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WORLD FOCUS takes up every month one international issue and gives an analysis of its various aspects by persons well known for their specialisation in the subject. The issues covered are topical or near topical, but of an abiding interest. The analysis is simple enough to interest even an initiate to world affairs, but without sacrificing depth. The aim is to present an Indocentric view on a particular issue currently facing the world.

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From the Editor's Desk

Headlines screamed. 'Bugti's death has alienated Baluchs.' 'Bugti's death set to change future of Sindh and Baluchistan.' 'Bugti's killing to radicalise anti-Pakistan insurgency.' 'Nawab Akbar Bugti turned into an aggressively defiant politician in the last few years of his political life.' Clearly, the killing of Nawab Akbar Bugti was a landmark even in the perilous political landscape of Pakistan.

Some Pakistani observers in India had a wry smile on their faces. They felt whether the slain Baluch leader is another Mujib-ur-Rehman. If so, Pakistan stared another painful vivisection of its national territory.

Akbar Bugti died the way he lived his life. A man who had lost all his sons either to violence or natural causes, rode out on camel back and headed for the Hindukush mountains to fight Islamabad's security forces, knew that he had burnt his bridges with rulers in Islamabad whom he had helped in many ways Bugti was a member of the 1958 Constituent Assembly of the fledgling nation and a former junior minister of defence.

This issue is dedicated to the past, present and future of Baluchistan, and by proxy Pakistan. This column will not show the temerity of second guessing of the specialists who write in the following pages. But one point needs to be noted. Tribal coalitions, be it in Pakistan or Afghanistan, are treacherously unpredictable. For now those tribal sentiments are boiling and seeking an outlet. Bugti's killing is a slap on their honour.

But the memories of past slights and previous contests will not remain overwhelmed by an absolute notion of Baluch nationhood for long. They will raise their ugly heads to set tribe against tribe, village against village and family against family once again. Unlike East Pakistan, the Baluch identity is not inspired by a single ethnic credo or a singular cultural or linguistic identification. But more of that in the following pages.

Still, finally, a word about Indian national interest in this charged environment of emotional turmoil. The country has had a romantic linkage to this far west of the un-'partitioned' India. Mahatma Gandhi was able to share some of his vision even with the culturally diverse tribal elders of the region. Khan Abdul Ghaffar 'Badshah' Khan has an almost mythical presence in India's modern history. Remember, a post-9/11 Pakistan under General Parvez Musharraf is as much a victim of Islamist insurgency as anyone else. Kudos should be given to Prime Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh for recognising that fact. So can a fragmented Pakistan - divided on the basis of myriad ethnicities - enhance Indian national security? We, at World Focus, leave you with this question.

New Delhi
October 2006.

G. Kishore Babu
Editor

Baluchistan: Repeat of 1971 ?

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Baluchistan: Strategic Importance & a tale of Ethnic Marginalisation

Alok Bansal

“They say we must join Pakistan for economic reasons. Yet we have minerals, we have petroleum and we have ports. The question is what would Pakistan be without us?”

Ghous Bakhsh Bizenjo leader of Kalat State National Party in lower house of Parliament of State of Kalat in 1948

This question represents the dilemma that has been

plaguering the Pakistani policy makers since its inception, the prospects of survival without Baluchistan look absolutely bleak even today as they appeared in 1948. Baluchistan has been in focus for past two years on account of an insurgency that has been challenging the writ of the Pakistani State in this sparsely populated but strategically significant part of Pakistan. However, the killing of Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti, popularly known as the “Tiger of Baluchistan” in an encounter in Kohlu district in the early hours of August 26, 2006, has led to renewed focus of the world community on this remote region. The killing has ominous implications for the

restive province. Not only has it unified the disparate Baluch groups as never before, it has also provided momentum to the opposition’s demands for an end to military rule. Comparisons are being drawn with the events that led to the creation of Bangladesh in 1971. Pakistan has often accused the external players of interfering in this crucial part of Pakistan. The way Baluch insurgents have been operating does point to some sort of external involvement. It is therefore essential to analyse the

strategic importance of this vast land to Pakistan and the international community as such.

This paper attempts to analyse the strategic importance of the region in terms of the resources available both mineral and agricultural, its crucial geo-strategic location and its large sea coast with numerous natural harbours. The paper also attempts to assess the main Baluch fear of

being marginalised in their traditional homeland and makes an attempt to answer the underlying question as to who is a Baluch. It also covers their tribal organisation and divisions.

Strategic Importance of Baluchistan

With around 350,000 square kilometres, Baluchistan has nearly half the landmass of Pakistan. Despite its sparse population its sheer size accords it enormous importance. It must be clearly understood that besides Pakistan Baluch inhabit a significant portion of Iran (Seistan wa Baluchistan province has an area of 181,600 square kilometres and is predominantly inhabited by Baluch and Brahui tribes) and a small strip in Afghanistan. Besides, the adjoining districts of Dera Ismail Khan and Jacobabad in Punjab and Sind were at some stage predominantly inhabited by Baluch. Baluchistan is crucial to the survival of Pakistani state. The province is rich in mineral resources and has large proven as well as unproven reserves of hydrocarbons. The region provides eighty percent of the country’s gas and most of its coal. Pakistan is keen to

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By killing Bugti, General Musharraf has now permanently alienated a significant section of Baluch population and has become a personal enemy for them. It is therefore no wonder that the recent assassination attempts on Musharraf show traits of Baluch involvement.

explore for energy resources in the region but has not been able to do so due to fierce opposition from the Baluch tribes. The region is also home to a large number of cattle and has enormous potential for fishing. Contrary to popular belief the natural resources of Baluchistan are more than sufficient to feed its population.

Climatically Baluchistan lies in Temperate Zone and the average rainfall ranges from three to twelve inches. There are regions which get no rains for years in succession. As a result agriculture is pursued only in the regions where facilities of irrigation exist, which include, mountain springs, rivers and underground water sources. Only about 4.5 million acre out of 47 million acres of plain land is cultivated due to scarcity of water. Fruits are grown in higher altitudes and limited quantities of Wheat, Jowar, barley, rice, potatoes and onions are cultivated. Tobacco and cotton are the cash crops grown in the province. Cattle rearing are the primary source of livelihood for most of the population and 90 percent of Baluchistan's area is used as pasture land. Sheep is the most common animal that is reared, although cows, bullocks and chicks are also reared in some regions. Makran coast is rich in marine life and a large quantity of fish, prawns and lobsters are harvested.

Though, there is not much vegetation in the province, it is quite rich in natural resources and besides natural gas has large reserves of minerals. The province has plenty of marble and limestone reserves and contains 95 percent of world's asbestos. It also has significant reserves of Barytes, Chromites, Silica, Gypsum, Magnesite, Antimony, Manganese, Graphite, Sulphur, Fluorite and Iron ore. The region is also believed to have large petroleum deposits underground but the exploration has not been possible due to fierce opposition from Baluch tribes. Pakistani government often tends to project Baluchistan as a 'wasteland of deserts and mountains' and an economic liability but nothing could be further from truth. Baluchistan is not only self sufficient but also supports the Federal Government with its resources. On and under the land; in the sea; on the mountains; and even over and beneath the deserts, nature has endowed the province with layers upon layers of immense natural wealth.

The province borders Iran on the West, and besides Peshawar, its northern border was the key staging area for the 'jihad' in Afghanistan. Its location renders its significance as it sits astride the oil lanes of the Persian Gulf. Squeezed into the triangle where Pakistan, Iran, and Afghanistan meet, it is geopolitically and strategically the most important part of Pakistan. It commands nearly the country's entire coast – 470 miles of the Arabian Sea. The coast has numerous natural harbours namely, Jiwani, Gwadar, Pasni, Ormara and some more fishing harbours. These ports especially Gwadar has the potential to kick start economic development in a region that has remained

most backward in Pakistan. The Asian Development Bank (ADB)'s Ports Master Plan studies considered Gwadar to be the best alternative to the Persian Gulf Ports in terms of location, which could handle mother ships and large oil tankers, to capture the transit trade of the Central Asian Republics as well as the trans-shipment trade of the region.

Gwadar is the first major port outside the Karachi-Port Bin Qasim complex and will remove the factor of critical vulnerability for Pakistan as the port will provide it with another option to disembark vital supplies in case of non availability of Karachi-Bin Qasim complex either due to natural disasters, accidents or naval blockade. The port is connected by the newly constructed Makran coastal highway (653 km long) from Sheikh Raj, approximately 105 km North of Karachi to Gwad near Pak-Iran border. This highway links the ports at Ormara, Pasni, Gwadar and Jiwani with Karachi and has the potential to boost trade between Pakistan and Iran. Another road link in the pipeline is the Gwadar-Ratto Dero motorway which would join the Indus highway through Turbat, Awaran and Khuzdar. A rail link is also being planned to connect Gwadar to Quetta and Zahidant.

The port due to its location at the entrance of the Persian Gulf, some 460 km from Karachi, has immense geo-strategic significance. The Southernmost point of Gulf of Oman, Ras-al-Hadd is only 190 nautical mile from Gwadar. This enables any naval vessel at Gwadar to interdict any ship entering or leaving Persian Gulf. Besides, it provides the shortest and cost-effective access to the landlocked Afghanistan and Central Asian Republics. The continued unstable regional environment in the Persian Gulf after the Gulf war and the emergence of the new Central Asian States has added to the importance of this port. Pakistan was interested in the project to seek strategic depth further to the southwest from its major naval base in Karachi that has long been vulnerable to the Indian Navy. To diversify the site of its naval and commercial assets, Pakistan has already built a naval base at Ormara, the Jinnah Naval Base, which has been in operation since June 2000. It can berth about a dozen ships, submarines and similar harbour craft. The Gwadar port project, however, is much bigger with enormous potential and is billed to crown the Pakistan Navy into a force that can rival regional navies. Accordingly the government of Pakistan has designated the port area as a "sensitive defence zone."

Besides its geostrategic importance, the project is the cornerstone of economic development of Pakistan and Baluchistan and it could change the landscape of the region and fortune of its people. The major economic benefits that the authorities perceive from the project are opportunities for trade with Central Asian States and Afghanistan, promotion of trade and transport with Gulf States and evolution of the port as trans-shipment hub for

computerised cargo. The port is planned to be linked with the hinterland and Central Asia and Afghanistan through a network of roads and railways. The development of Gwadar town had also been started by the Gwadar Development Authority under a master plan. Pakistani government, with the aim of attracting foreign investment in the region has permitted China and South Korea to set up tax-free special industrial development zones in Gwadar.

Ethnic Marginalisation

This strategically important region of Pakistan has been wrecked by insurgency for over past two years and despite best attempts by the Pakistani security forces; the situation is getting worse by the day. There is a general alienation of the population and a number of underlying factors have precipitated this sense of alienation. One of them is the lack of representation in the government. The Baluch feel that they have been denied representation in the government and as a result they perceive it as an alien government. There are hardly any Baluch in Army or top federal jobs, even most of the provincial jobs are held by outsiders. As a result the ratio of unemployment in Baluchistan is far higher than in other provinces. There is also the case of perceived economic exploitation by Islamabad; Baluch feel that their natural assets are being exploited without giving them anything in return. A case in point is Sui Gas, which was being supplied to almost all the households and industries across Pakistan except in Baluchistan, till General Zia decided to set up a Corps Headquarters in Quetta. Absence of genuine federalism and the lack of any worthwhile decision making powers with the provincial government under the current military dispensation has further accentuated the alienation of population.

However, the issue that has incensed the Baluch the most is the fear that they are going to be marginalized in their own province by the rising influx of Pakhtoons and other Pakistanis. They feel that they would lose their identity, their language, everything. Until the 1970s, the fact that Baluchistan's North was ethnically Pakhtoon whereas the South was almost entirely Baluch was not perceived in conflictual terms by either community. With the abrogation of 'One Unit Formula' and Baluchistan becoming a province in 1970, the tensions became more discernible. The influx of a large number of Afghan refugees (during the war in that country) of Pakhtoon origin created an abrupt and disruptive imbalance in the numerical strength of the two communities. The Baluch are no longer the dominant ethno-linguistic group in large parts of the province as Baluchistan's population has swollen with large numbers of Pakhtoon refugees from Afghanistan. The tension between them reached a high point in 1991, culminating in violent intra-provincial clashes. With the large-scale influx of the Afghan refugees the demographic

profile in Baluchistan has considerably changed. If the refugees stay permanently, the traditional ethnic balance between the Baluch and Pakhtoon population would shift in favour of the Pakhtoons. This has created a sense of identity crisis for Baluchs and has contributed to the ethnic tensions between Baluchs and Pakhtoons. Over the years Pakhtoons in view of their larger earnings have emerged as a privileged class in Baluchistan and control most of the businesses in northern Baluchistan. Not only do they dominate most government departments they also corner most of the job quotas earmarked for Baluchistan in army and other government departments. In the current stand off with the government, Pakhtoons of the province are with the nationalists and Pakhtoonkhwa Milli Awami Party (PMAP) has been collaborating with other nationalist parties.

This feeling of being reduced to a minority has also led them to oppose the mega projects being undertaken in Baluchistan as they perceive that these will not result in greater economic opportunities for them but will be used by outsiders to colonise their land and reduce them to a minority. The project that has caused maximum heartburns is Gwadar Port as the Pakistani establishment has been propagating that it will be another Karachi. However, the problem is that even half the population of Karachi in Gwadar is sufficient to turn the whole population of Baluchistan into a minority. It is therefore essential to analyse as to who are the Baluch, because the classic definition of an ethno-linguistic entity does not fit the Baluch. As the people who call themselves Baluch, speak different languages, some of which are as different as chalk from cheese and have totally different origins.

Baluch Ethnicity

Baluch ethno-nationalism is one of those phenomena, which goes against the theories that view nationalism as an effect of industrial social formation or print capitalism. Ironically it arises from a highly fragmented, tribal Baluch society, which is both the least industrialised and least literate. Indeed, Baluch nationalism is the response to the alien domination through the centralised state system first imposed by the British colonialists and then by the Pakistani State. Historically the land inhabited by Baluch was never under the firm control of any invading army, its inhospitable terrain also did not offer any incentive to the occupiers and most of them were content with a notional suzerainty over this vast stretch of land. However, despite political fragmentation a sense Baluch identity has emerged over the years and its earliest manifestations are seen in the twelfth century when they formed a powerful tribal confederacy.

However, it is only during the reign of Nasir Khan the sixth Khan of Kalat in eighteenth century that a single

unified political Baluch unit emerged. His successors were inept and this led to the fragmentation and colonisation of Baluch land. The colonial rule fragmented the traditional Baluch territory, the Goldsmid Line gave a quarter of Baluch land to Iran while Durand line gave some more territory to Afghanistan. Even the territory under British influence was divided into British Baluchistan and Baluch States. However, despite decades of political fragmentation, a strong sense of Baluch identity has emerged in the post colonial era and although a large section of Baluch speak Brahui, an entirely different language from Baluchi; they have all adopted an all encompassing Baluch identity.

The ethnic origins of the Baluch set them distinctly apart from the peoples of the Indo Gangetic plains. Although many Baluch speak Sindhi (most of them speak both Sindhi and Baluch) today and a significant section of people speak Brahui a language of Dravidian origin, similar to Gondi spoken by tribal inhabitants in parts of Central India, most Baluch speak different dialects of Baluchi a language of Persian origin and consider themselves to be Arabic in origin and trace their lineage to Prophet Abraham. Their traditions speak of affiliation with the Kurds and one tribe that controls the Bolan Pass retains the name Kurd. Similarly Brahuists, though clearly Dravidian go at lengths to try and establish their Aryan origins. As stated earlier on account of its severe weather and scarcity of fertile land, the social mode of Baluchistan has predominantly been nomadic pastoralism, complemented by patches of settled agriculture. It was around these patches that tribal life was organised. The social organisation of the province continues to be based on tribalism to this day.

The colonial rule impacted Baluchistan considerably, it changed the landscape. British economic policies contributed to the economic deterioration and pauperisation of the province. Within the first decade of the twentieth century the settled population in Baluchistan increased from less than five percent to over fifty percent. Heavy taxation imposed by the British resulted in number of peasants selling their land, as a result in a state where there were few tenants and hardly any agricultural labour, their number increased considerably. "The development of commodity-money relations converted Baluchistan into an agrarian appendage of the metropolis, as the imports of factory made articles coupled with high taxation led to the bankruptcy of the local artisans", whose number dropped sharply. British also beefed up the authority of the tribal chiefs under the "Sandeman System" as they depended on them to ensure safe passage for British troops and trade transiting from Sindh to Afghanistan. According to Mir Hasil Bizenjo, although the system of tribal chief had emerged in seventeenth century, it was not a formal institution and was only institutionalised by Sandeman who converted it into a hereditary institution, which had

not been the case. He even fixed salaries for them. As a result Baluch society which was fairly egalitarian turned feudal and this feudal orientation increased with passage of time.

There are 17 major Baluch tribes and as they are structured today, each tribe both Baluchi speaking or Brahui speaking is headed by its own 'tumandar' popularly called as *sardar*. He symbolises the Baluch custom and tribal tradition and is expected to display honour, hospitality and bravery in his behaviour. His word is law and his authority total. The Baluch have a saying 'the Baluch will swear on the Holy Quran but never on the head of the Sardar'. These tumandars have traditionally ruled over their subjects as feudal despots and have not only dispensed the justice but have also been responsible for maintaining law and order in their regions. They have maintained private militias and prisons to ensure this. Though mostly autonomous, these *sardars* have always considered the Khan of Kalat, a Brahui, as their lord beige and have traditionally accepted his suzerainty. Each tribe is further subdivided into various sub-clans that are headed by their own *waderas*. There are approximately 400 subclans, which are headed by these waderas. The Central region including Kalat is inhabited by Brahui speaking tribes like Sehri, Mazari and Mengals. To the North and South of this Brahui region are tribes speaking different dialects of Baluchi. To the north east are the two largest and the most fierce tribes amongst the Baluch – the Bugtis and Marris, who have traditionally prevented Pakhtoons from overwhelming their land and the land to its South.

The Baluch generally adhere to Hanafi school of jurisprudence of Sunni Islam and are generally casual about religious observance. Religious leaders play a marginal role in Baluch society, except in Iran, where maulavis and dervishes have grown in importance in recent years. It is probably because the Sunni identity of Baluch has assumed a major role in Iran in view of official attempts to impose Twelver Shia (*Athna Ashari* - official religion of Iran) sect in the region. A number of Baluch tribes in Pakistan still have non-Muslims namely Hindus and Sikhs in their fold. Sylvia A Matheson's anthropological study of Bugti tribe highlights that a number of Hindus not only inhabited Bugti land but also called themselves as Bugtis. In fact one of the close advisors of Nawab Bugti was a Hindu. As a result Pakistani establishment has often tried to use the Islamic fundamentalist parties to subsume the tribal Baluch identity in a larger Islamic identity.

A large number of Baluch live outside Baluchistan and in fact today more Baluch live outside Baluchistan than within its frontiers. A large number have migrated to the gulf and other Arab countries especially in Oman, which had a historical relationship with the region. These Baluch turn the wheels of Arab Gulf States. They along with

Pakhtoons are the predominant ethnic groups from Pakistan in the region. They are often seen working in the toughest physical jobs like the construction of roads. These Baluch have been in the forefront of forging a common Baluch identity and are reported to be financing the ongoing Baluch nationalist movement.

Conclusion

To conclude the continuing Baluch insurgency poses the greatest threat to the survival of Pakistan. Of all the sub-nationalisms, the strongest threat to Pakistan at present is posed by the Baluch nationalism, which is again rearing its head after thirty years. Four times since Pakistan's creation, the Baluch, who never wanted to be part of Pakistan, have rebelled, demanding greater autonomy, or even an independent state, which would reunite the five million Baluch in Pakistan, Iran, and Afghanistan under one flag. The problem in Baluchistan is potentially serious as it seeks to generate separatist and nationalist sentiments within a culturally distinct ethno-linguistic group that had its own autonomous history and has not changed much under British rule. Even before the partition of British India, the Baluch nationalists had opposed the accession of their region to Pakistan and after partition they continued to espouse their desire to establish their own independent national state. None of the Muslim intellectuals or Political stalwarts who conceived the idea of Pakistan before partition, had examined the question whether the existence of a common identity as Muslims would prove sufficient to obliterate the cultural consciousness of the masses to create a sense of political brotherhood, weeding out parochial considerations. Even a cursory look at the history of Islamic people would have shown that the religion was never an adequate vehicle to bridge the gaps dividing people on the basis of their historical experiences, traditions, languages and culture. The Islamic concept of one Ummah had ceased to be a practical reality after the Ummaids in AD 650 splintered into different political units.

Baluchistan has been Pakistan's soft underbelly. It was a source of constant worry to the Pakistani federal government and to American geopolitical planners during the Cold War because of its vulnerability to Soviet penetration. Its hugeness makes it hard to defend and its location, stretching from the Afghan border all the way along the Iranian border to the sea, makes it strategically inviting. The significance of Baluchistan has only increased after the emergence of landlocked but resource rich Central Asian states. Pakistani government is depending on the mega developmental projects being undertaken in

Baluchistan to give fillip to Pakistani economy. These mega projects have evinced lot of international interest. However, a prolonged insurgency will certainly delay the mega projects being undertaken in the province and in case of inordinate delay may make some of them unviable. As long as violence continues foreign direct investment in Pakistan is not likely to pick up, including from friendly Chinese sources.

Today the region is amongst the most impoverished regions of Pakistan and even the basic facilities like clean drinking water, health and education facilities are mostly absent. This has led to the complaints by the Baluch against the 'big brother' Punjab and woven into this resentment is a degree of political anger and bitterness towards the army. Baluch also fear ethnic marginalisation, although Baluch nationalism is a complex phenomenon. Baluch society has emerged by assimilating vast segments of other ethnic groups. The most fascinating aspect of this process of assimilation has been the case of Brahuīs who have retained their distinct language despite being assimilated into Baluch ethnicity. Today all Baluch accept Brahuīs as one of them. As far as Baluch ethno-linguistic community is concerned, ethnicity and language have ceased to be synonymous or parallel. It is therefore difficult to define even the basis of Baluch ethnicity. In fact Baluch nationality is an amalgam of many ethnic strains and many members of this group are not members of 'the community of language' like the Sindhi speaking ethnic Baluch of Sindh.

The assassination of Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti, the *Tumandar* (tribal chief) of the largest Baluch tribe, has only aggravated the situation. His assassination is the culmination of a long process by the Pakistani establishment to remove him from the political scene. A strong proponent of Baluch nationalism, he had said, "I have been a Baluch for several centuries. I have been a Muslim for 1400 years. I have been a Pakistani for just over fifty" Sardar Akbar Khan Bugti, on account of the circumstances and the manner of his death is destined to become a martyred hero for Baluch nationalism like Nauroz Khan before him, and for all other nationalists fighting for autonomy or independence from Pakistan, despite government's attempts to paint him as an autocratic feudal despot. By killing Bugti, General Musharraf has now permanently alienated a significant section of Baluch population and has become a personal enemy for them. It is therefore no wonder that the recent assassination attempts on Musharraf show traits of Baluch involvement.

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Baluchistan-Cruces of History

Maloy Krishna Dhar

Most puzzling problems of history-the inscrutable cruces; are creatures of history, intertwined with political geography, which often transcend to the realms of geostrategic Gordian Knots. Baluchistan is such a cruces of history, which lay in the main marching tract of human civilisation, spanning the east, west and central Asian ethnic and civilisational entities. Therefore, writing about present day Baluchistan cannot be confined to a few skirmishes between the Pakistani Establishment and the glorious Baluch people and other ethnic and linguistic groups, which have merged edges with their Baluch brethren. The Baluch are an ancient people, perhaps contemporaneous to the inhabitants of Moenjodaro. Before entering into their heroic struggle against the myopic Pakistani leaders and Army Establishment we need to understand about this historic people that bridged various meridians of Asian civilisations.

Historians seek approximation of truth through disagreement, finally settling down on a common minimum parameter. The Baluch riddle is no exception.

Some historians guess that they inhabited the northern regions of Elburz and east of Caspian Sea. This tract is now inhabited by Ashkanis, who claim Aryan origin from trans-Caucasian people. This school believe that the Baluch and the Kurds are of Aryan origin, as are the Iranians and

certain strains of Indians. Baluch language still treasures certain traits of Indo-Aryan-Iranian roots and applications, akin to Sanskrit. Some proto-Baluch speaking people still live in Turkmenistan and surrounding areas.

Some scholars attribute migration of the Baluch people to their present geographical location around 1200 B.C.

Baluchistan must stay inside Pakistan and the federation must learn to mould itself to the need of the federal units to be as autonomous as possible without actually destroying the state. There were times when we thought that Awami National Party's (sic) Six Points were not negotiable; today hardly anyone will disagree that they could have been accommodated. These days, states do not come to an end easily. In fact many states in the recent past reached the "black hole" status and stayed like that without changing their morphology. There are many "failed states" in our world, which are on the map because the international system doesn't allow annexations any more...

Pakistan was the result of Muslim separatism. It runs the risk of splintering under the weight of the regional demands for autonomy. To prevent the emergence of mini-states in place of the federation, it must nurture its provinces into mini-states by consent. Baluchistan has to stay within Pakistan to become autonomous. Once outside, it will succumb to further fragmentation and chaos."

To a conscious Indian a question pops up: Has Delhi worked on any Baluch strategy? The pundits and trusted friends of the Establishment might answer gorgeously.

Recognition of their existence even during the times of King Cyrus and Combyses has substantiated their route of migration from Caspian Sea region through northern Iran.

Some scholars assert that the Baluchs are the indigenous people of Baluchistan and they had created the first civilisation of the World around Mehergarh. Some Baluch nationalists prefer to support this theory. Other historians, with a view to support supposed Semitic origin of the Baluch, maintain that they came from Halab, Allepe, and are people of old Sumerian of Mesopotamian stock. The propagators of Pakistan being a saga of the Indus alone subscribe to this theory.

Whatever the pundits say the historical Baluch tract had witnessed admixture of

the Scythians, Parthians, Ashkanis, Sakas, Kushans, Huns, Turks and Mongols. Most of the pundits agree that the Baluch have more in common with the Qurdish people and other peoples of Aryan stock and they have basic ethnic differences with the Punjabis, Sindhis and Pathans.

It is also borne out of the fact that the Brahuie Baluchs (Kalatis) are ethnically different from the peoples of other provinces of Pakistan. The historians also debate the origin of the Brhuies fervently and agreement amongst them is as rare as conjunction of illuminated cosmic dust bowls. It is more or less agreed that the Brahuie Baluchs of Baluchistan and Sind are linked to the people who inhabited the Harappan and Moenjodaro civilisational tracts along the Sindhu and Saraswati (running through Gujarat and Sind).

Most pundits however, agree that 'the word 'Baluch' was derived from 'brza-vaciya, (brza-vak)', meaning a loud cry, in contrast to 'namra vak', polite way of talking. Some writers maintain that etymologically it is made of two Chandas (Vedic Sanskrit) words, 'Bal' > 'Och', meaning powerful and magnificent.

History had repeatedly reshaped the geographical boundaries of the Baluch people. Besides the Pakistani part of Baluchistan eastern Iran- Sistan - has a vast tract inhabited by the peoples of Baluch stock. The Saka people inhabited Sistan or the land of the Sakas-Sakastana around 128 BC. Two important ethnic groups are Barahuie and Baluch, who speak Baluch tongue with an admixture of Barahuie and Persian languages inhabit both Pakistani and Iranian Baluch tracts.

In modern times Anglo-Afghan relations waxed and waned between 1838 and 1919 constantly changing and margin-skirting of the British Indian and Afghan territories. The Anglo-Afghan agreement of 1893 signed between Amir Abdur Rahman, and Sir Mortimer Durand, (British Indian government) demarcated a 'permanent border' between the two countries. It was supposed to be reviewed after 100 years in 1993. While Afghanistan insists on a review, Pakistan stoutly asserts that the border was finally signed and sealed. This dispute has not been resolved.

Over 300,000 ethnic Baluch people inhabit the Afghan part of Baluchistan, though the Pakhtoons or Pushtuns (Pathan) heavily populate the tract. The Pathan people also inhabit large tracts in Pakistani Baluchistan.

The Baluch people have followed a resilient secular attitude towards religion despite growth of religious fanaticism elsewhere in Pakistan. The majority of Baluch are Hanafi Sunnis, but there is a community of an estimated 500,000 to 700,000 Zikri Baluch, who live in the coastal Makran area and in Karachi. The Zikris believe in the Messiah Nur Pak, whose teachings supersede those of the Prophet Muhammad. Their beliefs, considered heretical, have led to intermittent Sunni repression of their community since founding of the sect in the fifteenth century. The Shia majority also often harasses the Iranian Baluchs.

Of the total population of Baluchistan the Baluchs numerically dominate the south of the province. The Pushtuns are in majority in and around Quetta and the north. The Kalat region and other parts of the region are

dominated by the Brahuie. In fact, the ruling family of Kalat represented Brahuie power in this region. Persian speaking Dewhars also live in the Kalat region and further west towards the border with Iran. The coastal Makran regions are inhabited by Meds and small groups of descendants of African slaves known as the Hubshi. In addition, 769,000 Afghan refugees can be found in the province including Pushtuns, Tajiks, and Hazaras. Sindhi farmers have also moved to the more arable lands in the east. A large number of Punjabis have occupied fertile land in the east and they are prominently present in industrial complexes in Sui gas project, Port Gwadar and Port Qasim facilities and other military installations. Majority of the professional workforce in the province originate from Punjab and Sind.

The Baluch society follows strict hierarchical pattern characterized as feudal militarism. The *hakims* are at the top of the system and his retinue consist of pastorals, agriculturists, tenant farmers and descendants of former slaves (*hizmatkar*). Sardar system is firmly embedded amongst the tribes like Bugti, Marri, Mengal, and Zarakzai, Achakzai etc.

It would, therefore, be seen that the Baluch people of Pakistan historically walked into the modern ages as an independent people-an admixture of Baluch, Brahuie, Pathan etc. While the State of Kalat had emerged as the kernel of Baluch political evolution, smaller States like Makran, Kharan, and Las Bela also enjoyed considerable prosperity. They were not 'the people of the Indus' as claimed by certain Pakistani scholars. They belonged more to Persian, Afghan and Kurdish orbits.

The British, on the eve of departure, played a neat trick with the Baluch people. They prescribed the 3rd June Plan and proclaimed that the future of British Baluchistan was to be determined by a voting college comprising the Shahi Jirga -excluding the representatives of the Baluchistan States-and the elected members of the Quetta Municipality. The plan virtually limited the voting exercise to certain loyal clients of the British and the Muslim League.

The Khan of Kalat, Mir Ahmad Yar Khan, who dreamed of an independent Baluchistan under his suzerainty, Ghaus Bakhsh Bizenjo, an emerging Baluch nationalist, and Abdus Samad Khan Achakzai, an avowed Gandhian and the leader of Indian National Congress, campaigned to prevent the voting college from opting for Pakistan. Their efforts failed on 29 June 1947 and the selected Electoral College, under pressure from the British Agents and Muslim League, voted in favour of Pakistan. Concerned Sardars of major tribes protested against British manipulation of the sordid episode.

The British had assessed that a Pakistani Baluch province would stand them in good stead in their strategic bulwark against Iran, Afghanistan and not so distant Soviet Union. The Crown representatives persuaded the States

of Kharan, Mekran and Las Bela to accede to Pakistan.

The British had declared in the Government of India Act, 1935, that Kalat was an Indian state. At the dawn of partition the Kalat ruler Mir Ahmed Yar Khan, asserted independence. He was persuaded by his former legal advisor M. A. Jinnah and British officials to join Pakistan. A compact Baluchistan political unit was formed in 1952. The States of Baluchistan - Kalat, Makran, Kharan and Las Bela - were permitted to form 'The Baluchistan States' Union'. In 1955, these States were made a part of the 'One Unit' or the single province of West Pakistan to facilitate the framing of a constitution on the basis of the principle of 'parity' between the two wings of the country. But by mid 1957 it became apparent that the political system established under the Constitution of 1956 was not likely to survive.

Formation of 'one unit' of Baluchistan came much later. The tract witnessed rebellion in 1948 itself. Prince Karim, brother of the Khan of Kalat, revolted against Pakistani rule. The genesis of Baluch resistance is normally traced from the rebellion of Prince Karim. It was not a mere revolt of a tribal leader. It represented the aspiration of a historical people to live as an independent entity. It is necessary to examine each phase of the important resistance wars fought by the Baluch people since their unfortunate relationship started with Pakistan, a 'promised land' of the Indian Muslims, created by the British. The process witnessed the emergence of another 'promised land' in the continent, the Land of Israel. History has supported the diagnosis—'promised lands' often turn cancerous.

Jinnah had coerced the State of Kalat through military pressure and deceit to join Pakistan. However, the Khan of Kalat ruled even after Jinnah's death as Pakistani government had very little control on the area. Anti-Pakistani rallies and meetings in certain areas of the Khanate had become an order of the day. Pakistan responded by enlarging its cantonments and deploying military in areas dominated by the Bugti, Marri and Mengal etc tribes. The Government of Pakistan decided to take complete control of the administration of the Khanate of Baluchistan on April 15, 1948. Several political leaders including Mohammad Amin Khosa and Abdul Samad Achakzai were arrested. The pro-Congress (INC) Anjuman-i-Watan Party, headed by Samad Achakzai, was declared unlawful.

The first struggle for Baluch independence started soon after annexation of Kalat by Pakistan and refusal to concede internal autonomy. The Baluchs interpreted the Pakistani move as unilateral violation of the *Sandeman system* (Baluch-British agreement that allowed autonomy to the Sardars). This resulted in civil unrest. Prince Abdul Karim Khan, the younger brother of the Khan of Kalat, decided to lead a national liberation movement on April 16, 1948. He invited the leading Baluch nationalist members—the Kalat State National Party, the Baluch League, and the Baluch

National Workers Party etc to join for creation of an independent 'Greater Baluchistan.'

Prince Karim initially solicited Indian support. But New Delhi was not in position to extend logistics and political support in view of its involvement in Kashmir war and contrary advices from the British Governor General.

Karim decided to migrate to Afghanistan in June 1948. Prominent political leaders like Mohammed Hussein Anka, secretary of the Baluch League and editor of *Weekly Bolan Mastung*, Malik Saeed Dehwar, secretary of the Kalat State National Party, Qadir Bakhsh Nizamami, a member of the Baluch League, Maulvi Mohd Afzal, a member of Jamiat-Ulema-e-Baluchistan) accompanied him. Some members of Sind-Baluchistan branch of the Communist Party also joined him. Pakistan alleged that India had incited the Prince through Hindu Baluchs (about 19% that time) and some Communist leaders of Sind, who maintained steady relationship with Indian Communists. It tried to depict the Baluch nationalist leaders as pro-Moscow.

The entourage encamped at Sarlath, Kandahar. Karim contacted Mir Ghulam Faruq (Rudini tribe), Sardar Mehrab Khan, Sardar Mir Jumma and Mir Wazir Khan Sanjrani of Chagai district (nuclear testing range), and several other chiefs. He also contacted the Afghan and the USSR emissaries for help.

Besides spreading the news of Baluch nationalism and religious tolerance Karim organized the Baluch Mujahideen, a liberation force consisting of former soldiers and officers of the Khanate's army. The Baluch liberation army had separate wings, *Jannisar* (devotee), *Janbaz* (darer), and *fidayeen* (suicide) squads. His GHQ was known as *Bab-i-Aali* (secret war office). However, the first Baluch liberation army did not have an impressive strength.

Prince Karim's efforts were hindered by Afghanistan and the Soviet Union's unwillingness to offer assistance. Prince Karim appointed Malik Saeed and Qadir Bakhsh Nizamami as emissaries to contact the Afghan government and other embassies. The Afghan authorities refused to provide help but allowed Karim to remain in Kandahar as political refugees. Kabul was not inclined to allow Karim to operate from its soil, as it was apprehensive of its own Baluch and Pushtun population. Ahmed Shah Abdali had treated Baluchistan as a subordinate territory. Only after Baluch-Afghan war of 1758 the Afghans and Baluchs signed an agreement of 'non-interference.' Afghan rulers Shuja Shah and Abdur Rahman Khan later demanded incorporation of the Indian Baluch territory. In fact, on the eve of partition, the Afghan government kicked up the issue of creation of 'Pashtunistan', a region stretching from Chitral and Gilgit to the Baluch coast in the Arabian Sea. Kabul described it as 'South Pashtunistan.' With such susceptibilities in mind Kabul decided to play safe.

The Iranians were apprehensive of similar movement

by their own Baluch nationality. The Soviets under Stalin had not yet developed a policy towards the changing situation in the Indian subcontinent and in Afghan territory. Stalin was focussed on East Europe and Central Asian territories. He did not want to antagonise the British and Afghan powers.

India was in no position to support the rebel Prince. Nehru was struggling for power within the Congress party, Pakistan's Kashmir invasion and he was yet to determine where he belonged, to the West, East or the nowhere-Non-aligned realm.

Pakistan pressurised the Kalat ruler in May 1948 to declare his brother a rebel. Pakistan moved its army to the military posts of Punjab, Chaman, Chashma, and Rastri near the Afghan border with a view to cut off Karim from Baluch support. The first Army action in Baluchistan had taken a toll of 65 Baluch lives. In the process two armed clashes ensued. However Karim's movement was split from within. Anqa and Malik Saeed favored armed struggle in the form of guerrilla war, while Mir Ghous Bux Bizenjo and other prominent leaders wished to resolve all issues by negotiation.

The Khan of Kalat later persuaded Karim to return to Baluchistan. He was, however, not yet ready to surrender. He organised a rebellion against Pakistan in the Jalawan area and received assistance from Mir Gohar Khan Zahri, an influential tribal leader of the Zarakzai clan. Major General Akbar Khan, (Kashmir famous General Tariq) Commander of Pakistani army's Seventh Regiment mounted counter attack and arrested Karim with his followers. General Akbar Khan, in an article published in the daily *Dawn*, August 14, 1960, (Early Reminiscences of a Soldier) stated that there was a plan to invade the Khanate. He narrated the clashes between Pakistan army and Karim's forces. Akbar claimed that under Jinnah's instruction this news was withheld from media.

Baluchistan witnessed a second resistance movement in 1958

The Khan of Kalat organized a rebellion to secede from Pakistan. President Iskandar Mirza directed Pakistan Army to take control of the Kalat Palace and arrest the Khan on charges of sedition. Informed circles asserted that Iskandar Mirza had played up the dormant dreams of the Khan, encouraged him to raise a banner of revolt with a view to justify imposition of martial law, which he did on 7 October 1958. His hope of hegemony was exterminated when on 27 October 1958, the Chief Martial Law Administrator, General Mohammad Ayub Khan, removed Mirza and assumed full authority.

Arrest of the Khan of Kalat witnessed spontaneous disturbances in most parts of Baluchistan that continued for about a year. It was during these disturbances that Nawroz Khan alias Babu Nowroz raised banner of revolt.

His revolt was not serious in nature but it symbolised the Baluch psyche. Babu Nowroz, head of the Zarakzai tribe started an armed struggle against Pakistan. His band of fighters numbering about 150 fought valiantly and offered serious battles to the army headed by Lt. Col. Tikka Khan (later General of the Pakistani army, Butcher of Bangladesh). There are reports to support the allegations that Tikka Khan had obtained surrender of Nowroz Khan through the mechanism of 'etbar' - or oath on the Holy Quran. He and his followers, including his sons and nephews, were taken to Hyderabad Jail, where his sons and nephews were executed for armed rebellion against the state. Nowroz was held in prison where he died at the age of 90. The Khan of Kalat was subsequently forgiven and freed.

Tikka followed up the surrender of Nowroz with widespread depredations on Zarakzai, Achakzai, Marri and Bugti territories. According to Baluch chroniclers over 1000 Baluch civilians lost lives. Ironically, Tikka had the privilege of meting out more atrocities on the defenceless Bengalis of East Pakistan. Tikka Khan has earned his place in Pakistan's history as the 'butcher general.'

The third Baluch uprising was much more serious in nature

The Marri tribe initially triggered off this phase of Baluch resistance in 1962. The Marris objected to rapid incursion by the Punjabis, attempted curtailment of privileges of the Sardars and denial of development instruments to the area. Frontier Guards and the Inter Services Intelligence as usual, suppressed this.

However, inglorious defeat of India in 1962 war and political somersaults by feuding factions in Afghanistan had encouraged Z. A. Bhutto to impose a façade of peace in the Baluch area. With a quiet Baluch front at home he planned an invasion of India in 1965. The inglorious history of Pakistan between 1965 and 1971 was characterised by certain idiosyncratic personalities and regional convulsions. While ailing Ayub Khan was preparing to fade into oblivion, General Yahya Khan, Z. A. Bhutto and Mujibur Rahman (in East Pakistan) were locked in an intractable war that resulted in the creation of Bangladesh. Inglorious defeat of the Pakistan Army had not dampened Bhutto, who was happy to rule over a truncated Pakistan. After all, he had plotted the balkanisation of Pakistan.

The secession of Bangladesh influenced Baluch nationalists to demand 'greater autonomy'. The bitter Bangladesh lesson had not mellowed down Bhutto. He turned down Baluch requests for better shares in Pakistan resources and 'more autonomy'. The Baluch leaders were provoked by Yahya Khan's action of abolishing the 'one unit' formula for Pakistan and creating an integrated province of Baluchistan on 1 July 1970, which comprised former Baluchistan States and directly governed Baluchistan territory. The Baluch Sardars and traditional

rulers smelt a rat. Against expectations of the military junta the National Awami Party (NAP) and the Jamait-ul-Ulema-Islami secured majority in the general elections of 1970. Bhutto's and Punjabi intransigence had frustrated all efforts to allow the Awami League majority to assume power in Islamabad and Dhaka. Similarly the Punjabi elite and Bhutto delayed devolution of power to the elected parties in Baluchistan.

A drifting Pakistan encouraged NAP and JUI leaders like Ataullah Mengal and Khan Wali Khan to demand larger say in the affairs of the province. President Bhutto, however, refused to negotiate with chief minister Ataullah Mengal and Mufti Mahmud. His arrogance propelled the Baluch tribes to think in terms of struggle. The Baluch rebellion on the heels of rebellion by the East Pakistanis took a serious turn and Bhutto sacked two provincial governments within six months, arrested two chief ministers, two governors and forty-four MNAs and MPs. He managed to obtain a Supreme Court order banning the NAP and ordered trial of all the leading members for high treason.

The civil disobedience movement launched by the Marri, Mengal, Bugti, Zarakzai etc tribes and 'Pakhtoons' very fast turned to armed struggle. Mir Hazar Khan Marri led the Baluch liberation movement under the banner of Baluchistan Peoples Liberation Front (BPLF). The BPLF was forced to move to Afghanistan along with thousands of its supporters. From the original BPLF the Baluch people, in recent times, have branched into organisations like BLA, BLM, BLO, etc. There exists a Baluchistan Government in Exile in the USA with branches in Europe.

Pakistan alleged clandestine Indian and Afghan assistance to the rebels. Bhutto sent in the army in 1973 and the airforce was inducted to fight about 20,000 Baluch insurgents. Iran, fearing similar uprising by their own Baluch groups, assisted Pakistan with helicopter gunships and pilots. It is alleged that the Reza Shah Pehalvi was motivated by US pleading to come to the rescue of friend Bhutto, who had established a bridgehead between Washington and Beijing. Washington was also worried about India staging another 'Bangladesh' coup in Baluchistan. In short, the movement was mercilessly suppressed by Pakistan Army, Air Force and the ISI inflicting an estimated casualty of 15, 000 Baluch people.

Transition from Bhutto to General Zia did not bring any breather. Zia appointed General Rahimuddin Khan as martial law administrator and governor of Baluchistan. An Uttar Pradesh born strict disciplinarian and married to a niece of Dr. Zaqir Hussain, former President of India, Rahimuddin ruled over Baluchistan with an iron hand, curtailed powers of the tribal Sardars, and brought about some developmental activities. Several hundred Baluch were incarcerated and thousands of Punjabis, Mohajirs and

Sindhis were inducted to strengthen the presence of Pakistan. Census operations conducted by Rahimuddin drastically downgraded the Baluch headcount. It was an administrative pogrom by Pakistan.

General Zia declared a general amnesty to those willing to give up arms. Tired and terrified minor Sardars surrendered to the military machine of Pakistan. Feudal leaders such as Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti and Ataullah Mengal were isolated. A ruthless dictator, General Rahimuddin, however, was known for personal integrity.

The period of stability between 1973 and 1988 Baluchistan witnessed large Punjabi, Mohajir and Pathan influx. Most professional work force belonged to other parts of Pakistan. In the eyes of Punjabi elite, Baluchs and 'Bangalis' carried same connotation-inferior country cousins.

In the meantime, Quetta, the hub of US, Saudi and Pakistani actions against the Afghan regime and Soviet Union, had witnessed influx of about 900,000 Afghan refugees. After the fall of Najibullah government and accession of a chaotic mujahideen junta at Kabul the Baluch leaders like Khair Bux Marri and Ataullah Khan Mengal returned to Pakistan in April 1992. With a roaring upheaval in next-door Afghanistan the tribal leaders had no option but to accept peace initiatives of Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif. However, tension between Pakistan Army, civilian government at Quetta continued as Islamabad failed to address the socio-economic and political grievances of the Baluch people.

The present phase of Baluch war of independence was propelled by socio-economic reasons

Baluch-Pakistan relationship did not rest on even keel even after Sui gas started flowing to Pakistani homes and industries in Punjab and Sind (some Baluch areas were connected much later), Port Qasim and Gwadar were being developed with Kuwaiti and Chinese assistance. New industrial infrastructures attracted professional and labour forces from Punjab, Sind and other areas of Pakistan.

President Musharraf's arrival did not improve the situation. Baluch demand for political autonomy, royalty from Sui gas, award of major work orders to Punjabis and Sindhis and induction of more Frontier Guards and regular army contingents increased the ambience of tension. Islamabad added to the tense situation by rehabilitating large number of ex-servicemen on denotified tribal land and inducting more NWFP Pushtoons to Quetta areas. Some minor Sardar's were either bought off or disinherited by affluent Punjabis and rich ex-army personnel. Islamabad even failed to negotiate an acceptable formula on gas, copper, silver, gold and coal royalty. The Baluch Sardars resented the fact that Islamabad had not considered it necessary to consult the provincial government before conducting nuclear tests at Chagai Hills.

Since 2000 the Kachhi Canal, Mirani Dam, Gwadar Port, Makran Coastal Highway, Saindak Copper Project and Quetta Water Supply Scheme were announced by Islamabad. Over 300 percent increase was made in the national budget for development programs in Baluchistan. These things have failed to materialize from paper into concrete. Along with the development programmes came in the Punjabis, Pushtuns, Sindhis and Chinese work forces. The Baluch people suffering from economic distress developed clash of economic interests with the Chinese and other Pakistanis. Examination of economic indices of this period brings out the facts of glaring disparity between Baluchistan and Punjab and Sind. The Baluchs, like the Bengalis were treated as raw material suppliers.

Some sources allege that the fourth phase of Baluch insurgency was triggered off by sexual assault on a female doctor, Dr. Shazia Khalid, by a gang of Punjabi employees of the PPL at Sui. Islamabad handled the matter in a cavalier fashion. Accumulated anger incensed the people and they mounted attack on the Sui facility. Nawab Akbar Bugti, the leader of Jamhoori Watan Party of Baluchistan, stated that the attack was a manifestation of anger of the people and had nothing to do with nationalist struggle for freedom by the tribals. General Musharraf retaliated by ordering the ISI and the Army to mount operations against rebel Baluch forces headed by Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti. Bugti's critics alleged that he had rebelled demanding higher royalty payment for Sui gas. These charges have not been proved.

Before proceeding further on the present phase of Baluch struggle it must be pointed out that Pakistan has been facing innumerable problems from its multiple fault lines-toeing the USA line against war on terror, Taliban, Al Qaeda, MQM, and the Waziri tribal unrest. The Balawaristan Movement (Gilgit-Skardu-POK) can be added to this cart. Musharraf also faces tremendous pressure from the home grown jihadi tanzeems, which have intricate relationship with the Inter Services Intelligence and International Islamic Jihad Movement. His agenda is topped by the Kashmir pie, which Pakistan is trying to eat and keep since 1947. In the backdrop these problems growing Chinese, USA, Afghan and Indian interests in the Baluch tract have complicated the geostrategic dimension. We propose to discuss these in later paragraphs.

The Baluchstan Liberation Army and factions like Baluchistan Liberation Front are piloting the present phase of resistance movement. Balach Marri, the son of Nawab Khair Baksh Marri, heads the BLA. His force of about 300 is well armed with sophisticated weapons. These weapons are purchased from former Taliban elements in Pakistan and Afghanistan, Afghan militia members and international gunrunners. Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti, before his assassination, headed another group of Baluch fighters in coalition with Balach Marri. After his death, Pakistani sources point out, his surviving grandson Brahmhdag Bugti

is heading the liberation struggle.

There have been spates of attack on Sui gas installations, pipelines, powerhouses and several convoys of the armed forces in Quetta, Dera Ismail Khan, Kohlu, Dera Bugti etc places. On occasions Chinese workers were kidnapped and in a few cases they suffered fatal casualties. Islamabad retaliated by deploying over 25,000 troops and bombing and strafing rebel strongholds at Kohlu, Dera Bugti, Marri and Mengal tracts. It is not our intention to catalogue the incidents and count the body bags.

Carlotta Gall, *New York Times* correspondent visiting the area in April 2006 reported having witnessed deep bomb craters caused by MK-82 bombs. According to her, "Hundreds of political party members, students, doctors and tribal leaders have been detained by government security forces, many disappearing for months, even years, without trials in well-documented cases. Some have been tortured or have died in custody, say officials of Pakistan's Human Rights Commission."

She proceeds to comment, "In places like Dera Bugti and Kohlu, government forces have carried out reprisals against villagers, Baluch leaders and human rights officials say. In a case documented by the Human Rights Commission, the Frontier Corps killed 12 men from Pattar Nala on Jan 11 after a mine explosion near the village killed some of its soldiers. Two old men from the village who went to the base to collect the bodies were also killed. The next day, the 14 bodies were handed over to the women of the village. Local fighters say the Frontier Corps has carried out 42 such reprisal killings in the last three months, the latest involving six villagers during the week of March 6."

President Musharraf made several recent pronouncements expressing his intent to crush the movement and develop Baluchistan. He impugned foreign interference; obviously direct indictment of Afghanistan, India and Russia. Speaking at Charsadda on February 12, 2006 Musharraf sternly warned the Baluch resistance forces and offered certain imaginary carrots. Again speaking at Lahore on March 24, 2006 Musharraf asserted, "These two or three Sardars who are fighting against their own people will be sorted out very soon. They are already on the run as they know they have lost support among their own people."

Musharraf again asserted on June 20 that Baluch revolt was crushed. However, Daily Times commented in an editorial on June 21, 2006, "The evidence for the pacification of Baluchistan is not strong. The Baluchistan Liberation Army (BLA) has not ended its operations and the big sardars are still challenging the writ of the state through statements and disruptive action on the ground. Acts of sabotage against public projects have not stopped and those who are inclined to go against the "terrorists" are being picked off by the rebels. State employees who show

enthusiasm in their work and thus displease the “liberation” movement walk in fear of the consequences of their “betrayal”. Above all, the linkage of insurgency with Baluch nationalism is nowhere near being broken by the efforts made in Islamabad... The rhetoric and sentiment of nationalism in Baluchistan is economy-based because of the awareness of the people that Islamabad derives its major economic resources from the province. Almost in pattern with all such provinces in the world, nationalism has acquired the sharpness of separatism, which has an exaggerated effect on a centre that has been obsessed with unity in past history... President Musharraf’s opinion that the insurgency has ended in Baluchistan must spring from the awareness that his “action” in Baluchistan has not been the quick surgical strike the world thought it would be. The longer it takes to decide the discord in the province the more difficult it will become to pacify it.”

Military dictators like Musharraf are not generally propelled by newspaper editorials realistic ground tremors. They act for self-preservation. The Pakistani dictator is confident that force alone can cow down the Baluchs. Finally, he got better of the most well known face of Baluch resistance. Nawab Akbar Bugti, leader of the Bugti tribe, president of the Jamhoori Watan Party and the driving force behind the anti-government rebellion in Baluchistan. Bugti was killed in a massive military operation in the Bhambore Hills, an area between the cities of Kohlu and Dera Bugti. Balach Marri, commander of the BLA was also reportedly killed along with 80 close family members and followers of the Nawab. Pakistan army claimed that the cave in which Bugti was hiding had caved under heavy bombardment. Reliable sources indicate that ISI operators trapped the Nawab and he was killed in cold blood after a close-quarter encounter.

Earlier the federal government exercised its powers under Section 11(b) of the Anti-Terrorism Act of 1997 and declared the BLA a terrorist outfit.

After Nawab Bugti’s death President Mussarraf claimed that the stray terrorist incidents in Baluchistan were eradicated. Claimers and disclaimers from a military dictator do not reflect the real state of affair in a country. A Bugti, Marri and Mazari might be assassinated. Millions of Bengalis and Baluchs might be consigned to flames but as Historian Suret Khan Marri tells, “The movement is there. Sometimes it is crushed. Now it is the fifth insurgency, and it has spread all across the Baluch area.”

Suret Khan’s statement is supported by events that followed the dearth of Nawab Bugti. Baluchistan has been ‘tackled’ by the Islamabad junta but the Baluch people have not been won over for the causes of a Unified Pakistan. The fault line is widening rapidly.

The Baluchs’ homeland is strategically important to Pakistan. Bangladesh was not a strategic outpost of

Pakistan. It was a raw material extraction tract for the Punjabi and assorted money-market controllers of Pakistan. It was an extension of the fallacious Two-Nation theory that still recognises the centrality of religion in the making of a nation. Punjabistan, which is erroneously projected as Pakistan, has miserably failed to assimilate the ethnic, linguistic, cultural and regional economic interests of the people of Sind, Baluchistan, NWFP and other regions.

Besides the Chagai nuclear testing range, Baluchistan is the main base for space programme and rocket experimentation facilities of Pakistan. Baluch copper fields at Saindok are being exploited with assistance of Chinese company MRDL. Saindok has assumed importance after gold and silver were struck. Sharig is a coal-mining town in which Chinese presence is significant. Recently huge deposit of gas was confirmed from Sharig exploration sites.

Besides copper, oil and natural gas (Sui) large deposits of coal, silver, gold, platinum, aluminium appreciable deposits of Uranium have also been found in the Baluch tract. In fact, Baluchistan is the only tract that promises extraction of Uranium to quench Pakistan’s thirst for weapons grade fissile materials.

In addition to the strategically important Gwadar harbour nearing completion with Chinese collaboration, Pakistan and Kuwait have recently developed Port Qasim on Makran coast. The Jiwani peninsula near Iran border is being developed as a strategic airport and berthing facility for Naval ships. Jiwani and nearby areas are being explored for petroleum and some Chinese firms are aiming for offshore exploration for oil reserves.

The Makran coast has a secret port facility near Ormara, used by Pakistan’s Hangor Class submarines. Knowledgeable circles in Pakistan allege that the secret port in between Gwadar and Karachi is being used to receive clandestine missile and weapons supplies from China and North Korea. Some secret weapons supplies by the CIA are also landed at Ormara facility.

Recent information indicates that Adi and Damb on Sonmiani Bay are being developed as strategic ports. Pakistan is reportedly seeking US help to develop the Bay as a big naval base.

Important strategic airports in Baluchistan are at Gwadar, Pasni, Turbat (also a mining complex), Juzzak and Robray. Situated near Iran and Afghanistan borders these airports are valued by the USA for strategic use against Iran, if such a situation arises in near future.

Quetta does not need any introduction. Pakistan’s strategic road head to Kandahar in Afghanistan, Quetta witnessed massive mobilisation by Pakistan, USA, Saudi Arabia and other forces that had coalesced into a coalition to fight the Soviet forces in Afghanistan. Quetta had also housed the ISI operational forward base; besides being used by the Afghan mijahideens and the Arab mercenaries

under command of Osama bin Laden. Even now Quetta is being used by Pakistan to clandestinely support the resurgent Taliban forces. Under no circumstances Pakistan would like the Afghan, Indian and other forces to have any toehold in the strategically important capital of Baluchistan.

From Pakistani point of view Baluchistan has assumed more importance as a number of Taliban elements and members of Gulbuddin Heckmatyar's Hizbe Islami have been settled by the ISI in the Pushtun majority areas of Baluchistan and in areas around Quetta. Whatever president Musharraf may assert about Pakistan's war against Taliban and Al Qaeda, it is widely known in Pakistan that Baluchistan bases are being used by the Taliban, Gulbuddin Hikmatyar and Osama bin Laden against Afghan, USA and NATO forces. Repeat showing of the Taliban forces in Afghanistan are being staged from Waziri and Baluch tracts of Pakistan. Musharraf wants to paint the resurgent Taliban movement with brush of 'people's war.' Pakistan watchers have confirmed reports of two live Taliban camps 120 km due south of Chaman in a hill valley and near Sheihk Manda, north of Quetta. The USA has the historic habit of behaving like the proverbial Ostrich when it comes to assessing real strategic value of its presumed allies. It is difficult to convince Washington that Pakistan and not Afghanistan is the fountainhead of Islamic jihad.

With so much of strategic, economic and geopolitical factors at stake Pakistan cannot afford to have a roaring insurgency in Baluchistan. The Bugti fire has been apparently doused, but Baluchs are preparing for renewed fight for their rights, though circumstances in Afghanistan and Iran are not conducive to their strategic preparations. The Bengali Pakistanis fought a single war of independence. The Baluchs have fought four so far. Baluch leaders say they are ready to fight another four to achieve their goals.

The Chinese have a big stake in Baluchistan. Besides collaboration with Pakistan in nuclear and missile technology, developing mining facilities and modernising the Gwadar port, China is interested in joint operation with Iran and Pakistan for laying oil and gas pipelines from Makran coast through Baluch territory, part of Sind, Punjab, and POK to destinations in Xinjiang province of China. This would facilitate China to curtail a longer sea route via the Straits of Malacca and areas of American naval presence in South East Asia. With the same objective in view China is exploring the possibility of laying a pipeline from Bangladesh to China via Myanmar.

The *Daily Times* of Pakistan reported on May 24, 2006, that prime minister Shaukat Aziz was actively considering 'a feasibility study for an oil pipeline from Gwadar port to Western China to transport China's oil imports from the Gulf. The Gwadar and Karachi ports offer the shortest access to the Arabian Sea for Western China, as well as

Central Asia, Aziz said at a seminar on 55 years of Pakistan-China relations, organised by the Institute of Strategic Studies. A major oil refinery at Gwadar would further facilitate China's oil imports. Pakistan is now in a position to exploit its strategic location at the crossroads of South Asia, Central Asia and West Asia to promote "corridors of cooperation."

The Chinese are also worried about presence of Uighur rebels in Taliban and Al Qaeda camps in Waziristan. There were unconfirmed reports that the BLA had taken helps from the Xinjiang rebels to procure weapons and to plan attacks on Chinese facilities in Baluchistan.

Closely linked to Chinese interest in Baluchistan are the aspects of up-gradation of the Karakoram Highway, communication between Gilgit-Skardu and connecting Kashgarh and Urumqui (Xinjiang) with Pakistan. Elaborate comments on these aspects deserve a separate treatise.

Inayatullah Baluch writes in his book, *The Problem of Greater Baluchistan*, that the strategic importance of Baluchistan has had a positive as well as a negative effect on Baluch nationalism. The Baluch people believe in the saying of the Prophet, 'salla Allahu 'alayhi wa salam'- Whoever fails to oppose a tyrant is guilty of tyranny. However, the USA does not appear to be appreciative of the noble spirit of the Baluch people. To Washington a Saddam is a tyrant and a Musharraf is a 'dictator of garden variety.' It allowed the Bengali Muslims to be butchered by Islamabad and in Baluchistan Washington is repeating the same act. America's strategic consideration categorise Baluchistan as a 'pivot of history.' The tract and its people have become pawns in the proverbial "Great Game" of Central Asia. Halford Mackinder, a former Director of the London School of Economics had long back described Baluchistan as a gateway to the Central Asian heartland. This holds good even today.

The USA considers Pakistan as a key geostrategic ally for strengthening its Great Game against Iran, China, and burgeoning influence of Russia in the CAR countries. Afghanistan has become another quagmire for the USA and Pakistan knows well that Washington cannot but depend on its treacherous ally to fight the Taliban, Al Qaeda and to manipulate the Islamic jihadis of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Chechnya and Uighur rebels of western China. With a stand off situation with Iran, Venezuela, Peru, Columbia and Panama the USA has to depend more on Arab oil. The Russian authorities have entered the oil market in a bigger way and Washington is worried about re-emergence of the Kremlin as another Cold War superpower. It is keenly exploring the possibilities of tapping the oil rich CAR countries and piping down the oil from Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan etc countries through Afghan and Baluch territories of Pakistan. Baluchistan has the potential to offer energy corridor to the Central Asian

Republics. There exists a plan to construct a gas pipeline from Daulatabad to Gwadar through Afghan territory for onward export to the USA and South East Asia. For this purpose, under the US aegis, Pakistan, Turkmenistan and Afghanistan have already concluded an agreement.

About 30% of gas facilities Baluchistan are being controlled by the USA. It is, like the Chinese, also engaged in on and offshore exploration of oil and gas in Baluch areas. Some reports indicate that the CIA and the ISI are collaborating to subvert some of the tribes like the Jamalis, Marris and Bugtis. Due to its common border with Afghanistan, the United States considers Baluchistan territory as important for military operations against Al-Qaeda and the Taliban. In fact, the United States has military bases in Dalbandin and Pasni on the Baluchistan coast. Strategic and economic interests often bring strange bedmates together. No wonder Pakistan, Afghanistan, China and USA are using the Baluch territory as a convenient strategic bed.

Pakistani media and political personalities aligned to the junta have often blamed India and Afghanistan for aiding the Baluch rebels. According to Daily Times of Pakistan (09.01.06) president Musharraf clearly blamed India for backing the Baluch militants, "There are lots of indications, yes indeed... There is a lot of financial support, support in kind being given to those who are anti-government, anti-me and to those feudal people who are anti-national."

Musharraf told a visiting Indian CNN-IBN team said that he was "annoyed" and "disappointed" by Indian government statements and alleged actions in Baluchistan. "It's a direct interference in our internal affairs."

Pakistani Foreign Office spokesperson Tasnim Aslam also responded by accusing India of "an unacceptable proclivity to interfere in the internal affairs of its neighbours...Such tendency is contrary to efforts aimed at building an environment of trust, peace and stability in South Asia." Federal Information Minister and the president's chief spokesperson Sheikh Rashid had said that good relations with neighbours had restrained Pakistan from making public evidence of the involvement of foreign countries in the Baluchistan insurgency. Speaking to the Reuters, he commented in Peshawar, "We have evidence that foreign countries are involved...but we don't want to spoil the good relations we have with our neighbours."

Pakistan Muslim League Secretary General Mushahid Hussain in an interview to the Outlook India magazine said (16.04.2006), "RAW has established its training camps in Afghanistan in collaboration with the Northern Alliance remnants. Approximately 600 ferraris, or Baluch tribal dissidents, are getting specialised training to handle explosives, engineer bomb blasts, and use sophisticated weapons in these camps."

Similar allegations have been made against the Afghan government. Some Pakistani leaders went to the extent of alleging Russian proxy involvement through Karzai government. They forget that Karzai is a USA and not Russian surrogate.

It would be futile for an Indian to rebut Pakistani allegations. It is better to fall back on the US sources to contradict Pakistan. The US sources have refused to accept 'involvement of foreign hand' in Baluchistan. Khalid Hassan, writing in the Daily Times on April 04, 2006 reported that The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace report authored by Frederic Grare concluded that, "Almost six decades of intermittent conflict have given rise to a deep feeling of mistrust towards the central government. The Baluch will not forget General Pervez Musharraf's recent promises and the insults hurled from time to time at certain nationalist leaders. The projects that were trumpeted as the means to Baluchistan's development and integration have so far led only to the advance of the Pakistani military in the province, accompanied by the removal of the local population from their lands and by the intense speculation that benefits only the army and its henchmen."

The Grare report argued that Baluch nationalism was a "reality" that Islamabad could not pretend to ignore forever or co-opt by making promises of development that were rarely kept. "For the moment, with little certainty about the conclusion of an agreement between the central government and the nationalist leaders, the province is likely to enter a new phase of violence with long-term consequences that are difficult to predict. This conflict could be used in Pakistan and elsewhere as a weapon against the Pakistan government. Such a prospect would affect not only Pakistan but possibly all its neighbours. It is ultimately Islamabad that must decide whether Baluchistan will become its Achilles' heel."

According to the Carnegie report, in the last 30 years the conflict in Baluchistan resulted in 8,000 deaths, 3,000 of them from the army. The province seemed to be heading for another armed insurrection. The report identified three separate but linked issues that keep alive Baluch nationalism: Pakistan's strategic evaluation of Baluch territory, centrality of the role of Army and promotion of Islamism to recapture lost bases in Afghanistan. In the process, Pakistan has criminally neglected the genuine aspirations of the Baluch people.

The Carnegie Foundation report summed up the international reactions to Pakistan's criminal activities in Baluchistan; "Today's crisis in Baluchistan was provoked, ironically, by the central government's attempt to develop this backward area by undertaking a series of large projects. Instead of cheering these projects, the Baluch, faced with slowing population growth, responded with feat that they would be dispossessed of their land and resources and of

their distinct identity. In addition, three fundamental issues are fuelling this crisis: expropriation, marginalisation and dispossession.... Since India reopened its consulates in Jalalabad and Kandahar, it has been suspected of wanting to forge an alliance with Afghanistan against Pakistan. At the least, it is thought to want to exert pressure on Pakistan's western border to force it to give up once and for all its "terrorist" activities in Kashmir, and, if possible, to bring the "composite dialogue" to an end on terms favouring India. India may also see the Chinese role in the development of the Gwadar port as a potential threat to its economic and strategic interests in the area. Pakistanis, Grare added, also suspected Iran of supporting Baluch activists to counter a Pak-US 'plot' to make Baluchistan a rear base in a future offensive against Iran. Iran also wants its Chah Bahar port, renamed Bandar Beheshti, as an outlet for Central Asia at Pakistan's expense. The Carnegie Foundation report believes that Pakistanis, including the Baluch, see the US as a potential troublemaker."

The pains of the Baluch people cannot be diagnosed by brief narration of their heroic struggle and international strategic power play in the region. Something must be told about blatant Human Rights violations.

Wahid Baluch (31.01.2006) of Baluch Society of North America, USA, drew attention to appalling human rights violation in Baluch territory. According to him 'Pakistani dictators have started the 5th military operation against the innocent Baluch people, using US gunship helicopters and F-16 jets, to crush their peaceful struggle against the occupation of their land and exploitation of their resources by Pakistan.'

The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan in a January 2006 report accused President Pervez Musharraf's military-led government of "gross human rights violations" in Baluchistan. The HRCPC rejected government claims that it was not using regular armed forces in a crackdown in the province launched last month after rocket attacks by tribal militants battling for greater autonomy and control of natural gas fields. The group said it had "received evidence that action by armed forces had led to deaths and injuries among civilians" and that "populations had also been subjected to indiscriminate bombing".

The HRCPC report said that up to 85 percent of the 22,000-26,000 inhabitants of Dera Bugti had fled their homes after paramilitary forces shelling repeatedly hit the town. "There were alarming accounts of summary executions, some allegedly carried out by paramilitary forces. The HRCPC received credible evidence that showed such killings had taken place...Across Baluchistan, the HRCPC team found widespread instances of 'disappearance', of torture inflicted on people held in custody, and on those fleeing from their houses,"

Asma Jahangir, Chairperson of HRCPC said, "I have a

very different view. It is not a matter of Indian government or Pakistan government. My view is that human rights issues are universal...And I think when our government takes out the issue of the massacres that took place in the Indian Gujarat, not only our government but all governments of the world should make India accountable for what they did...And therefore, it is just right that when systematic human rights violations are taking place as they took place in Gujarat and what is taking place in 'Baluchistan', that the world community does pay attention to it. India is part of the world community and India is part of the region and I hope that not only India but other countries do pay attention...so what is happening in 'Baluchistan' is grave enough to take notice of."

The Baluch fault line is wider than the East Pakistan tectonic gap was. No amount of scholarly research can sum up the pains of the Baluch people, no strategic consideration can heal the wounds and no amount of armed attack on the Baluch people can subdue them. Mr. Najam Shethi has spoken the sanest words in his *Daily Times* editorial on 04.10.2006. I quote him, "In short, one can say that Pakistan itself emerged from a separatist nationalism that could have subsided had the All India Congress handled it well. But after becoming a state Pakistan quickly developed further separatist symptoms, which point to a future of many mini-states in the region. Let us accept that all sub-nationalisms aspire to a national state but are thereafter incapable of applying closure to the process of fragmentation..."

Baluchistan must stay inside Pakistan and the federation must learn to mould itself to the need of the federal units to be as autonomous as possible without actually destroying the state. There were times when we thought that Awami National Party's (*sic*) Six Points were not negotiable; today hardly anyone will disagree that they could have been accommodated. These days, states do not come to an end easily. In fact many states in the recent past reached the "black hole" status and stayed like that without changing their morphology. There are many "failed states" in our world, which are on the map because the international system doesn't allow annexations any more...

Pakistan was the result of Muslim separatism. It runs the risk of splintering under the weight of the regional demands for autonomy. To prevent the emergence of mini-states in place of the federation, it must nurture its provinces into mini-states by consent. Baluchistan has to stay within Pakistan to become autonomous. Once outside, it will succumb to further fragmentation and chaos."

To a conscious Indian a question pops up: Has Delhi worked on any Baluch strategy? The pundits and trusted friends of the Establishment might answer gorgeously.

Will Baluchistan go the East Pakistan way?

Samuel Baid

After the death of tribal chief and leader of the Jamhoori Watan Party (JWP) Nawab Akbar Bugti in a military operation against Baluchistan on August 26, there came statements from Baluch nationalists which expressed their desire to liberate themselves as did the Bengalis in 1971. Even non-Baluch, shocked by the military might the Pakistan Army and Air Force callously used on Baluchistan, could not help recalling the events of 1971 which led to the separation of East Pakistan. In 1971 the Pakistan Army killed 3 million Bengalis, raped thousands of women and drove more than 10 million people from their hearth and home to seek refuge in India.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the possibility of Baluchistan going the East Pakistan way. If yes, what are the factors, in addition to the aspirations of the Baluch that are likely to contribute to that possibility? Alternatively, we will also examine the factors that will keep Baluchistan in Pakistan.

Factors that contributed to the separation of East Pakistan from United Pakistan are to some extent present in the case of Baluchistan. However, both have different history of joining Pakistan. East Bengal (later East Pakistan and ultimately Bangladesh) joined Pakistan with its volition. In fact Bengalis were in the forefront of the Pakistan movement. Baluch, on the other hand, were opposed to joining Pakistan. As against the Bengalis, they did not subscribe to the ideology of Pakistan. Baluchistan was annexed with the massive use of military and air power in 1948.

But both Bengalis and Baluch were suspects in the eyes of the Pakistani Establishment. In the early years of

Pakistan Urdu snobbery and arrogance marked the establishment's attitude to non-Urdu speaking people. Bengalis, who passionately loved their language and culture, were treated as if they were outcast. They faced economic discrimination. Urdu-speaking Biharis in East Bengal were given preference to Bengalis in the matter of

jobs and high positions in bureaucracy. As Bengalis began protesting they were branded Indian agents and become suspects in the eyes of the Pak establishment.

Baluch were suspects because they resented the way they were forced into Pakistan and protested the exploitation of their natural resources by outsiders. They always felt, like Bengalis, they were treated as third rate citizens of Pakistan. Baluchistan accounts for 48 percent of Pakistan's landmass yet it has just

one railway line and a few roads connecting a few urban areas. Literacy for men is 25 percent and for women 5 percent.

After the assassination of Muhajir Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan in Rawalpindi in October 1951, the hold of Urdu speakers on the government began weakening. After the shifting of the national capital from Karachi to Islamabad in 1960, this hold had almost vanished. But now Urdu superiority and snobbery were replaced by racial superiority and arrogance of Punjabis. Punjabis abhorred short and dark Bengalis. They had no respect for the cultures and traditions of Sindhis, Baluch and Pushtuns.

The Punjabis' contempt for Bengalis was evident the way the Army tortured and butchered them in East Pakistan in 1971. Before that a devastating cyclone struck East Pakistan in November 1970. Bengalis complained that the

There are differences between the situations of East Pakistan and Baluchistan. West Pakistan's Political Party's remained almost indifferent to the denial by Gen. Yahya Khan's Government to the Awami League to form the Government at the Centre, being the majority Party after the 1970 elections. There was the same callous indifference when the Army launched a genocidal crack down on the protesting Bengalis.

In the case of Baluchistan, Pakistan's opposition parties strongly supported Baluch before and after the killing of Nawab Bugti on August 25. The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan and the Press stood by them. The World Sindh Institute (WSI) sent a strong appeal to the Chairman of US International Relations Committee drawing his attention to the government's atrocities in Baluchistan. All this should make a Baluch decision to separate from Pakistan morally difficult.

Pakistan Army did not help them. As a result 2 lakhs people died. The following month Pakistan's first elections on the basis of adult franchise were held. The Awami League of East Pakistan won the elections, but Punjabi Army didn't want to transfer power to Bengalis. As a result the Bengalis launched agitations. Walter Isaacson in his book "Kissinger" gives details of the atrocity with which the Army tried to put down these agitations. He writes: "Sweeping into the city of Dacca with American M-24 tanks, the Pakistani army in March 1971 began a systematic massacre of its own citizens in an effort to crush the movement for an independent Bangladesh.

"Even in a century marked by genocidal madness, the crackdown was horrifying. The women's dorm at the university was set ablaze, and then the students were machine-gunned to death as they ran out. Newspapers carried descriptions of soldiers gouging out the eyes or crudely amputating the arms of hundreds of living children, then killing their parents. Within three days, some ten thousand people were killed..."

It is to be noted Pakistan used weapons given to it by the United States against its own citizens. In military operations in Baluchistan in which Nawab Akbar Bugti was killed, Pakistan used Cobra helicopter gunships and surveillance aircraft given to it by the US to hunt down Al Qaeda men hiding in the rugged Pak-Afghan border. It is said Pakistan also used in Baluchistan three Cessna aircraft which America had given to it to help catch heroin smugglers. It appears, the US has no objection to Pakistan using its weapons against Baluch. Nawab Bugti's sons have alleged Pakistani Army used chemical weapons too and that was the reason why his body was buried without showing it to his family members.

Since 1948 the Baluch have faced Pakistani Army and Air Force's fire power a number of times; but perhaps they were never as stunned as they were when Nawab Akbar Bugti was killed. This death united Baluch people against Pakistani domination. The Chief of Baluchistan's largest tribe Marri Kher Bux Marri told BBC Urdu service on August 31, 2006 that Baluch didn't want provincial autonomy or jobs for their youths: they wanted liberation from Pakistan.

The same day BBC conducted a Talking Point programme featuring two Baluch leaders. They were former Prime Minister Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali and former provincial Chief Minister Sardar Ataullah Mengal. Mr. Jamali said Akbar Bugti's martyrdom was an example for every body. All Baluch would meet and take a decision whether or not Baluch members should continue to sit in Parliament, he said.

Mr. Jamali said if the Parliamentary committee, headed by Mr. Shujjat Hussain, had worked honestly things would not have come to this pass. Mr Shujjat Hussain, who is the

President of the ruling Quaid Muslim League, had meetings with Nawab Akbar Bugti along with Muslim League (Q)'s Information Secretary Mushid Hussain. The committee's recommendations were ignored by Gen Musharraf who preferred a military solution.

Mr. Jamali said it would have been better if the 1940 Lahore resolution had been followed. Till today people have not got their rights and safeguards. The 1940 Muslim League resolution had envisaged Pakistan as a confederation of Muslim majority provinces.

In Mr Jamali's tone, one could feel a Baluch revolt against Gen. Musharraf's handling of Baluchistan's problems. He told a questioner that during his Prime Ministership he did not allow any action against Baluchistan. It was a dig at the present Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz's secondary position vis-à-vis Gen. Musharraf and his Army.

Sardar Ataullah Mengal said the death of Akbar Bugti was an example for all Baluch. "He has shown the way to our destination and we have accepted that." A questioner asked him if he wanted to snap 60-year old relations with Pakistan. Sardar Mengal's reply was: "Relations are first established, and then snapped. But unfortunately despite our repeated efforts the rulers of Pakistan have not allowed this relation to be established. Therefore, there is no question its being snapped... we are forcibly tied in this relation with chains. We were not willing for this relation then (in 1948) nor are we willing today. Any misconception about it was demolished after Akbar Bugti's martyrdom.

"... The present developments are clearly pointing (to the government's decision) that we have no place in this country. Now the rest depends on our strength and unity... past Pak rulers has not done any good to us nor do we expect any good from the future rulers."

He said Nawab Kher Bux Marri was representing the people's voice when he demanded liberation. "I fully support whatever he said." Sardar Ataullah said Akbar Bugti had become the hero of all Baluch.

Sardar Ataullah Mengal's Government in Baluchistan was dismissed by then Prime Minister of Pakistan Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in 1973. This government was formed in 1972 after much tussle between Baluch leaders and Mr Bhutto, who wanted to appoint his own man as governor of Baluchistan. Baluch did not accept it. Ultimately Bhutto gave in as a strategy to get National Awami Party (NAP)'s support to pass the Constitution. Baluch leaders were then members of NAP. Klan Abdul Wali Klan was the leader of this party. Mr. Bhutto allowed Baluch leader Ghaus Bux Bizenjo to become the provincial governor. But soon after the Constitution was passed near unanimously, the provincial Government was dismissed. Governor Bizenjo and Chief Minister Mengal were jailed along with other

NAP leaders and Baluchistan was subjected to heavy Army and Air Force action. (Armed Baluch ran up the hills to take positions there. Thousands of Baluch fled to Afghanistan. Among them was Nawab Kher Bux Marri, who started giving military training to Baluch youths to liberate Baluchistan. After Gen. Zia ul Haq called off military operations in Baluchistan in December 1977 many of these youths stayed back in Afghanistan and later fought the United States- supported Jihadis along with the Afghan forces. These youths, now experienced warriors, are said to be the backbone of the Baluchistan Liberation Army (BLA). Nawab Kher Bux Marri is still their leader. As its name proclaims, the BLA strives for the liberation of Baluchistan from Pakistan. This organization is said to be responsible for frequent attacks on gas pipelines taking gas to Punjab, on military posts, railway lines and electric poles. It was also said to be behind the firing of rockets in Kohlu, where Gen. Musharraf was addressing a public meeting in January, 2006.

Gen. Ziaul Haq had released NAP leaders from a jail in Hyderabad (Sindh) where, newspaper reports said, they were administered slow poisoning. Sardar Ataullah Mengal left for London after his release. In London he announced that he would not return to Pakistan until Baluchistan was liberated. However, after a couple of years he returned and eventually got involved in provincial politics.

He set up Baluchistan National Party (BNP). In 1997 his son Akhtar Mengal fought provincial elections on BNP ticket and became the Chief Minister of Baluchistan, but about a year later he was eased out by the then Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif for his protests against nuclear explosions in the Chaghai Hills in May 1998 without taking the provincial Government into confidence. Akhtar Mengal's protest, in fact, reflected the anger of the Baluch nationalists against the Federal Government's attitude of always taking Baluchistan for granted. This protest came amid the influx of Pakistani troops into Baluchistan to build cantonments.

Baluch are very possessive about their province and its natural wealth. The Federal Government, on the other hand, does not bother about Baluch feelings when it uses the soil and resources of Baluchistan. This is the source of the conflict between Baluch and the Federal Government. Nawab Akbar Bugti died fighting the Federal Government "which denies us our *Sahil* (coast) and *wasael* (natural resources)", he had said in a BBC (Urdu) interview before his death. By *Sahil* he meant Gwadar where Federal Government's mega project has opened the doors for a massive influx of outsiders into Baluchistan. By *wasael* he meant gas (which meets Pakistan's 50 percent requirements), coal, gold and silver and marble which are under the control of outsiders who are reluctant to employ local Baluch youth.

As the protests against the killing of Bugti went on, the Khan of Kalat, Salman Daoud convened a grand *Jirga* of Baluch Sardars to discuss the situation in the province and to chalk out a plan of action against Pakistan's treatment of the Baluch nation. This *Jirga*, on September 21, was held after the one Khan of Kalat had convened in 1876 to ask the then British administrators to allow them passage to Afghanistan.

How all Baluch tribes were worked up by Bugti's death was evident from their attendance in the *Jirga*. They were about 80 and they included Baluch Sardars from Sindh and Punjab as well. They included Chief of Jhalawan Sardar Sanaullah Zuberi, Chief of Sarawan Nawab Aslam Raisavir, Sardar Akhtar Mengal, Zulfikar Magsi and former caretaker Prime Minister Mir Balkh Sher Mazari. While the Sardars were meeting in a closed-door session, outside young Baluch were shouting slogans for liberation of Baluchistan. On the mid-night of September 21-22 the *Jirga* issued a 7-point Declaration. The points were:

1) There was regular violation of agreements reached between Baluch and the British crown in 1946 and between Baluch and the Government of Pakistan in 1948 for accession (of Baluchistan to Pakistan). The grand *Jirga* has, therefore, decided to approach the International Court of justice for Justice.

2) The *Jirga* expressed concern about the fixing of Baluchistan's boundaries and said certain areas of Baluchistan were currently in Punjab and Sindh. They should be reverted to Baluchistan.

3) The *Jirga* expressed grief and anger at the killing of Nawab Bugti and denying his body to his family people. It demanded that the whole incident should be investigated in the presence of International Human Rights Organizations.

4) The Declaration said all agreements with multinational companies in respect of Gwadar and other Baluch arcas without the will of the people of Baluchistan should be cancelled or else the International Court of Justice can be approached on this matter too.

5) The *Jirga* severely condemned the government intervention in Bugti's property and its distribution among his opponents. It demanded this property should be handed over to his family because his successors are alive.

6) The *Jirga* demanded cessation of the military operations in Baluchistan, release of all arrested persons and immediate stoppage of work on military cantonments in the province.

7) The grand *Jirga* rejected a *Jirga* and council held in Dera Bugti by (Pro Government) Bugti tribal under the Government patronage on August 24, 2006. The grand *Jirga* called it Government's interference in tribal affairs. The

tribal sardars emphasised the need for all Baluch to unite and launch a political Party. Criticising the Government, they said by killing Bugti rulers had proved they had no consideration for Baluch and they could treat them as they liked. Speakers at the *Jirga* emphasized now was the time for all Baluch to unite otherwise they would all be killed one by one.

Whatever has been written above shows that so far there has been truly no assimilation of Baluchistan in the state of Pakistan? As Nawab Ataullah Mengal says this province has been forcibly tied to Pakistan with iron chains without the will of its people. He himself wants to break Pakistani bond asunder. Marri are the largest tribe of Baluchistan. They are fully for independence. "We don't want provincial autonomy or jobs: we want liberation," says their Chief Sardar Kher Bux Marri. The grand *Jirga's* decision to approach the International Court of Justice is a clear indication that Baluch Sardars do not consider Baluchistan as a part of Pakistan.

Now the question: Can Baluchistan go the East Pakistan way? Let us compare the two. First of all the literacy aspect. Before its liberation in 1971 East Pakistan had the highest literacy rate in all the provinces of united Pakistan. There were newspapers in Bengali, English and Urdu. The quality of Bengali intelligentsia was much higher than that which existed in West Pakistan. Political leadership in East Pakistan rose from middle classes whereas West Pakistan's political leadership was rooted in an obscurantist feudalistic system where the middle class were absent. Thus the masses in East Pakistan were more politically alive and focused than was the case in West Pakistan.

