shadow: Baluch Nationalism and Soviet Temptations, New York: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1981, p. 36

⁶² Janmahmad, Essays on Baloch National Struggle in Pakistan, p. 305.

⁶³ Selig S. Harrison, In Afghanistan's Shadow: Baluch Nationalism and Soviet Temptations, New York: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1981, pp. 3-4.

⁶⁴ Taj Mohammad Breseeg, 2004, p. 333.

⁶⁵ Torbjörn Pettersson, Pakistan och Demokrati (Pakistan and Democracy) i serien "Världspolitikens Dagfrågor", Stockholm: Utrikespolitiska Institutet, 1990, p. 22.

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⁶⁶ See Ahmed Rashid, *Descent Into Chaos* (New York: Viking, 2008), pp. 283-287.

⁶⁷ Bansal, A., *Balochistan in Turmoil, Pakistan at Crossroads*, New Delhi, Manas Publications, 2010, pp. 109-111.

⁶⁸ Wirsing, R. G., Ahrari, E. (eds.), *Fixing Fractured Nations*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, pp. 100-102.

⁶⁹ Read, more on the Baloch Pashtun divide, Taj Mohammad Breseeg, [Baloch Nationalism: Its Origin and Development](#), Karachi, Royal Book Company, published in 2004, pp. 296-298

⁷⁰ Bansal, A., pp. 111-121.

⁷¹ M. Zafar, *Gilani Agrees Trust Deficit Exists Between Centre, Baloch*, Daily Times, 8 June 2010, Retrieved 8 June 2010 from http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010\06\08\story_8-6-2010_pg7_11.

⁷² Bansal, A., *Balochistan in Turmoil, Pakistan at Crossroads*, New Delhi, Manas Publications, 2010, pp. 111-121.

⁷³ The Washington Post, Wednesday, February 15, 2006

⁷⁴ Hameed Baloch, (ed.), *Memoir of Douglas Fell (The Last Prime Minister of Kalat State)*, Sayad Hashmi Reference Library, Karachi, 2010, p. 34.

⁷⁵ Taj Mohammad Breseeg, 2004, p. 364

⁷⁶ Riccardo Redaelli, [The Father's Bow: The Khanate of Kalat and British India \(19th – 20th Century\)](#), pp. 47-47.

⁷⁷ Inayatullah Baloch, [The Problem of Greater Baluchistan](#), p. 200.

⁷⁸ For more detail see, Reza Raees Toosi, "Isteratezhi-e Sarzaminha-e Sookhteh" (The Backward strategy), in: [Tarikh-e Ma'aser-e Iran \(The Contemporary History of Iran\)](#), Tehran: Mo'assesah-e Motale'at-e Tarik-e Ma'aser-e Iran, Winter 1376/1997 (pp. 19-69).

⁷⁹ Syed Iqbal Ahmad, [Balochistan: Its Strategic Importance](#), pp. 101-103.

⁸⁰ The Foreign Policy Centre, [Balochis of Pakistan: On the Margins of History](#), Foreign Policy Centre, London 2006.

⁸¹ Baloch, Inayatullah, "Resistance and National Liberation in Baluchi Poetry", Paper presented at Balochi Symposium at the University of Uppsala on 17-20th August 2000, Uppsala, Sweden.

⁸² Selig S. Harrison, "Ethnicity and Politics in Pakistan", p. 297.

⁸³ Valeria F. Piacentini, "Introduction", in: Riccardo Redaelli, [The Father's Bow: The Khanate of Kalat and British India \(19th – 20th Century\)](#), Firenze: Il Maestrale, 1997, p. 21.

⁸⁴ B. M. Kutty, (ed.), [In Search of Solutions: An Autobiography of Mir Ghaus Bakhsh Bizenjo](#), Pakistan Study Centre, University of Karachi and Pakistan Labour Trust Karachi, Karachi, 2009, pp. 79-80.

⁸⁵ Marvin and Bernard Kalb, [Kissinger](#), Boston: Little, Brown, 1974, pp. 63-64.

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⁸⁶ Selig S. Harrison, In Afghanistan's Shadow, See, Chapter 7.

⁸⁷ Marvin and Bernard Kalb, Kissinger, p. 180. It should be remembered that the Shah of Iran was the first who recognised Pakistan as an independent sovereign state.

⁸⁸ Janmahmad, Essays on Baloch National Struggle in Pakistan, pp. 220-233, See also Selig S. Harrison, In Afghanistan's Shadow, 1981.

⁸⁹ Selig S. Harrison, In Afghanistan's Shadow, p. 159.

⁹⁰ Interview with Akbar Barakzai.

⁹¹ Rashed Rahman, "The Rise and Fall of Baloch Nationalism", p. 7.

⁹² New York Times, 15th May 1973.

⁹³ Selig S. Harrison, In Afghanistan's Shadow, p. 97.

⁹⁴ Interview with Abdul Samad Amiri.

⁹⁵ Asadollah Alam, The Shah and I: The Confidential Diary of Iran's Royal Court (1969-1977), London, 1991, p. 216.

⁹⁶ Interview with Abdul Samad Amiri.

⁹⁷ People's Front, May 1973.

⁹⁸ Noam Chomsky, *Pakistan a 'paradigm example of a Failed State*, in Express India, February 3, 2008,

⁹⁹ Inayatullah Baloch, The Problem of Greater Baluchistan, 1987, pp. 19-23; See also Janmahmad, Essays on Baloch National Struggle in Pakistan, p. 427.

¹⁰⁰ Interview with Senator Dr Abdul Malik Baloch.

¹⁰¹ Observer Research Foundation, *Pakistan will remain instable*, Selig Harrison,[online] (06 February 2008)