CHAPTER 5

BALOCH NATIONALISM AND THE PAKISTAN STATE

Baloch Nationalism is one of those phenomena, which refutes the theories that view nationalism as an effect of ‘industrial social organisation’, as advocated by Gellner or the product of ‘print capitalism’, which Anderson believes. Rather it arose from the tribal mode of society, which was least literate and least industrialised. Indeed, Baloch nationalism emerged due to the alien domination and excessive state intervention (Khan, 2005:114). The occupation of eastern Balochistan by the British, the martyrdom of Mehrab Khan in 1839, the coming of western Balochistan under the Persian control in 1928 followed by the execution of Mir Dost Mohammad Khan, the death of famous Baloch freedom fighters in the Persian jails and, the imprisonment of the rebellious tribal chief, Noora Mengal by the British were few among many events that contributed to the development of the Baloch national consciousness. Coupled with it, the other developments and events within and outside the British Indian Empire such as the First World War, the 1917 Russian revolution and the subsequent civil war, revolution in Turkey and the Indian nationalist struggle further provided a fillip to the growth of Baloch nationalism. Meanwhile, the British intelligentsia, including the intellectual works of the European writers and travellers in the 19th and early 20th centuries served as an important channel of new awareness among the Baloch people. Even, the Baloch nationalist writers and poets had also stimulating role for the Baloch nationalism. The landscape of Balochistan had undergone a considerable change, when the networks of roads, railways, telegraph lines, rest houses, cantonment of British troops etc, though on limited scale were constructed especially in northern Balochistan by the British during the end of 19th century. This in turn brought the Baloch people close to each others and as such, they came to know more than their forefathers had known their country and the world at large. Nonetheless, Baloch nationalism became an important political force only after 1920, especially after the Young Baloch movement and the Anjuman-e Ittehad-e Balochan (organisation for the unity of the Baloch) in 1920s (Breseeg, 2004: 195-197). The first successful nationalist campaign against the state recruitment in 1929 that turned into an arms mutiny reinforces this fact. