

A case study on:
**Lack of Democracy and
Socio-Economic Development
of Balochistan**



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Sungi

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Introduction

Democracy is defined as a system of governance which bases itself on people's representation aptly described in the maxim "By the People, Of the People, For the People". In Pakistan, this system has not been practiced to its full potential even by the democratically elected civilian governments. The process of democratic dispensation has been repeatedly interrupted by military rule. Pakistani political parties do not have a democratic culture within the parties themselves and have become undemocratic feudal family dynasties and a part of the civil and military ruling elite. They have all ruled but never governed the country.

This paper will try to illustrate the undemocratic manner in which the country has been ruled in the last 60 years through a case study of the province of Balochistan. To understand the issue of Balochistan it is necessary to revisit some historical facts and to consider the exploitative manipulations of the ruling elite since independence. The story of Balochistan is a classic example of how undemocratic rule creates conflicts and civil wars in society.

History

Historically, Kalat or Balochistan was never an Indian State. Several representatives of the British Colonial Government described Kalat as a sovereign and independent State. In 1872, Sir W. L. Merewether, in-charge of the British Government's relations with Kalat, wrote as follows, "There cannot, in my opinion, be the least doubt of the course which should be followed with regard to Kalat or Balochistan as it should be correctly termed. His

Highness the Khan is the de facto and de jure ruler of that country. We have treaty engagements with him under which, he is bound to keep his subjects from injuring British territory or people, to protect trade etc. But the treaty is with him as ruler only, and under none of the engagements are we called upon to enter directly into the manner in which he carries on his government."

Sir Bartle wrote as follows in 1876: "It was a cardinal rule to attempt no disintegration of the Khan of Kalat's sovereignty, whether nominal or real, over the Baloch tribes, but rather by every means in our power to uphold his authority." There was no attempt on the part of the Government of India to exercise any powers of paramountcy over Kalat; on the contrary, they did not even avail themselves of the authority delegated to them under the treaties, apart from suspending the payment of the annual subsidy. Lord Salisbury, the then secretary of State for India, while approving of the policy adopted by the Government of India wrote as follows to the Governor General-in-Council: "Armed intervention would appear an unfriendly act towards a State with which our relations have, until recently been cordial, while it would probably entail a prolonged occupation of the country, and might involve ulterior results of a serious kind in other quarters... His Majesty's Government trust that an early opportunity may be taken of again placing the relations between the Government of India and the Khan of Kalat on the friendly footing provided for by the Treaty of 1854, and thereby reestablish a position of affairs desirable in the interests of the British Government, and essential to the continued existence of Kalat as an independent State".¹ Thus the political position of Balochistan right up to the partition of the Subcontinent was that of an independent State governed by the British India Government through treaties negotiated at various times.

1. Ahmed Yar Khan, *Inside Balochistan*, Balochi Academy, Quetta

Political and Economic situation pre Partition

The Khan of Kalat, Mir Ahmed Yar Khan, on ascending to the throne in 1933, reversed most of the British imposed administrative measures and more or less reverted to the system established in 1666 under the loose Baloch tribes Confederacy. He made the Prime Minister responsible to the Legislature (Dar-ul-Umra and Dar-ul-Awam) with a cabinet comprising of selected and some nominated members, each with a separate portfolio. Besides the Cabinet, a State Council having 12 peoples' representatives and 6 members drawn from the Cabinet was set up. Qazis (Judges) were appointed in every Tehsil and a panel of Ulema was set up to advise the judges. Sharia Laws were reintroduced. A penal code was prepared and introduced by which justice was assured for everyone without any distinctions of caste, creed, color, race, religion or status.

Agriculture received due attention by the establishment of numerous farms and Baloch students were given stipends to specialize in this vocation. Balochistan is rich in fruits, both in quality and variety. An extensive chain of fruit farms was set up under the direct management of the State Government to streamline the horticulture production on commercial basis. This created a healthy competitive atmosphere between the State run and private sector farms, developing this sector of the economy on sound footings. Thus the first steps towards socio-economic well being of the State subjects were initiated.

Determination of Status at Partition

The Labor Party Government headed by Clement Atlee in Britain decided to send a 3-member Cabinet Mission to India in a final bid to devise the methodology for the transfer of power in India. Known as the Cripps Mission, it arrived in India on 24th March 1946. The Khan of Kalat, on the advice of Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the legal advisor to the Kalat State at the time, approached the Mission on behalf of his Government to discuss the future status of his State in the scheme of independence for India.

The Mission advised the Khan to have his case prepared by legal experts. Eminent lawyers I.I. Chundrigar, Sir Sultan Ahmed, Sardar B.I.C. Memon and Sir Walter Monkton were hired to prepare the case for the Kalat State, which after vetting by the Quaid himself, was submitted to the Mission in the form of a Memorandum. This Memorandum, briefly, re-stressed the following major points:

1. That Kalat is an independent and sovereign State, its relations with the British Government being based on various mutual Agreements and Treaties.
2. That Kalat is not an Indian State, its relations with India being of only a formal nature by virtue of Kalat's agreements with the British and that with the ceasing of the Agreement of 1876 with the Kalat Government, Kalat would regain its complete independence, as it existed prior to 1876; and that the Kalat Government would then be free to choose its own way without interference by others.
3. All such regions as were given under the control of the British in consequence of any treaty will be returned to the sovereignty of the Kalat State, and resume their original status as parts of the Kalat State.
4. The right to rule over these areas is vested only with the British Government, which is in direct control presently.
5. On the lapse of British sovereignty, the agreements in respect of these areas under their direct control shall cease to have any legal binding; and the rights hitherto vested in the British shall automatically be transferred back to the Kalat Government.
6. Other Baloch regions like Kharan, Lasbela and the Marri, Bugti areas were part and parcel of the Kalat State as acknowledged by the British; and must, therefore, go back to it when the latter vacates.

The Marri and Bugti Tumandars also added their application to the Memorandum, submitted in 1946, demanding that their tribal regions be included in a "federation" with Kalat.

The final Partition plan of June 3rd 1947 stated in respect of transfer of power in India vis-à-vis the States:

“All the rights surrendered by the States to the paramount power will return to the States. Political arrangements between the States on the one side, and the British Crown and British India on the other will thus be brought to an end. The void will have to be filled either by the States entering into a federal relationship with the successor Government or Governments in British India; or failing this, entering into particular political arrangements.”

The Quaid-e-Azam hailed this statement and on June 18th 1947, issued the following statement to the press:

“The Indian States will be fully independent, legally and constitutionally, as soon as the supremacy of the British ceases; and as such, the States will be free to act as per their wish whether to join the Indian Legislature or the Pakistan Legislative Assembly. In case of their decision to join either of the two, they can adjust their relations and arrangements anew as per their wish in the new setup.”

“The All India Muslim League's policy has been quite unambiguous from the very beginning that we would not interfere in the internal affairs of any State; and such problems must primarily be discussed and solved between the people of the State concerned. If any State wishes to consult us in the matter, we offer our services readily. In case a State desiring to retain its independence by cooperating with Pakistan in trade and economic affairs only, we welcome them to have political talks on the same to arrive at any solution agreed upon for mutual good.”

“I am of the firm opinion that the Memorandum of the Cabinet Mission of 12th May, 1946, clearly lays down the policy of His Majesty's Government in respect of the position of the Indian States. It nowhere makes it obligatory upon them to merge themselves with any Legislative Assembly, be it Indian or Pakistani. It is my personal belief that if any State wants to remain aloof, it may do so without any pressure from any quarter, whether it be the British Parliament or any political organization in the country. The British Government has clearly informed them (the States) that sovereignty is not transferable. It can be brought to an end, thus making the States attain their independence automatically”.²

The Quaid-e-Azam wrote to the Khan of Kalat that since the position of the Kalat State was different from the other Indian States, representation on behalf of the State should be made directly to the Viceroy in Delhi. The Chief Secretary of Kalat State was sent to Delhi with a draft of the new position of Kalat as prepared by legal experts. This resulted in a round table conference, held on 4th August 1947, in which Lord Mountbatten, Quaid-e-Azam, Mr. Liaqat Ali Khan, Chief Minister of Kalat, Sir Sultan Ahmed, the legal Advisor of Kalat State and the Khan of Kalat took part in the deliberations. The following points were agreed upon:

1. Kalat State will be independent on 15th August 1947, enjoying the same status as it originally held in 1838, having friendly relations with its neighbors.
2. In case the relations of Kalat with any future government got strained, Kalat will exercise its right of self-determination, and the British Government should take precautionary measures to help Kalat in the matter as per the Treaties of 1839 and 1841.

2. Ahmed Yar Khan. *Inside Balochistan*, Balochi Academy, Quetta

3. The Khan of Kalat, mentioning his services and those of the Baloch in the creation of Pakistan, expressed his full confidence in the Quaid-e-Azam and the 'Government of Pakistan' to be established under his leadership.

As a corollary to the round table conference at Delhi, another agreement was signed between Kalat and Pakistan on 4th August 1947. The points agreed upon were broadcast on 11th August, 1947, as under:

1. The Government of Pakistan agrees that Kalat is an independent State, being quite different in status from other States of India; and commits to its relations with the British Government as manifested in several agreements.
2. Legal opinion will be obtained to find out whether Pakistan Government is legally bound by the agreements and treaties that already exist between Kalat and the British Government.
3. Further talks will be held between the nominees of Pakistan and Kalat after obtaining the legal opinion on the above points.
4. In the meantime, a Standstill Agreement will be made between Pakistan and Kalat by which Pakistan shall stand committed to all the responsibilities and agreements signed by Kalat and the British Government from 1839 to 1947 and by this, Pakistan shall be the legal, constitutional and political successor of the British.
5. In order to discuss finally the relations between Kalat and Pakistan on matters of Defense, Foreign Relations and Communications, deliberations will be held in the near future in Karachi.³

3. Pakistan Archives, British Museum Library.

The Kalat Government made a formal declaration of its independence on 15th August 1947. A delegation comprising the Kalat Prime Minister and Foreign Minister was sent to Karachi for discussions to reach an honorable settlement vis-à-vis relations with Pakistan in the light of the mutually endorsed Standstill Agreement of 11th August, 1947.⁴

On his return, the Khan promptly summoned the Kalat State Houses of Parliament, the Dar-ul-Awam and Dar-ul-Umra, and proposed to the House to accord him a mandate on Kalat's merger with Pakistan. Both the Houses, however, contended unanimously that the proposal of Kalat's merger militated against the spirit of the 4th August 1947 agreement between Kalat Government and the spokesmen of Pakistan and also against the Independence Act of 1947. In view of this contention, the members proposed further talks with the Government of Pakistan on the basis of these agreements. This decision of Kalat's Parliament was forwarded to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Pakistan, for necessary processing.

Baloch leaders were not in favor of a merger without first thrashing out crucial issues such as Constitutional status, provincial autonomy, judicial system, control and allocation of resources, taxation, socio-economic development programs, and all other governance issues of vital importance to the life of a nation.

The Quaid handed over the matter to his newly formed Cabinet. The members of the cabinet were new entrants to such high office and lacked the requisite experience of handling sensitive matters like the demographic, ethnological, historical, cultural, traditional and democratic background of the Baloch and the peculiar status of Kalat State vis-à-vis the agreements made between Kalat, the British and subsequently Pakistan. The Cabinet approached the merger of Balochistan with Pakistan in an atmosphere of apprehension and animosity.

4. Quaid-c-Azam Papers, Pakistan Archives.

The Cabinet decided to cut off Kharan and Lasbela by giving them an equal status to Kalat and obtaining their 'mergers' with Pakistan directly. Makran, which had been a part of the Kalat State for the last 300 years, was made independent of Kalat on 17th March 1948; and one of the three Sardars made its ruler. Thus Makran, too, was made a part of Pakistan. These hasty, illogical, irrational and politically illegal and oppressive steps naturally disillusioned the Baloch people. They rightly felt that all, their erstwhile services and sacrifices in the cause of Pakistan were being ignored.

The wave of hatred and animosity generated by the irrational policies of the Government of Pakistan against Kalat was quickly spreading to an alarming dimension all over Balochistan. Particularly in the tribal areas, feelings were running high against Pakistan and the Baloch people were calling the position of the Khan of Kalat himself into question. Things were quickly moving towards a showdown. The Government of Pakistan instructed the Brigadier in Command at Quetta to go on full alert for action against Kalat State and the Agent to the Governor General began to prepare for police action.

This was the situation as it stood in the first quarter of 1948. The Khan of Kalat deeming it his patriotic duty towards Pakistan signed the merger documents in his personal capacity on 30th March 1948 in an effort to diffuse the situation. In his autobiography he admits that he did not have the mandate to sign the merger without the consent of the Houses of Parliament of Kalat State, thus making the merger undemocratic and illegal.

A fortnight after the merger, on the 15th of April 1948, the Agent to the Governor General in Balochistan issued an order in the name of the Quaid-e-Azam that it had been decided to maintain the *status quo ante* in Kalat. Balochistan was to revert to the position it held pre-partition. A Political Agent, an officer subordinate to the

AGG was appointed to look after the administration of the State and guide the Prime Minister in all internal affairs. Thus the legal entity of the Khan of Kalat was abolished and he was arrested on charges of treason. Within 20 hours of the order, many of the members of the Balochistan Cabinet were also arrested or exiled from Balochistan.

Kalat was taken by a brigade sent in by the Quaid more or less without any violence and the Pakistan flag was raised, the Khan's forces disbanded and all arms confiscated. The Khan's brother, Prince Agha Abdul Karim took to the hills and encamped at Shorawak on the border of Afghanistan and Pakistan. This is considered in the history of Balochistan as the first resistance war against the State of Pakistan. It did not come to much, with the Khan being put under arrest and Prince Agha Abdul Karim brought back in 1949, on promises of entertaining Baloch demands. The Khan was soon released and some semblance of peace was ensured through unfulfilled promises for the next eight years until the Martial Law of Ayub Khan.

The vivisection of Balochistan, particularly the further dissection of Kalat State was a painful operation for the Baloch to bear as Kalat and Quetta were separated in to different administrative divisions. It was, therefore, natural for the Baloch to feel alienated and progressively became more and more restive on account of the undemocratic treatment being meted out to them. It was in this background that a representative body of tribal Sardars and dignitaries of Kalat State approached the Khan on 17th December 1957 and submitted a memorandum drawing attention to the following salient points:

1. That the tribal Sardars and the dignitaries of Balochistan, while expressing their full faith and confidence in the Government of Pakistan, had assured the Government of their sincere cooperation in all matters. They had been loyal and sincere to the Government of Pakistan since the day of its birth.

2. That they had voluntarily shown the desire for a merger on 4th August 1947 by signing a document and handed over all the Baloch territories to Pakistan prior to the creation of the state. In appreciation of these sacrifices and services, the Government of Pakistan was requested not to make any alterations or bring about any changes in their local traditional customs, as these were part and parcel of their tribal way of life.
3. That the boundaries of Baloch territory were spread over thousands of miles touching the borders of Afghanistan, Iran and the Persian Gulf on one side and over 300 miles of coastline of the Arabian Sea on the other side. The Baloch tribes are keeping a strict and vigilant watch on these borders against activities detrimental to the interests of Pakistan.
4. The experience of the One Unit type of Government was dangerous for the ancient customs and way of life and as such they were unable to accept the same. It must be withdrawn.
5. They demanded that the Baloch should be treated at par with the tribal people of the North West Frontier, FATA, where the tribal customs and traditions are not challenged and adequate arrangements be made to safeguard their cultural values which they love more than their lives.
6. During the final merger talks of Kalat with Pakistan in 1948, they had expressed doubts that after the merger of Kalat their local customs would not be safe, and as such, they had then requested the Quaid-e-Azam and the Khan of Kalat to sign a joint written guarantee in this respect. Unfortunately, the request was not considered then. They earnestly beseech the Khan of Kalat now to see that their demands were accepted, thereby preserving their tribal culture and traditional way of life.

President General Sikandar Mirza was supposed to have great sympathy and experience of tribal affairs as he had served as the Head of the Department of Tribal Affairs for several years with great success. The Khan advised the Sardars and elders to keep complete peace and harmony amongst the tribes and extend full cooperation to the government in all matters. In the meantime he would try to arrange a meeting between the tribal leaders and the President. The Baloch tribes were getting more and more restless. The President received thousands of letters of protest against the administration of the States under the One Unit Government. These letters of protest carried veiled threats that if the decision was not revoked, the Baloch people would not hesitate to take up arms against the government. The matter was reaching a critical point now and finally the Khan brought it home to the President. At last a meeting between the Baloch Sardars and President Sikandar Mirza took place on 8th October 1957, in which 44 tribal Sardars participated. The following points were discussed:

1. That no change in the ancient tribal customs is made against the will of the Baloch tribes.
2. In appreciation of the selfless services and sacrifices of the people of Balochistan for the cause of Pakistan, the Government should be considerate and generous in allowing the people to be governed by their tribal customs. As the Khan of Kalat is fully aware of the ancient tribal way of life, it is requested that his advice and guidance should be sought if any change is deemed necessary. The changes must be gradual and not abrupt.
3. The amount sanctioned for the development and welfare of the tribal areas must be spent in consultations with the people, as in the past. The amount so far spent has gone to waste. The Government of Pakistan had promised to spend an amount of Rs. 80 million on development projects of

the Baloch State Union but according to our estimate and survey, the amount spent on the projects was not more than Rs. 10 million.

4. We would, therefore, request you to kindly investigate the matter and bring the culprits to book for cheating the government and the people of Balochistan on this account.⁵

The President responded by promising to look into all their demands sympathetically. He assured them that he would seek legal opinion on the matter of exemption of the Kalat State from the one Unit regime and suggested to the Khan to contact and seek advice from Lord Macnair of London. The Sardars should provide sufficient proof that the majority of people of Balochistan wanted separation from One Unit and also submit a detailed list of the traditions, customs and laws in order for him to study these in the light of the laws of the country and see how far these could be acquiesced. He also exhorted them to continue maintaining peace and harmony while striving for the development and progress of Pakistan. He also stated that in order to make the withdrawal of Kalat State (including Lasbela, Makran and Kharan sub-States of Kalat) more democratic and legal, a referendum of the Baloch people is held on the question throughout the State. This he said was essential because Pakistan was wedded to democracy.

The President was being challenged by the opposition and it is alleged that he was preparing to impose Martial Law if he was defeated in the upcoming elections. When informed of the President's intentions. General Ayub Khan, Commander-in-Chief of the Pakistan army is reported as having said, "I would be the last man to counsel the President to take such a wrong step. The army's primary duty is to defend the country. If entangled in politics, the army will lose its real character." Political wrangling

5. Ahmed Yar Khan, *Inside Baluchistan** Balochi Academy, Quetta

continued from October 1957 to October 1958, when General Ayub Khan himself imposed Martial Law. This period saw more and more unrest in Balochistan, non-cooperation of Baloch Sardars with the administration for putting their demands on the backburner and an escalation in tensions between the Government of Pakistan and the Baloch.

The dawn of 6th October 1958 will remain fresh in the memories of the Baloch, for it was on this day that the forces of tyranny, oppression, repression and blood-shed were let loose on the simple and innocent people of Balochistan for no crime against the State of Pakistan except that they demanded to be treated as equal citizens with Fundamental Human and Civil rights to live freely and productively according to their ancient traditions. On that fateful day, the people of Kalat woke to the roar of guns to find that their town had been invaded and occupied by none other than the Pakistan Army.

The Balochistan Underground; known as BUG; came into being in 1959, when the Ayub regime decided to do away with the provinces of West Pakistan once again. The opposition to this move of the center was strong in all the smaller provinces of Sindh, NWFP and specially Balochistan, where Nauroz Khan Zehri, Chief of the Sarwan tribes took to the hills with his son and a large number of his nephews and relatives. A few clashes took place, until Brig. Tikka Khan (later General) known as the butcher of Bengal and Balochistan, and Nauroz Khan's nephew Doda Khan, negotiated the return of Nauroz with the Quran as the guarantor of no ill treatment and settlement of the grievances of the Baloch. Nawab Nauroz, his son, six of his nephews and 4 others were arrested and tried in the Hyderabad jail. Nauroz died in jail a frail old man of 90 years while his son and nephews were hanged. The nephews asked for the Quran to be hung around their necks during their hanging, because it was their guarantor. The second resistance war of the Baloch thus ended with the hanging of 11 resistance leaders.

Sher Mohammed Marri took to the Marri hills in 1962, and remained in the mountains until 1968. The resistance was a protest against the hanging of resistance leaders, the One Unit and for the reinstatement of the provinces. The paramilitary forces had to withdraw after suffering substantial losses and casualties. In 1968, Air Marshall Nur Khan, then the Governor of West Pakistan, negotiated a peace treaty with the Baloch in which the One Unit was to be done away with and the provinces again reinstated. After the forced abdication of Ayub Khan and the announcement of general elections by General Yahya Khan, the Baloch formed the National Awami Party whose manifesto and political programme was progressive and based on nationality rights.

Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, in December 1971 took over as President. Immediately on assuming power, Bhutto set about formulating a new Constitution, which he claimed would establish a truly democratic system and incorporate the demands of the newly delineated provinces by the breakup of the one unit Provinces of West Pakistan. The final draft of the Constitution was presented in the National Assembly in August 1973 for ratification and signing. All but three members signed the Constitution. These were Nawab Khair Baksh Marri, Ali Ahmed Talpur and one member from the Frontier province. Nawab Khair Baksh Marri spoke eloquently and in an emotional manner against the provincial rights incorporated in the new Constitution as being inadequate and not representative of the aspirations of the smaller province's control over their natural resources for development and self-rule.⁶

Prior to the presentation of the final draft of the Constitution, Balochistan was being administered by a government of the National Awami Party (Balochistan) led

6. National Assembly debates on 1973 Constitution. National Assembly Proceedings Record August 1973

by Nawab Khair Baksh Marri. Sardar Attaullah Mengal as Chief Minister headed this government while Khair Baksh was representing Balochistan in the center. From 1970 to 1973 Balochistan was in the grip of a drought that had had a devastating effect on the fragile economy, based largely on livestock breeding, and Marri tribesmen were migrating into areas that afforded enough water and pastures for their livestock. This migration led them through the area of Feeder. Inevitably the hungry and thirsty livestock was let loose into standing crops belonging to the Jamali and other resident tribes. This resulted in a localized but dangerous armed conflict between the Marri and resident local tribes. The provincial government tried to resolve the issue through traditional mediation of the Jirga system prevalent in Balochistan. Whatever the merits and demerits of this inter-tribal conflict it gave Bhutto the excuse that he had been looking for to overthrow the Attaullah provincial government. The Federal agencies were brought in immediately to stage incidents that would justify dismissal of the provincial government.

The air force was ordered to bomb the Marri tribesmen while the Frontier Constabulary was ordered to surround them. An escalation in the situation, which would have had dire consequences, was averted at the last minute by the personal intervention of Nawab Khair Baksh Marri and Mir Ghous Baksh Bizenjo, the Governor of Balochistan. Mir sahib stopped the air force action while Nawab Khair Baksh negotiated a settlement amongst the tribal antagonists. This incident took place in December-January 1972-73.

Jam Abdul Qadir, at the behest of Bhutto, sent some of his armed tribesmen into the hills overlooking the RCD highway where they looted and harassed people using this road. The Provincial government ordered the local paramilitary forces to control the situation and arrest the miscreants. The High Command refused to comply with the provincial government on the orders of the Federal

government. To combat the deteriorating situation, the NAP government raised a force of levies (local militia) of their own loyal tribesmen and issued arms to them from the provincial arms depot. This force of some one hundred was dispatched to Las Bela to capture and bring the miscreants to justice.

In the meantime another cog in the wheels of this conspiracy was put in place, the so-called Iraqi arms find. It was claimed by the Federal government that a huge arms find had been made in the Iraqi Embassy in Islamabad meant for Balochistan's movement for secession and independence. Bhutto made a big show of this and put the arms on a train for display to prove to the general public from Islamabad to Karachi that NAP was planning secession from Pakistan for the purposes of creation of a greater Balochistan.

Using these contrived law and order situations as an excuse, Bhutto dismissed the Provincial Government of NAP in February 1973 and made Akbar Bugti the Governor in a move that brought Balochistan under direct Federal government rule once again. The NWFP provincial government of NAP under Wali Khan resigned in protest at this illegal dismissal of the Balochistan NAP government.⁷

The paramilitary forces surrounded all the tribal areas where they felt resistance would be experienced such as the Mengal-Bizenjo areas, Kalat and Khuzdar, and the Marri, Bugti area. Since Balochistan had been in the grip of a drought for the past three years (1970-73), the population was forced to migrate to Sindh for grazing their herds and finding employment. The population, which remained in the tribal areas, was totally dependent on the import of food and necessities of life from close by cities of Sibi, Khuzdar, Kalat, etc. The paramilitary forces tried to stop this flow of food into the tribal areas and arrested a number of Baloch

7. Lawrence Liftshulz, Far Eastern Economic Review, September 1976.

along with their camels and all the goods they were carrying. This resulted in some clashes and eventually culminated into a full-scale civil war from May 1973 to July 1977. The Pakistan Army deployed nearly 4 divisions of troops to try and quell the resistance.

The Pakistan Army reportedly suffered 5,400 casualties while the Baloch suffered over 15,000 casualties, the majority being civilian or non-combatants. The guerrilla forces only suffered 160 casualties. Bombing and slaughter of their herds systematically destroyed the livelihood of the tribesmen. This war forced over 5,000 families to seek refuge in Afghanistan from 1974 to 1992.

All of the NAP leadership was arrested in August 1973 immediately after the signing of the Constitution and a tribunal was set up to try them on sedition and treason charges. This tribunal was finally disbanded in December 1977 and all the internees released by the Martial Law dictator Zia ul Haq.

In a classic example of the authoritarian undemocratic manner of governance of Balochistan General Musharraf congratulated the commando unit and FC on what he called a very successful operation when the 82-year-old Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti was murdered in August 2006 in a military operation, and thus reminded all dissenters and nationalists of what he had declared in Zhob, "I will hit you in such a manner that you will not even know what hit you." He has delivered on his threat and will now have to face the consequences.

Economic exploitation

The scanty rain and snowfall in Balochistan, averaging between 6 and 7 inches, is nowhere sufficient to ensure cultivation without artificial assistance. The husbandman's return, is only assured where his cultivation is dependent on the karez, or underground water channel, on springs, or on diverted water of streams and rivers.

The crops sown are wheat, maize, jowar (sorghum), watermelons, dates, rice in the Kachhi and Makran area, and many varieties of fruits. Fruits form the major export crop of Balochistan and its Kala Kohlu apples are sought after in all Pakistani markets. Grapes, cherries, apricots, dry fruits, pears, are some of its well-known fruits which are cultivated for domestic and export markets. Fruit tinning industry is also active in Quetta. Vegetables are only grown on permanently irrigated lands. But no effort has been made to preserve water by making reservoirs for the development of agriculture. In valleys like Quetta, Pishin, Loralai, Kalat, Mastung, Khuzdar, Sibi, Zhob etc, tube wells have been sunk for agricultural use. But this has had an adverse effect on the ground water due to the scanty rainfall. In Quetta, the underground water level has dropped to 1200 feet or more and there is an acute shortage of water in the city and surrounding areas now. Yet there are enormous valleys where alluvial soil has made them potentially very productive but the lack of irrigation water has left an estimated 30 million hectares lying fallow, Turbat produces 54 varieties of dates but due to lack of infrastructure, the crop is not sent into Pakistani or export markets.⁸

Lacking agricultural development, the tribesmen continue with their century's old nomadic traditions of raising livestock and this is the main reason that the Baloch tribes have yet to settle in peri-urban areas or villages. Water is the most important ingredient for societies to settle, which is lacking all over Balochistan.

The biggest economic activity in the province is mining. Gas in very large quantities has been found at Sui (1952), Loti, Pir Koh, Dohdak, Zin, mostly in the Bugti area. It is supplied to all of Pakistan but in Balochistan only Quetta and a few other towns of 5 districts received gas to

8. Balochistan Gazetteer, 1937

supply after 1985. The potential for further discoveries in the Marri, Khetrar, Khan Mekhtar, Duki, Sibi, Zarghun areas and other parts of Balochistan is enormous but the central governments have not been able to exploit these areas because of the opposition of the tribes. The local people have been denied any benefits, which should have accrued to them from the exploitation of gas reserves. It should be mentioned here that whereas the Bugti gas fields supplied 100% of the gas consumed in Pakistan to date it has now been depicted to supplying only 30% and the fields will go dry in another 15 years.

The royalty and taxes for gas has been agreed to on the basis of wellhead price of Rs. 37 per mcuft, (which was set in 1954 and remains the same today). Rs. 5 billion were paid to the provincial government recently by the ex-Prime Minister Zafar-ullah-Jamali and that is only one-third of what is due but this did not get spent in developing the gas producing area but consumed by the provincial government itself for its own running expenses. Nawab Akbar Bugti was receiving the rent for the land under use of the gas installations and pipelines and using it to meet the administrative costs incurred in performing his tribal duties of providing justice, giving refuge to mostly women refuge seekers, and development expenditures. It is true he was receiving some funds from the company for his own use including vehicles, their petrol and maintenance and his own household expenses and these have always been tacitly approved by all governments. But most of the rentals were being used to develop 30 primary schools, 11 secondary schools, an Intermediate Degree College, a Livestock research and teaching College in Dera Bugti and some agriculture works.

One to two hundred people were present everyday at his Dera where jirgas were adjudicating cases being brought by the tribesmen. Tea and lunch was being served, free of cost, to all in what is known as a lunger system. This cost is huge and was the main recipient of the

revenues from the rentals. T can also emphatically debunk the vicious government propaganda that Baloch Sardars had jails as in all my travels in Balochistan I never saw any such jails in any area, be it Dera Bugti, Kahan (Marri), or Wad (Mengal) areas. The Baloch justice system is based on material compensation and “mulk badar” (exile) and has no concept of imprisonment.

All the coal produced was consumed in Quetta for WAPDA's power plant, which has been shut down for many years under the IPP power generation policy. This mining too is conducted using primitive methods and no modern systems have been introduced. This industry employs a large number (estimated 10,000 to 15,000) of unskilled laborers. The potential for using coal based power generation is enormous in Balochistan, provided the government formulates a proper policy for its development.

A typical case of undemocratic socio-economic development is the Saindak project in the Chagai desert. The feasibility study of the Saindak project was started in 1975. The project, the only metallurgy project in Pakistan, would yield an annual production of 144,000 tons copper, gold 1.47 tons, and silver 27.6 tons per year for a period of 80 years. The project would generate annual revenues of US\$ 55 million approximately at the rates of copper, gold and silver in 1975. The project would also have resulted in creating 1,288 direct and 11,000 indirect jobs (mostly for the people of Balochistan) opening new avenues of down stream business/industry, developing infrastructure and transferring know-how of metal mining technology in Balochistan. Schools, hospital, a township for 500 persons, railway line, power supply, water supply, road from Taftan to Saindak, were all completed by Baloch engineers and management by 1995. Initially the copper was to be refined in China, the technical partner in the project; but it has been suggested that a refinery be built at Saindak, where the entire infrastructure for the setting up of a refinery are now in place. This would make the project more feasible as it

would then produce by-products such as Sulphuric acid, elementary sulphur, and 240,000 tons phosphates for fertilizer, pyrite, and Magnetite concentrate.

The project started operations in 1995, and produced 1,700 billets of copper earning Rs 158 million in three months of trial production. But the Benazir government closed down the project late in 1995 on the plea that the government did not have the funds to continue and international copper prices had dropped making the project unfeasible. The then Finance Minister, V.A. Jaffery, wrote on the demand of Rs. 1.5 billion working capital, 'A bottomless pit and no funds are to be allocated'.

The government of Nawaz Sharif did not restart this project although the Irani government made a very good offer on a barter system. Iran has a copper field approximately 200 km from Saindak and has built a very large refinery but its smelter is of a smaller size compared to Saindak's. The offer would have allowed the Saindak blister copper to be refined in Iran and Iranian copper ore smelted in Saindak instead of shipping it to China over thousands of kilometers of oceans and seas.

The government should have considered the benefits of this project, which would have given the country access to gold and silver deposits, and even if the international copper market was down, it could have supplied all the requirements of domestic industry. Pakistan imports more than 150,000 tons of copper for its military and electric wire manufacturing industry. The initial capital cost had already been made, and not to run it would mean wastage of the Rs. 16 billion that had been spent on its development.

The project has been handed over to a Chinese company on a 10-year lease basis by the General Musharraf government. The distribution of profits is according to a formula that is incomprehensible. The Chinese company takes 75%, the Federal Government 24% and only 1% of

revenue is passed onto the Balochistan Government. A very equitable distribution indeed! The vast copper and gold reserves of Koh-i-Dalil have been similarly leased to an Australian company.

The Gawadar Port Project is another contentious project undertaken by the General Musharraf regime. The Benazir government, in its second tenure, developed a fishermen's village on the peninsula of Gawadar and one in Pasni with cold storage facilities and a market for the fishermen to sell their catch to contractors. The fishermen also built their houses and small jetties for their boats and trawlers in Gawadar. All Baloch stakeholders welcomed it, as it gave an impetus for local economic and social sector development, although not much was done to develop the infrastructure to sell the catch within Pakistan. The fishermen sold their catch in Karachi, Oman, Muscat, UAE and Aden while returning to their villages with only small catches for domestic consumption.

The way the Gawadar Port Project is planned and its feasibility are questionable. The plan does not envisage local human resource development for the running of the port. It also does not cater to the need of developing industries around the port area, which would make it a hub of industrial and economic activity thus making it economically viable and encourage human resource development. Instead it is planned to be just a transit trade port for goods from and to China and the Central Asian Countries through the Kara Kurram Highway and Afghanistan. The distance from the port to these countries and the infrastructure available makes this plan even more questionable. The Baloch fishermen's village has been shifted 40 or more kilometers inland making them lose their livelihood. A Chinese company, which is using some local labor, built Gawadar Port with most of the semi and skilled labor imported from outside Balochistan. The port operations have now been handed over to a Singapore company.

The planned infrastructure, like the highway and rail link with Quetta and the motorway to Rotadero (Sindh), both are yet to be started. The coastal highway linking Karachi, Ormarra, Pasni and Gawadar has been completed. This is primarily of strategic military importance since Ormarra and Pasni are both naval bases and a naval base is also to be built in Gawadar. This naval base is strategically important because it sits on the mouth of the Hormuz Straits through which all the oil is shipped from the Persian Gulf region to the rest of the world.

The main objection of the Baloch to Gawadar Port's development is that they are not stakeholders in its development; in fact, they have been excluded from it. The rich non-Baloch elite has bought up the land where the city is to be built and large service industry groups are vying to buy large tracts of land for hotels etc at throw away prices. The Baloch feel that they will become a minority in their own land when there is a mass influx of skilled and professional outsiders, especially when there is no local human resource development planned. They quote the Karachi situation where the indigenous Sindhis have been pushed out and the majority population is now non-Sindhi and thus the political decision-making institutions have also passed into non-Sindhi hands. Also since the port will be federally administered all the revenues will go to the Center and Balochistan will again be left high and dry.

Strategic importance

The big power game began in 2003 in Balochistan and the ongoing military operations are an adjunct to this dangerous game. The Pakistan government planned to play the China card against the US. It was thought necessary because the US has proven to be only a fair weather friend while the Chinese have stood besides Pakistan since the 1960's. From time to time, the US has responded negatively to Pakistan's needs especially in the case of wars with India and the nuclear rivalry between India and Pakistan which

resulted in American military and economic sanctions against both countries. India always had the USSR and now Russia as its ally so it was not such a blow for them while Pakistan had put all its eggs in the US basket.

Pakistan invited China to invest in Balochistan in the Gomal Zam Dam, (now handed over to the Frontier Works Organization, a military arm), Saindak gold and copper project and the development of the Gawadar port. This extension of Chinese influence close to the Hormuz Straits and thereby into the Middle East has never been in the strategic interests of the US as it has tried to contain China within its own borders. The US strategy has always accepted India as the bulwark for containing China but this has now been circumvented through Pakistan. It is therefore alleged that the US is playing a covert but active role in keeping Balochistan restive and some reports even suggest that the bomb blasts, killing and kidnappings of Chinese engineers working on the Gomal Zam Dam was engineered by US agencies.

On the other hand, analysts are of the opinion that the cantonments being planned and built in Balochistan are at the behest of the US so that they can be used to counter Iran's nuclear ambitions. The US could use these cantonments and bases for operations against Iran as well as surround Iran from all sides as their forces are already in neighboring Afghanistan and Iraq. The Balochistan border is the only side that the US does not control. US opposition to the IPI project is also a part of this grand design against Iran.

Balochistan, an economically and militarily weak region with a scattered and small population would be easily controllable by the US directly by pumping in money and negotiating a defense pact aimed against Iran. At least this seems to be the US objective for the balkanization of Pakistan. Pushtoonistan would most probably align itself with Afghanistan while Sindh could align with Rajistan in

India leaving the landlocked Punjab as the remnant of Pakistan. In such a scenario, Pakistan's nuclear programme would also be nullified and possibly scrapped by US pressure as the only Muslim state with such a capability.

Balkanization will play directly into the hands of the US although the Pentagon has denied any hand in making the maps of a new Middle East including Pakistan by a think tank. The US would like to see the redrawing of borders to serve its own strategic interests. The US is adamant in not allowing the Chinese to have access to the Hormuz Straits through the Gawadar Port. Secondly, the US wishes to see a weakened nuclear Islamic State of Pakistan without the rich unexplored energy and natural resources of Balochistan, while trying to weaken the Islamic State of Iran, on the threshold of becoming a nuclear power, by Balkanizing it into three states. An independent greater Balochistan, including Pakistani Balochistan, Iranian Baloch province of Sistan and the provinces of Shorawak and Helmand of Afghanistan, would, in the neo-con thinking of the US, be too weak to survive on its own and so the US could step in and gain access to the natural resources, while achieving its other strategic objectives. It could then also use Baloch soil for anti-Iran operations. This thinking is abundantly clear in the Afghanistan and Iraq invasions and the US support Israel received for invading Lebanon to eliminate Hizbollah.

Depending on the newly elected civilian government's reactions to Baloch demands, which unfortunately have always been knee-jerk reactions, there are two possible directions the situation can go. If, and it is a big if, the Center's advisors and decision makers wish to safeguard Pakistan's integrity, they will have to accept the demands of complete provincial autonomy where the provinces have control over their natural resources, socio-political and economic development without any interference by the Center. Nothing less will now be acceptable to the minority

provinces. If this is not acceptable to the ruling elite then there is great danger to the Federation of separatist movements gaining strength resulting in a balkanization of Pakistan.

This projected regional scenario would open a Pandora's Box and separatist movements will gain strength in the whole of the Sub-Continent and the Middle East culminating into small economically and militarily weak fiefdoms or states embroiling the whole region in guerrilla wars of survival and a human catastrophe on an unprecedented scale. This whole region is not only resource rich but is Muslim dominated and the Islamophobia of the US and its allies will be the victors if such a situation arises.

Conclusion

The 2008 census is to begin soon and only then will we get a better idea of the population of Balochistan. At the moment there are conflicting numbers being quoted. According to Government sources the population is just 8 million while some claim it is even less. In my personal estimation I would put it over 10 million as in most of the previous census exercises women have not been counted properly due to traditional tribal customs of not exposing their women. The other reason is that a very large number of Baloch have migrated to the UAE, Qatar, Muscat, Middle East and the provinces of Sindh, South Punjab and even to central Punjab over many turbulent years. Their new generations are mostly registered in the areas they were born and thus counted in the populations of those areas and not Balochistan. These migrations have taken place because of civil wars, famine and drought along with a complete lack of any genuine socio-economic development.

It has been proven that government cannot do development works to improve the living standards of the people because of the vested interests and the corruption,

inherent in our political system. Also because of the economic policies being implemented which cater only to strategic, federal and class interests. Many a time the Prime Minister and the President have claimed that these mega projects will improve the living standards of the people of Balochistan by the trickle down effect but history is witness that results are usually the opposite.

I once asked Nawab Khair Baksh if he still believed in an independent greater Balochistan. His answer was not only philosophical but also very realistic. He said, "If Balochistan were to become independent in today's geopolitical regional situation we would be such a weak state that any of the powerful nations like the US or Russia could dominate us, as we would be economically and militarily weak. It is better to live and negotiate with a weak master (Pakistan) than a powerful master who would dictate its own terms and conditions for strategic and vested interests."

In my humble opinion, only a truly democratic dispensation, dialogue and consensual amendments in the Constitution to address provincial autonomy, fiscal powers, control over natural resources, fundamental, civil and human rights can now save the situation. The Balochistan crises must be addressed on an emergency basis to rectify the 60 year mishandling of Baloch demands resulting in grievances and resentments that have brought Pakistan to the brink of another civil war. Pakistan can no longer afford military rule because it has resulted in burdens of international debts, balance of payments deficit, inflationary trends that are widening the gap between the haves and have nots and an economy that is nearing default while its policies have driven the country into another catastrophic civil war with the Baloch.



Sungi

Sungi Development Foundation

Sungi Development Foundaion was established in 1989 as a non-profit, non-governmental organization. Sungi's mission is to "bring about policy and institutional changes by mobilizing marginalized communities to transform their lives through equitable and sustainable use of resources without any discrimination against social origin, sex, race, caste and religion."