As against East Pakistan's Literacy status, Baluchistan has been abysmally backward in education. The literacy rate for men is 25 per each and only 5 percent for women. The intellectual class is as good as non-existent. Political leadership has been in the hands of Sardars whose axis of politics is their resentment against the way Baluchistan was "dragged" (as Sardar Ataullah Mengal said) into Pakistan without Baluch freewill. Sardars and their children are educated, many of them in universities abroad but the masses over whom they hold their sway are mostly illiterate whose obedience of their Sardars is unquestioning.

The current anger of Sardars is against the Chinese funded Gwadar Project which has been launched without taking even the Provincial Assembly into confidence. The Federal Government leaders have proudly announced that Gwadar area would become a rival to Dubai. As a result, the land prices have risen many times. The poor Baluch have been selling their land. The Baluch Sardars see it as a threat to the Baluch community in this development. They also complain that Baluch youths do not get jobs in the Gwadar Project while thousands of fishermen have been deprived

of their livelihood. Sardars have been able to unite the Baluch community against this project. Then, as said earlier, Sardars resent the control of Province's natural resources by outsiders and the construction of military posts and cantonments.

But Sardars have not launched a serious united movement for liberation. Nawab Akbar Bugti's armed struggle against the Pakistani Army was not for liberation of Baluchistan but for the right of Baluch to their natural resources. He used very harsh language against Pakistan Government, its Army and Punjabis but even in his bitterest mood he did not give a call for *azadi*. In fact he was one Sardar who had supported Baluchistan's inclusion in Pakistan in 1947. It was, therefore very foolish of the Pakistan Army to have killed a man like him. That Gen. Musharraf congratulated the Army for killing Bugti shows bankruptcy of political acumen in the Pakistan Establishment and its callous attitude towards the people of Baluchistan.

In East Pakistan the liberation struggle started in earnest on March 25, 1971, when the Army launched a crackdown on Bengalis. There was a unified second-line leadership which led this struggle after the arrest of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Mujib's Awami League was practically the sole party which the people followed religiously.

In Baluchistan, a unified leadership to press the people's demands has not yet emerged. The alliance of four nationalist parties did not lead to a unified command. The Kalat grand *Jirga* in September had called for a single Baluch Party, but it is not known what followup steps are being taken.

The Marri Tribe is the largest followed by Bugti and Mengal tribes. The three Sardars, who have always been in limelight, are Kher Bux Marri, Nawab Akbar Bugti (now no more) and Nawab Ataullah Mengal. They have shown unity in different degrees at different times vis-à-vis the Federal Government. Kher Bux Marri, Nawab Bugti and Nawab Mengal have been very bitter critics of the Pakistan Establishment for its shoddy treatment of Baluchistan and usurpation of its resources. But all three of them showed different stands on relations with Pakistan as under:

1. Akbar Bugti – He had favoured Baluchistan's merger with Pakistan. He was basically responsible for the dismissal of the Baluchistan government and the subsequent military crackdown on Baluch in 1973. The dismissal of the Government resulted from Bugti's charge to the then Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto that the Baluchistan government was smuggling arms through the Iraq embassy. This charge was never proved or sought to be proved by Bhutto or Bugti but the latter was made the Governor of Baluchistan as a reward.

When he left governorship he was quite disillusioned

about Pakistan Establishment. He refused to speak Pakistan's national language Urdu for some months. Strictly speaking, his fight with the Establishment was confined to his rights over the Sui gas royalty. Two years ago when he had bitter verbal dual with the Establishment, he told other Sadars that he was fighting his own fight. That disappointed Nawab Marri and Nawab Mangal. However, since last year he had been fighting for Baluch cultural traditions and their rights to Baluchistan's *Sahil* (coast) and *wasael* (natural resources). He had allowed Bugti young people to join Baluchistan Liberation Army (BLA). But it should be noted that even when his armed war with the Pakistan Army had become bloody and ferocious and he had become convinced that the Army wanted to kill him, he did not give a call for liberation of Baluchistan.

2. Ataullah Mengal – He stood somewhere between Nawab Bugti and Kher Bux Marri. Between 1972 and 1973 he was the Chief Minister of Baluchistan. Then Z.A. Bhutto sacked him and jailed him. After his release from jail by Gen. Ziaul Itaq in Deenhe 1977, he went away to London where he said he would not return till Baluchistan was liberated. However, he returned but has not accepted Baluchistan's "forcible" inclusion in Pakistan. He fully supported Bugti's protest against usurping of Baluchistan's land and its resources.

Klar Bux Marri – He is very decidedly for independence of Baluchistan. He had trained an army of Baluch young people in Afghanistan to liberate their province from Pakistan. However, Bhutto's removal by Gen. Ziaul Haq in 1977 and the Soviet troops entry into Afghanistan in 1979 and the subsequent United State led war in that country had changed the scenario. The core of the BLA is veterans who had fought the US-led forces in Afghanistan in the 1980.

In other words, though there is enough anger and sense of alienation in Baluchistan there has been no unified leadership so far to canalize this mood into a freedom struggle as did Sheikh Mujib in East Pakistan.

There is another difference between the situations of East Pakistan and Baluchistan. West Pakistan's Political parties remained almost indifferent to the denial by Gen Yahya Khan's Government to the Awami League to form

the Government at the Centre, being the majority Party after the 1970 elections. There was the same callous indifference when the Army launched a genocidal crack down on the protesting Bengalis. On the contrary, Mr. Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party (PPP) had won most seats in West Pakistan, supported the crackdown by saying: "Thank God Pakistan has been saved." In this other Bengalis felt they had no friends in West Pakistan.

In the case of Baluchistan, Pakistan's opposition parties strongly supported Baluch before and after the killing of Nawab Bugti on August 25. The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan and the Press stood by them. The World Sindh Institute (WSI) sent a strong appeal to the Chairman of US International Relations Committee drawing his attention to the government's atrocities in Baluchistan. The Institute also organised demonstrations against the killing of Nawab Bugti at Capitol Hill in Washington D.C. Pakistan political Parties support must have given Baluch some sense of belonging to Pakistani political system-something that was missing in East Pakistan.

That should make a Baluch decision to separate from Pakistan morally difficult. One less known fact about the liberation of East Pakistan is that the Bengali separation came about as a result of Ayub Khan's conspiracy in the 1960s. Ayub saw no point in keeping Bengalis with Pakistan after synthetic jute came in the international market thus affecting Pakistan's Jute export earning. The Jute produced in East Pakistan was the main foreign exchange earner for Pakistan. Late Khan Abdul Wali Khan revealed in an interview with Lahore's Urdu Weekly *Chatan* (December 21, 1981) that once Ayub Khan invited him and some other politicians to seek their support to his plan to let east Pakistan go.

Lt Gen AAK Niazi who surrounded to Lt Gen Jagjit Singh in Dhakei on December 16, 1971, wrote in his auto biography "The Betrayal of East Pakistan" that he was made a scapegoat in East Pakistan for the diabolic conspiracies hatched in West Pakistan. According to him, it was not the intention of the High Command in Rawlapindi to keep East Pakistan with Pakistan. Baluchistan, on the other hand, is very important for Pakistan which will go all out to prevent its separation from it.

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The Crisis in Baluchistan

Kalim Bahadur

The killing of Nawab Akbar Shabaz Bugti by Pakistan's military regime has shaken the country and has brought back the memories of the worst days of the 1971 crisis of East Pakistan. He was a typical feudal Baluch Sardar, arrogant, authoritarian and harsh. He is reputed to have killed the first man at the age of 12, while he later forced the entire sub-clan of almost 20,000 Kalpars out of the Bugti area as revenge for the murder of his son.

Educated at Oxford and fond of the philosophy of Nietzsche he could be hospitable and generous. His killing was another example of how Pakistan's military rulers attempt administrative solutions to political problems.

His assassination has made him an icon of Baluch nationalism.

It demonstrates the military mindset of Pakistan's rulers. General Musharraf appears to have decided to kill him rather than have dialogue with him when he had declared last year that Bugti would not know what hit him. The details of his killing, probably killed after a firefight, were kept secret by the military and he was buried without his body being identified by his relatives or in their presence.

Akbar Bugti was one of the three Sardars of three leading Baluch tribes, Khair Bakhsh Marri of the Marri tribe, Attaullah Mengal of the Mengal tribe and Akbar Bugti of the Bugti tribe, who have been a thorn for the successive rulers of Pakistan, military or civilian. It is also ironical that while the other Sardars had opposed Baluchistan's accession to Pakistan, Bugti was one of those few who had supported the accession.

However, insurgencies, militancy and guerrilla warfare have become a chronic feature in this region. The province,

comprises forty-three per cent of Pakistan's land mass, and a 770 km coastline, but only makes up five per cent of the country's population. These five per cent people are perhaps also sitting on the wealthiest land mass in the country. Their sense of deprivation and grinding poverty is ingrained in their psyche which makes them burst out in revolt whenever they are pushed to the wall.

Baluchistan was annexed by Pakistan against the wishes of the people of the province in 1947. It is the most backward and underdeveloped province of Pakistan. Baluchistan is also the largest province in size but with a small population. The province is the richest province in mineral resources which remain unexploited. Succeeding regimes in Pakistan have done nothing for its social and economic development. The Sardari feudal system a relic of the Mughal era is the major reason for the poverty and underdevelopment of the province. The neglect of the socio-economic and political problems of East Pakistan led to the 1971 crisis and the break up of Pakistan. The crisis in Baluchistan and the way it is being dealt by the Musharraf's military regime is likely to lead to a serious blow to Pakistan federation. The military regimes which are highly centralized institutions and lack political flexibility cannot resolve the problems of constituent units of a federation. The Baluch people want a share in decision making particularly in matters dealing with their own province.

There have been four insurgencies in Baluchistan since Pakistan became independent, in 1948, 1958-59, 1962-64 and in 1973-77. The current crisis is being called as the fifth insurgency. It is alleged that once again Pakistan's military junta is taking the country towards possible civil war and secession. Insurgents owing allegiance to the shadowy Baluch Liberation Army (BLA) have been targeting gas plants in Sui and power installations, killing not only security personnel but also the Chinese engineers working in Gwadar. Bomb explosions and abductions of surveyors had laid the ground for the confrontation. These violent actions have

continued even after the murder of Bugti. The roots of the crisis in Baluchistan go back to early years of Pakistan. Baluchistan is the largest of the four provinces of Pakistan with an area 347,190 sq. km with a population of about 7 million. Of all the four provinces, Baluchistan is the most diverse socially, economically, ethno-linguistically. Baluchi is the language spoken by almost one third of the population Pushtu and Brahui are the other two main languages of the province. The Baluchis in Baluchistan are divided into more than a score of major and minor tribes and clans. The Marri and Bugti are supposed to be the

largest and are believed to be of Arab origin. The Mengals are believed to be of Mongol origin. Other important tribes are Mazari, Zehri, Raisani, Gichki, Achakzai, Mandokhel, Jamali and Jamotes, etc. According to the memoirs of the Khan of Kalat the state of Kalat declared independence on 15 August 1945. Jinnah had asked him to join Pakistan. The Khan laid several conditions for accession to Pakistan. In 1947 the Khan of Kalat state asked his assembly to decide the question of accession. The House of the People of the Kalat state (elected with restricted electorate) which was dominated by the Kalat National Party led by Ghaus Bakhsh Bizenjo, Anjumane Watan led by Abdul Samad Achakzai and the Jamiatul Ulama-e-Hind voted against accession to Pakistan. In spite of this the Khan was coerced in 1948 to accede to Pakistan. It was the resistance of the Khan of Kalat that led to the first insurgency in the province in 1948. The younger brother of the Khan Prince Abdul Karim Khan decided to start an armed struggle to oppose the occupation of Baluchistan. He claimed that his goal was the creation of a Greater Baluchistan. He had thought he would get the support of Afghanistan and the Soviet Union which did not happen. Abdul Karim was arrested and was sentenced to ten years of imprisonment. The second Baluch insurgency was led by Nawroz Khan in 1958 who opposed the occupation of Baluchistan by Pakistan. Some of his supporters were lured by the government to come down from the hills and surrender. His revolt also failed. He had been assured of amnesty but he and his companions were arrested. He died in prison and eleven Baluch nationalists including his nephews were hanged. This betrayal by the government is even today quoted as an example of its untrustworthiness.

The 1973-1977 insurgencies were provoked by the dismissal of the National Awami Party (NAP) Jamiatul Ulama-i-Islam (JUI) government in the province headed by Ataullah Mengal. The political crisis erupted because of the rift between the two groups of Sardars who dominated the political scene in Baluchistan. Akbar Bugti and Ghaus Bakhsh Raisani were opposed to the NAP-JUI government. This group was close to Z.A. Bhutto who was then the Prime Minister of Pakistan... This irredentist movement was being supported by a number of foreign powers. There was the well known case of discovery of weapons in the Iraqi embassy. On 13 February 1973 Bhutto dismissed the Baluchistan government of Ataullah Mengal. Military action was launched on 29 April 1973 and a new government was installed in the province with Akbar Bugti as governor. Iran under the Shah actively supported the Bhutto's assault on the Baluchi nationalists for he was afraid that the discontent might spread to the neighbouring Iranian Baluchistan. By early 1974, 40,000 sq miles of area was affected, and an estimated 20,000 insurgents were involved. The resistance put up by the Marri and Mengal tribes was unexpected and the Punjabi and the Pathan army were looked at by the people of Baluchistan as the army of occupation. Though the insurgency was led by the Marri and Mengals a good number of Marxist and nationalist youths belonging to the Baluchistan Students Organisation

(BSO) led by Sardar Khair Bux Marri whose aim was to create greater Baluchistan was also involved in large numbers. The Pushtun and Baluch leaders were later tried by the special tribunal at Hyderabad (Sind) for high treason. It was General Zia after his coup in July 1977 who disbanded the Hyderabad Tribunal and released the Baluch and Pushtun leaders.

The recurrent revolts were the result of the economic, social and political problems which had led to alienation among the people of the province. The Baluch people saw that the rich resources their province was being held by the outsiders and they were being deprived of the benefit from them. The people also had the memories of the forcible annexation of their province which had embittered them. Ever since the inception of Pakistan the political leaders, military or civilians, have never cared to redress their grievances. Baluchi political culture has been secular and had no influence of the two-nation theory on it. Baluch leaders point out that while the major provinces have electricity there is no power in Baluchistan. Several times electric poles have been installed but the wires have never been energized. Denied governments jobs the Baluchi youth have no option but to take to criminality, smuggling and drug peddling. The federally controlled Baluchistan Constabulary has 32,100 Pathan soldiers and has only 900 Baluch jawans. Baluch Police force is overwhelmingly Pushtun. The 12,000 strong Pakistani Coast Guard has only 90 Baluch on its rolls. Even the famous Baluch regiment has hardly any Baluch officers and soldiers. The Pakistan Petroleum Limited which is responsible for the extraction and distribution of Sui gas does not give jobs to Baluch youths as a matter of policy. In Baluchistan the government runs 586 check points which means that for every ten thousand persons the province has a check point.

When Pakistan came into existence it did not lead to the creation of a nation or even a feeling of nationhood. For a variety of socio-political reasons, and partly because of the nature and character of the Pakistan movement, the ruling elite could not undertake the tasks of nation building. The first victim of the failure in nation building by Pakistan's ruling elite was East Bengal. It was not mere neglect in economic reconstruction but a persistent policy of depriving the Bengalis of their share in power which they deserved by virtue of the fact that Bengalis comprised a majority of population of Pakistan. The One Unit Scheme in the constitution in 1954 which divided the country by merging the four provinces of West Pakistan into one unit called West Pakistan and the other unit was East Pakistan and thus Bengalis were deprived of the advantage of their majority in a democratic political system. Later in 1970 election the Bengali Awami League won a clear majority in the National Assembly but it was not allowed to form the government which ultimately led to the secession of Bangladesh. There was discrimination against Bengalis in employment. The East Pakistan government secretariat was full of non Bengalis. The same was the situation in the armed forces. There were very few Bengali officers in the army. East Bengal had become almost a colony of West

Punjab. The successive regimes in Pakistan failed to redress the genuine grievance of the people of East Pakistan.

The wide disparities between various unit of the federation only increased and nothing as done to remedy this. In Pakistan the stranglehold of the feudal lords, Sardars, Malik, Waderas and Chaudharies could not be removed to allow for the demands of development. Agrarian reforms that were undertaken during the Ayub regime and later by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto were half hearted and therefore, they could not promote the democratization of society. Baluchistan has been backward on every count. The quality of life is below subsistence level. Piped water is available to less than 5 percent of the population. The persistent degradation of the province's water supply system has turned Baluchistan into an arid wasteland. The province has the lowest population growth rate in the country. It is not because of better management of family planning but rather due to the higher mortality rate. It has the lowest literacy ratio (24.83 percent against the 43.92 national averages). Baluchistan has the lowest Human Development Index in the country. Female literacy is below fifteen percent and general illiteracy is also high and there is widespread unemployment. The discovery of natural gas (Sui gas) in the early fifties has not helped provide jobs to the Baluchi youth. Sui gas was being supplied to most of Pakistan but for Baluchistan limited supply was given only in the eighties after the provincial capital, Quetta became the HQ of a Corp headquarters of the Pakistan armed forces. It is widely held view that apart from the neglect by the rulers in Islamabad one major reason for the backwardness of the province is the Sardari system.

The Sardari system in Baluchistan originated during the Mughal rule but developed to its present position during the British colonial period. In contrast to the relative egalitarianism of the tribal society that is characteristic of the Frontier tribes the Sardari system is hierarchical. The tribe is headed by a Sardar, the hereditary chief, from whom power flows downward to waderas, section chiefs and downwards to the subordinate clan and sub-clan of the lesser tribal units. The late Zulfikar Ali Bhutto had abolished the Sardari system in 1976 by a law titled the System of Sardari (Abolition) Act. General Ziaul Haq in the late seventies wanted to depoliticize the system and therefore, he revived the Sardari system. Under the partyless electoral system the people voted on the basis of tribe and ethnicity. The inability of the ruling elite to build democratic institutions partly because of the prolonged military rule also helped to strengthen the Sardari system. It is a fact that writ of the government does not run in the Bugti, Marri and Mengal areas. General Musharraf has been arguing that most Sardars are not hostile and are willing to cooperate. Only three Sardars that is late Akbar Bugti, Khair Bux Marri and Ataulah Mengal were making trouble. Sardars have played a dominating role in the political life of the province. The Sardars of Mengal, Bugti, Marri Raisani, and the Jam of Lasbela have occupied various high offices since the seventies. Akbar Bugti, Ataulah Mengal his sons Akhtar Mengal and Nasir Mengal, Ghulam Qadir Jamote

and his son Jam Yusuf, Taj and Zafarullah Jamali have held high political positions like Prime Minister, Governors, Chief Ministers and other high offices. All the Chief Ministers in Baluchistan have been Sardars. Therefore it could be said that Sardari system is also one of the main reasons for the present plight of the Baluch people.

The Baluch society is not static. In spite of the stagnation and deprivation the society remained backward and the hold of the Sardars persisted because of the tribal and feudal mores. However, the social organization in the province is slowly changing. Sardars are aware of the growing national and democratic consciousness which would jeopardize their privileges. That is why Sardars do not identify themselves with the nationalist causes but in case of open confrontation with the central authorities many of them would side with the popular movement. In a traditional tribal society political ideology like Baluch nationalism would not get support because loyalties of tribal members do not extend to entities rather than individual tribes. Within the tribes, an individual's identity is based on his belonging to a larger group. This larger group is not the nation but the tribe. There are several reasons that Baluchistan people did not rise up during the early years after independence. The most important among them was the lack of cultural and linguistic homogeneity. Only 30 percent of the population speaks Baluchi. Pushtun and Brahui are the other two main languages. In the period after the independence some basic changes began to take in place in the Baluch society partly because of detribalization and the partly because of the land reforms introduced by Gen. Ayub Khan and later by Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. New classes began to emerge in the society. A small working class also was formed in the mine industry, construction and new factories. A new middle class also emerged. Large numbers of migrants went to the Gulf States.

The province has been relatively peaceful during the decade of elected governments from 1988 to 1999. However, symptoms of simmering discontent had been visible in the form of demands by the Baluch nationalists for protection of their identity, rights and interests. The extremists and hardliners among them periodically resorted to violence, attacks on pipelines and bomb blasts in order to agitate their cause. The resistance is being led by several insurgents groups which have emerged throughout the province. None had heard about the Baluchistan Liberation Army (BLA) till three years back. Baluch Liberation Force (BLF) and Peoples Liberation Army (PLA) are the other important resistance groups. BLA is the deadliest of all and it specializes in targeting military posts, telecom lines, energy infra structures, civil servants and police chiefs. Before the military coup of October 1999 most Baluchi politicians were part of the provincial and national mainstream politics, contesting elections and seeking to resolve what they considered the province's grievances through parliamentary means.

The situation under Musharraf regime deteriorated. Decision making under every military ruler in Pakistan has

been highly centralized. Not that the democratic rulers since 1988 had taken much care of the provincial autonomy particularly of the smaller provinces like Sind and Baluchistan. Under the Musharraf regime all important decisions began to be taken in Islamabad. Under the military dispensation the top military ruler usually the Army Chief alone knows what is best for the country. The government at the centre and governments in the provinces are expected to obediently follow whatever the Chief has decided. Interestingly General Musharraf after taking over unlike his military predecessors did not call himself Chief Martial Law Administrator but the Chief Executive. The final solution to the Bugti problem was based on typically an autocratic ruler's belief that only a handful of people were causing the mischief. The widespread protests and reaction to his killing has shown the falsehood of the assumption.

Ever since the present military takeover seven years ago the regime has undertaken several big projects for the avowed aim of developing the province. They are called Mega projects and touted as aiming at the all round industrial and economic development of the province and the Baluchi people. There are several projects connected with the greater Gwadar Plan. The construction of a deep sea port at Gwadar is one part of the Plan. Another part under this plan is the construction of a network of roads connecting Gwadar with Karachi, Pasni, Ormara, and Turbat which will be constructed in four phases. This network of roads will ultimately be connected with China through the Indus highway. Located at the Arabian Sea coast and extremely backward Mekran Division of Baluchistan hinterland, Gwadar port will become the hub of economic and trade activities in the whole region. Apart from the Gwadar there are two other Mega projects which are Mirani Dam and Saindak Copper Project. The Gwadar Deep Seaport is being built by the Chinese and will give China a foothold in a very strategic location at the mouth of the Gulf of Hormuz in the North-Western part of the Indian Ocean.

However, the Baluchi nationalists are not amused by these grand projects. It is alleged that three groups of people will certainly benefit from these projects, first, the Sardars who bought the land some years ago for almost nothing and sold them at high prices, second, the development agents mostly from outside the province and, third, the Chinese. Another much publicized development plan has been the project to set up three cantonments in Sui, Kohlu and Gwadar. It is obvious that the cantonments have little employment potential and are needed only to protect the Sui gas pipelines and the Gwadar Project.

The Mega projects have failed to satisfy the Baluchi people. Their historical experience of continual neglect, discrimination and being kept out of the decision making even on issues of vital concern to them have bred a general cynicism among the people of the province. Their objections to the Mega projects are well founded. The main burden of the complaint is that the project has been decided upon without taking the Baluchis into confidence. The provincial government does not have legitimacy because the 2002 elections were rigged by the 'military

alliance'. It has no say in the decision making about the development projects. Since the Mega projects would be tightly controlled by the central organizations all the jobs would go to Punjabis and people from other provinces. In his time Ayub Khan granted more resources to the development of East Pakistan than all his predecessors. Still, his policies also contributed most to alienation of the Bengalis. The situation was almost similar to that of under General Musharraf. Both Generals Ayub and Musharraf have authoritarian and militarized approach to politics and society and have denied genuine political power to Bengalis and to Baluchis.

It was in the background of the simmering tension in the province during the last four years that the incident of the rape of Dr Shazia Khalid took place in the premises of the Pakistan Petroleum Ltd (PPL) in Sui in the first week of January 2005 that snowballed into the current mega crisis in Baluchistan. It was a rape incident and Dr Shazia Khalid was not a Baluch but the Baluch nationalists saw it as an affront to their honour which they decided to avenge at all costs. The incident blew up and led to a very dangerous confrontation between the Baluch nationalists and the Pakistan army which had shaken the entire country. What hurt the most was the attempt by the PPL and the government to cover up the crime. The suspects were not arrested and one of the main suspects was given a clean chit by President Musharraf himself. Political parties and public organizations had been publicly warning against any resort to military action in Baluchistan. They were stressing the need for dialogue with the aggrieved groups.

Another violent clash took place on 17th March 2005 with F.C created a sensation in the country. A delegation comprising of the members of the National Assembly and journalists was sent to Dera Bugti on a fact finding mission three days later. Bugti alleged that the attack on the 17th March 2005 had been planned by the various security agencies with the clear intention to kill him. In a phone conversation with Akbar Bugti Senator Mushahid Husain, General Secretary of the Pakistan Muslim League (Q) and a member of the Parliamentary Committee denied that any military operation had been launched on 17th March 2005. Akbar Bugti retorted later "what would he call a military operation? Is killing 10,000 was his definition of a military operation?" PML (Q) leaders Chaudhary Shujaat Husain, and Mushahid Husain announced that after their talks with Akbar Bugti the situation would improve. A three member committee had been formed to monitor the situation. The committee was to comprise of one nominee of Sardar Akbar Bugti and one of the government to be headed by a neutral man. After the members of the National Assembly delegation returned from Dera Bugti on their fact finding mission soon after the F.C clash with the Bugti tribesmen the Government started a virulent campaign against Akbar Bugti. Muhammad Ali Durrani, Pakistan's minister of Sports, Culture and Youth Affairs while reporting on the Parliaments delegation's visit alleged that Dera Bugti had turned into a state within a state and no writ of the government existed in the area.

Earlier the National Assembly had appointed a parliamentary committee comprising members both from the ruling alliance and from the opposition, during the brief tenure of Chaudhary Shujaat Husain as the Prime Minister in September 2004 to go into the problems of Baluchistan. It was headed by Chaudhary Shujaat Husain and comprised of two sub-committee's one dealing with the political issues headed by Mushahid Husain and the other of concerning the issue of provincial autonomy headed by Wasim Sajjad. Mushahid Husain had gone to Baluchistan several times and had met most of the leaders in the province. However the second sub-committee had not been as active. The parliamentary committee had come in for criticism from the members of the National Assembly for being wrongly constituted because most of the members were ignorant of the socio-cultural traditions of the Baluch tribes. The parliamentary committee was headed by Chaudhary Shujaat Husain who is a member of the Chaudhary clan of Gujarat in Punjab which dominates the ruling Pakistan Muslim League and symbolizes the Punjabi domination of Pakistani power structure. This ensured that an amicable solution to the Baluchistan problem could be ruled out. Nawab Akbar Bugti had condemned the parliamentary committee as toothless and Ataullah Mengal's group had walked out of it soon after it was appointed.

Chaudhary Shujaat Husain informed the National Assembly on 2nd May 2005 that the parliamentary committee had made 30 recommendations on the Baluchistan problems. Further that the subcommittee on the autonomy issue would submit its recommendations later. Among these recommendations were the development grant of Rs 9 billion for the three major cities of the province, disbursement of Rs 5 billion gas royalty arrears and strict observance of the job quota. Another recommendation was the appropriation of 7 percent revenue of the Gwadar port to Baluchistan. The question of the outstanding gas royalty was also to be evaluated for settlement. Chaudhary Shujaat also announced the deletion of 33 items from the concurrent list which would devolve to the province. Mushahid Husain sub-committee held up the vision of the complete abolition of concurrent list and said that the Federal list should be limited to the core functions of the federation i.e., defence, foreign affairs, and finance and currency communication and inter provincial harmony, coordination and national solidarity. However, it was also announced that the sub committee under Wasim Sajjad was to formulate the relevant constitutional amendments. It was also decided that the Council of Common Interest would be made an effective body to oversee the implementation of provincial autonomy. Both Chaudhary Shujaat Husain and Mushahid Husain declared the occasion of their decisions as historic. But not every body agreed with this evaluation of their decisions. Sardar Ataullah Mengal declared the report of the parliamentary committee was a façade and a fraud. He went on to say that the people of Baluchistan would get nothing. He said that the concurrent list is the talk of 1973 and now it is 2005. He wanted the Centre to retain only three subjects' viz., defence, finance and foreign affairs

and the rest should go to the provinces. He alleged that Punjab always accepts things when it is too late. The recommendations of the Shujaat Husain Committee were not implemented till the assassination of Akbar Bugti. This reflected the reality of the power structure in the country. The real decision making was confined to the presidency, the army, the intelligence service and the local commanders. The political leadership did not count. The situation in Baluchistan continued to simmer. The shadowy Baluchistan Liberation Army has not stopped its sporadic violence. Bomb blasts, rocket attacks on pipelines, telephone lines, power grids and railway tracks continue. Sardar Akbar Bugti had been complaining about the troop movements in his area and alleging that the government was trying to find justification for launching a military operation targeting him and his tribesmen. And that is what happened on 26 August 2006.

Sardar Ataullah Mengal had a point. Under military rule after the LFO and the 17th Amendment the 1973 constitution has become almost redundant. As long as the army rules the country the provincial autonomy and popular participation in decision making are ruled out.

Some of the main issues of the social, economic and political situation which need immediate solution could be summarized as following. 1. Though some Sardars support the nationalist demands of the Baluch people the Sardari system which is the relic of the feudal system should be abolished. 2. The implementation of the 1973 constitution's provisions of centre province relations. 3. The announcement of the National Finance Commission award. 4. The implementation of the resolutions of the Provincial Assembly. 5. Restoration of the right of the provincial Assembly to legislate on local government laws. 6. Baluchis must be given the administration and control of the Mega Projects. 7. Jobs for the Baluchis in accordance with the constitutional job quota. 8. Concurrent list to be abolished and provinces be given right to legislate freely. 9. Gas royalty formula should be worked out on the basis of equity for all provinces. 10. No voting rights for settlers for ten years.

The military regime of General Yahya had chosen military action to deal with the Bengali nationalists in 1971 rather than the path of peaceful negotiation which led to war and secession Bangladesh. The Musharraf regime has also resorted to military action to resolve the political and economic problems of the people of Baluchistan. The 1971 military action in East Pakistan had struck a fatal blow at the Pakistan federation, the killing of Akbar Bugti and what he represented is another blow to federation and may lead to similar end.

The continuing insurgency in Baluchistan will have implications for the entire region. The province occupies a strategic location and is close to the mouth of the Gulf of Hormuz through which pass almost 80 percent of world's oil supplies.

Baluchistan after Bugti

Veena Kukreja

The unwarranted and brutal killing of 79-year-old leader of the Jahmoori Watan Party, Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti, mouth piece of Baluchi aspirations, by Pakistani armed forces on August 26 in Baluchistan's Bhambore hills

– reportedly with the use of cluster bombs and laser guided missiles – has sent shock waves through political circles across Pakistan. By killing Nawab Bugti with an inordinate show of force that included helicopter gunships strafing the cave in which he was hiding and firing missiles at it, Pakistan has exemplified the heavy-handedness for which the Baluch people have resented Islamabad all along. The assassination of Nawab Bugti has set Baluchistan ablaze and gave Baluch nationalism a martyr around whom to build itself and galvanize the opposition in Pakistan. Ironically, its more than just Bugti's martyrdom becoming a symbol for the provincial

movement – his assassination facilitates unity among the next generation of Baluchistan's leadership. It is worth noting that the tribal sardar more popularly known as Nawab

Bugti was more pro-Pakistan than many other Baluch leaders.

Again, ironically, in his early days Bugti had never joined the Baluch nationalist movement or the various

Pakistan Army Seems To Repeating The 1971 Blunder. Army Is Following Policies In Baluchistan Akin To Those It Adopted In The Former East Pakistan In 1971. Pakistan's Army Generals Had Not Learnt Their Lesson From The 1971 Tragedy When The Army's Itch To Teach The Bengalis A Lesson Split Pakistan. The Army Had Earlier Made Two Faulted Attempts On Bugti's Life. And Now, If The Army Thinks It Has Got Rid Of Baluchistan's Most Troublesome Leader, It Is Making The Same Mistake It Made In 1971. By Killing Bugti, General Musharraf Has Tried To Show The World That He Is In Control Of Situation. The General Could Be Wrong On All These Counts. This, As Daily Times Wrote In Its Editorial On August 28, "Could Be The Biggest Military Blunder After The Assassination Of The Former Premier Z.A. Bhutto."

Islamabad Will Never Accept That Baluchistan Is Its Own Doing – It Has To Do With Pakistan's Long Succession Of Military Coups And Regimes Which Has Come In The Way Of Building Durable Representative Institution Of Governance That Accommodate Popular Aspirations. Pakistan Has Never Been Able To Overcome The Baluch Feeling That Their Rich Natural Resources Are Being Exploited For The Benefit Of Punjabi Dominated Government In Islamabad. There Is No Victory In Brutally Suppressing Your Own People. To Be Able To Get The Baluchis Into The National Mainstream, Pakistani Rulers Will Have To Bring An Authentic Socio-Economic Change Which May Bring Them At Par With Constituent Units Of Pakistan, Namely, Punjab, NWFP And Sindh. But Expecting A Military Government do so is perhaps litte too much.

alliances of nationalist group formed in the country. Though he was urbane – having been educated at Aitchison College in Lahore and at Oxford – was known to be an autocrat, not tolerating dissent, showing cruelty even to his followers. He was close to M.A. Jinnah and facilitated Baluchistan's entry in Pakistan. He had been member of the National Assembly, served as a Minister of State for the Interior, and was appointed the governor of Baluchistan as the federal government battled an insurgency between 1973 and 1977. During the 1973 uprising – now described by

Baluch nationalists as the first war of independence, he provided a cloak of legitimacy to the brutal suppression of the revolt. After forming the Jahmoori Watan Party, he became Chief

Minister in 1989 and ran the province like a authoritarian Patriarch.

But he developed differences with the Oil and Gas Development Authority, Islamabad and the Sui Gas Company that ran gas wells at his hometown Dera Bugti over the issue of rent and perks, which he wanted to be raised.

Over the years, Nawab Bugti had definitely crossed swords with Islamabad for more political autonomy and more finances to the province. But, despite becoming the face of the Baluch resistance movement, especially after 2004, it was widely believed that he was Pakistan's bridge to the more anti-Pakistan elements in the province, such as Nawab Khair Buksh Marri and Sardar Attaullah Mengal. In him, at the fag end of his life, the Baluch nationalist movement and Baluch Liberation Army found a fellow traveller who was willing to challenge the intrusion of the army into the heartland of the Baluch people.

His death transformed him from pro-Pakistan and at time, disliked figure in Baluch politics and cast him in the mould of the Baluchistan freedom fighter that he never was. It was around this image that the protagonists of the simmering nationalist cause in the province are now rallying.

Baluch National Movement: Genesis and Grievances

Prior to current military operation, Baluchistan has been the target of four other such operations that started in the years 1948, 1958, 1960, and 1973, respectively.

The Baluch national movement had its origin in the pre-independence period. Like the Pakhtuns, the Baluchs were also never enthusiastic supporters of Pakistan. In 1947, Ahmed Yar Khan, the last ruler of Kalat, declared Kalat as independent. Pakistan rejected Khan's declaration and forcibly annexed Kalat. The Pakistani army occupied Kalat and forced the Khan of Kalat to sign accession documents. The forcible occupation of Baluchistan by Pakistan led to a short-lived revolt by the brother of the Khan of Kalat. The revolt did not last long, but it gave a fillip to the Baluch national movement, which resurfaced in 1973. Even today, Pakistan's writ does not run beyond Quetta and military cantonments.

Representing the smallest percentage of population at 5 per cent but claiming the largest percentage of Pakistan (44) as their homeland, are the Baluchs. The Baluchs are a tribal community, consisting of 17 rough tribal groupings.

Baluchistan is an area of vital strategic importance to Pakistan. Baluchistan is at the strategic crossroads between Afghanistan and the Gulf of Oman to the south.

Baluchistan is a province with rich mineral and gas deposits. The Sui national gas field in the Bugti area produces about 40 per cent of Pakistan's natural gas. The province is also rich in uranium and cooper. In 1998 Pakistan

conducted five underground nuclear tests in Baluchistan. The Baluchi nationalist grievances have long centred around Islamabad extracting its mineral resources without giving anything back to region in terms of development. Even though the province is responsible for 40 per cent (3,58,246 million cubic feet of Pakistan's gas production, it only gets 16 per cent (66,447 MCT) of country's final output to consume.

The Baluch people struggle for clean drinking water. Education and health facilities are inadequate. 85 per cent of its population does not have access to safe drinking water and another 80 per cent live without electricity. 63 per cent of Baluch population lives below the poverty line and 70 per cent of its children are deprived of education. Despite its natural riches, Baluchistan is Pakistan's least developed province and gets the least amount of fund from the federal government. It has virtually no representation in the army and very little in the bureaucracy.

As far as the Baluch grievances are concerned, ethnicity intertwined with a sense of political isolation and relative economic deprivation continued to be a potent force in evoking Baluch mobilization. Very few Baluchis have held key position in the central government of Pakistan. In the provincial framework, the Baluch sense of grievance hinged on the nativist/regional planks. According to one estimate, of 830 higher civil service posts in Baluchistan only 181 were held by the Baluch in 1979.

So far as the channeling of funds is concerned, it had been mainly in the hands of non-Baluch, predominantly Punjabi bureaucracy. It was alleged that the Baluch plea for control over decisions pertaining to development activities had been ignored. In addition to this has been the issue of internal colonization. The Baluch resented that Punjabi settlers had been grabbing prime farm land and the Punjabi real estate speculators had been buying up property in Quetta.

The other grievances included the Baluch perception of the exploitative attitude of the centre in harnessing natural resources of the province. They felt that the Punjabis were reaping the benefits of the vast untapped natural resources. In this view, the foreign imperialist interests backed by the Pakistani bureaucracy have been getting the lion's share in profits from the state resources, which are being rapidly depleted without any lasting benefit to Baluchistan itself. Thus, apart from a dismally low rate of royalty paid by the Centre to the state gas has been piped not within Baluchistan but outside. Even its capital Quetta, received gas long after it had been tapped.

The recent investment by Islamabad in the Gwadar port has brought no cheer to the province as people see hardly any benefit in it for themselves. Contracts for developing the port have been awarded to Chinese and West Asian countries. Several of these countries have

also invested millions in the region, with assurances of massive returns. A modern airfield is in the making. An extensive road network connecting Central Asia with other parts of Asia via the Indus or Karakoram highway is in progress. The rail and road connectivity under construction would connect Sinkiang with Baluchistan's port city of Gwadar. The strategic partnership between China and Pakistan is not in the field of nuclear armaments only but China has greater stakes in the promotion of its commercial enterprises as well as naval encirclement of India. Chinese are doing the same in Myanmar front and have embarked on diplomatic maneuvering in Bangladesh. Baluch fear all these Chinese-dominated development activities. Besides, though Baluchistan is witnessing a plethora of mega infrastructure projects, the benefits are going to outsiders. Much of the labour comes from Sindh and Punjab. Fewer jobs go to Baluchs. Land around the port is being grabbed by real estate mafia from Karachi. The army has occupied prime property for its officers. According to Baluch leaders, the army plans to settle 300,000 people from other provinces in Baluchistan, denying the people of the land their future. Baluchs believe and not wrongly that Punjabis and Sindhis overwhelm them in their own home. This is not an unfounded fear. The Pakistani establishment, particularly the army has engineered large-scale demographic change in Northern Areas, Sindh and Baluchistan.

Recent Baluchistan Conflict

The latest ongoing round of trouble between the sardars and the government began soon after Musharraf staged his coup in October 1999. Violence significantly escalated in the region after President Musharraf signed a deal with China on behalf of the Gwadar Port Authority in March 2002. Nawab Bugti had his own quarrel with the Musharraf regime over the slash in royalties paid to him for the gas fields, which lie under Bugti tribal lands. The government complained that the sardars were pocketing the royalty to build personal wealth, and denying any share of it to the tribe by way of development works. All of 2005 saw skirmishes between the Frontier Corps and Bugti tribesmen, who seemed well armed.

But Nawab Bugti also made it known he was open to a political negotiations settlement. General Musharraf initially used National Security Council Secretary General Tariq Aziz to negotiate with Nawab Bugti. But Aziz soon withdrew from the negotiations and two parliamentary committees were set up to look into Baluch grievances. A committee headed by Senator Mushahid Hussain made a number of recommendations including raising the royalty for gas piped out of Baluchistan, increase in the recruitment of Baluchis to Federal Services, paramilitary forces and the army and a freeze in construction of new military cantonments in Baluchistan. Nawab accepted the

recommendations in good faith. General Musharraf however had other ideas and wanted to "sort out" the Baluchs military it.

With their political demands rejected and their honour challenged by the Doctor Shazia Khalid's rape by a Pakistani military captain, the Baluchs resorted to a full scale uprising against the Musharraf dispensation. Post a failed assassination attempt on Musharraf in December 2005; military operations in the region were intensified. On April 2, 2006, there was a large rally organized in Quetta to oppose the Pakistani government's operations. Seeing that the rally received an overwhelming response, Pakistan military is said to have launched a severe crackdown on leaders and activists of the Baluchistan National Party. Interestingly accessing Indian assistance routed through Afghanistan to the insurgents, the government stepped up security operations.

Bugti's killing: Implication for Baluch Nationalism

Nawab Bugti's assassination is an ominous sign that government instead of following accommodative politics has started eliminating politicians that opposed it. The killing of Bugti will trigger ethno-national conflict in Pakistan threatening its federal structure. The event has deepened alienation in Baluchistan and will be increasingly difficult to bring Baluch tribes back into the Pakistani mainstream. The alienation of the Baluch from Pakistan is now comparable to that of the Bengalis from East Pakistan in 1971.

After Bugti's death, both Marri and Mengal have been in the forefront of the protests. The four parties Baluch Alliance, comprising Mengal's Baluch National Party, the Baluch National Party, the National Party, and Bugti's JAP buried internal differences and organize protest rallies, strikes and shut downs in Baluchistan. They have put up spirited shows in Parliament, complete with noisy scenes and walkouts. The widespread protests against the killing of Bugti, who was Chief Minister of Bugti tribe, point to the radical turn the Baluch nationalist movement is going to take.

Recent Baluchistan conflict has sparked large-scale violent riots in Baluchistan and other parts of Pakistan. Outside Baluchistan, Sindh and NWFP too are seething with unrest against the army and Punjabi domination, which they see as going hand in hand. This is clearly a dangerous situation, which could spiral out of control. The Baluchistan conflict can become the undoing of the dream of federal set up.

And despite President Pervez Musharraf's bravado after Bugti was killed – he congratulated the security forces for their "successful operation" – the incident does not bode well for the General as he goes into an election year shortly.

It is clear that it is a fight to finish, as General Musharraf is concerned. He has pledged to continue the operation until the writ of government was established fully in Baluchistan. After the assassination of Bugti, he told his Corps Commanders and Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz that he will not let go other 'miscreants'.

It is interesting to note that in December 2005, when the situation in Baluchistan deteriorated due to the intensification of activities of BLA and other Baluch nationalist organizations, the majority of the Corps Commanders was reported to have told President Musharraf that the army was not in position to wage two-front war – one against the Baluch in Baluchistan and other against the tribals of the Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA) for sheltering the foreign terrorist elements operating against the NATO forces in Afghanistan. They, therefore, urged Musharraf to reach a cease-fire with the tribals in the FATA area and divert the troops deployed there in support of the operations of the US led forces in Afghanistan to Baluchistan. Since June 25, there has been cease-fire in the North Waziristan area of FATA of Pakistan.

Pakistan on September 5 2006 signed a deal with local Taliban militants in North Waziristan bordering Afghanistan aiming at ending years of unrest in the restive tribal belt. The Miranshah agreement is a cause of concern not only to Baluch, but also to the NATO forces in Afghanistan. Besides, Islamabad policy of creating divide between the Baluchs and Pashtuns can lead to further fragmentation of Pakistan.

All Baluch leaders have asked forces that Pakistan should give their share of the revenue generated by the exploitation of natural resources of the region. General Musharraf is bent on denying the tribals this. The tribal leaders, on their part are determined not to be cowed down. The elimination of Bugti by brute force is not end of revolt against Islamabad's policy of ruling by force.

The Bugti episode has certainly sparked the nationalist cause built on a foundation of legitimate grievances articulated by several Baluch parties in the province, and outside. Indeed, from now on, attitude against Islamabad is likely to harden. Increasingly radicalized youth are attracted to the possibilities presented by a shadowy group called the BLA, which has linked to several bomb attacks and other acts of sabotage on gas pipelines and infrastructure in the province over the last few years.

While this will severely strain the Pakistan federation, it is doubtful if the insurgency itself will intensify. Although slogans of "Free Baluchistan" rent the air during the protests over the Bugti issue, many analysts have compared it with 1971 situation; a militant secessionist struggle by the Baluch against Islamabad is improbable given the fact that with population of less than six million, Baluch lack the capacity and resources to build critical mass required

for such a struggle.

Moreover, given Baluchistan's sparse population armed revolt by Baluch nationalists in past have invariably been crushed in a ruthless manner. In 1973, coercion was used to crush the Baluch insurgents on a large scale. The Z.A. Bhutto regime used heavy and overwhelming Pakistan and Iranian fire power against them. In the subsequent years, Baluch tribes men took refuge in Afghanistan but were unable to act in absence of unity among the tribal leaders. Undoubtedly, in the wake of recent developments, any attempt by Baluch nationalists will be ruthlessly crushed. But events in Iraq exemplify that well organized resistance can be mounted even to the most modern armed forces.

Implication for Musharraf

President General Musharraf, who completed seven years in power in October 2006 and has a desire to continue in office beyond 2007, when his presidential term ends, may have acted unwillingly against his own ambition.

The President is faced with unprecedented protest from the opposition parties as well as from the religious alliance of Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA). The grand opposition, consisting of the Alliance for the Restoration of Democracy (ARD) and MMA, are likely to exploit Bugti's killing to fan up its agitation for the ouster of President Musharraf who took militaristic course that reminds of bitter lessons from the dismemberment of Pakistan in 1971.

Confronted with widespread protests against the killing of JWP chief Nawab Bugti in a military operation, the Pervez Musharraf government has issued a 13 page charge-sheet accusing Nawab Bugti of illegally collecting money through blackmail, corruption and drug and weapons running. The charge-sheet projects tribal leaders Khair Bux Marri and Sardar Attaullah Mengal as criminals.

Pakistani government propaganda has little effect on Baluch and Sindh nationalists protests and strikes are continuing in Quetta and other parts of Baluchistan on the call of Baluch leaders and the ARD. The Pakistan People's Party and the Muslim League (Nawaz) are the two main political parties, which make up the ARD. In Sindh, Sindhi nationalist parties organize protests and strikes.

Besides there has been unhappiness in the army itself – two former ISI Chiefs, Hamid Gul and Asad Durrani have been scathing in their criticism of the assassination of Bugti.

Within the ruling party PML (Q) there is growing disquiet, President Pervez Musharraf has expressed unhappiness over remarks by some prominent leaders of the ruling praising to Baluch rebel leader Bugti, who was killed in an encounter with Pakistan army.

Most worrying for the General, however, is the beginning of Mohajir – Punjabi rift in the ruling elite. General Musharraf migrated from India, and is a Mohajir.

It's felt a Mohajir has gotten Pakistan into this mess, merely on a matter of prestige.

Killing of Nawab Bugti by the Pakistani army has exposed President General Pervez Musharraf's weakness. The General might have finished him along with his security guards to prove that his writ runs in every part of Pakistan. However, conversely, Musharraf has only strengthened the Baluch struggle, raised fear of similar reprisal in Sindh and Northern Areas, and generated a widespread debate in Pakistan about the grave fallacy of letting a General dictate the destiny of the country.

New Great Game

Despite the protracted insurgency, the Baluch struggle has remained a simmering footnote because the province is at the centre of a new "great game" involving China, Iran and the oil companies, China is wary that a Baluch movement for independence will jeopardize its massive investments in the naval bases in Ormara and Gawadar. The Iranians are anxious to prevent Baluch nationalism from spilling over. And the oil companies don't want to jeopardize energy production and future pipelines linking Baluchistan with Central Asia, Iran and India. On its part, the US has to balance its displeasure over northern Baluchistan being used as a base by the Taliban with the imperatives of securing Pakistan's grudging cooperation in the war on terror.

Implication for India

The presence of the Taliban leadership in and around the Baluchistan capital Quetta, has serious security implications for India, given the mutually reinforcing links between the Taliban, the ISI and Jihadi groups like the Jaish-e-Mohammad and Lalshkar-e-Toiba. Instability and violence in Baluchistan, where Pakistan gas pipelines are attacked and damaged on a regular basis, make any talk of Iran-Pakistan-India pipeline no more than a pipedream, even if agreement is reaching on gas pricing. The growing

Chinese presence in Baluchistan has far reaching implications of India's Martine security.

Finally, escalation of conflict in Baluchistan and pressure from the military could put General Musharraf to adopt an aggressive position against India in a bid to hold on to power.

Conclusion

Pakistan army seems to repeating the 1971 blunder. Army is following policies in Baluchistan akin to those it adopted in the former East Pakistan in 1971. Pakistan's army generals had not learnt their lesson from the 1971 tragedy when the army's itch to teach the Bengalis a lesson split Pakistan. The army had earlier made two faulted attempts on Bugti's life. And now, if the army thinks it has got rid of Baluchistan's most troublesome leader, it is making the same mistake it made in 1971. By killing Bugti, General Musharraf has tried to show the world that he is in control of situation. The General could be wrong on all these counts. This, as *Daily Times* wrote in its editorial on August 28, "Could be the biggest military blunder after the assassination of the former premier Z.A. Bhutto."

Islamabad will never accept that Baluchistan is its own doing – it has to do with Pakistan's long succession of military coups and regimes which have come in the way of building durable representative institution of governance that accommodate popular aspirations. Pakistan has never been able to overcome the Baluch feeling that their rich natural resources are being exploited for the benefit of Punjabi dominated government in Islamabad. There is no victory in brutally suppressing your own people. To be able to get the Baluchis into the national mainstream, Pakistani rulers will have to bring an authentic socio-economic change which may bring them at par with constituent units of Pakistan, namely, Punjab, NWFP and Sindh. But expecting a military government do so is perhaps litte too much.

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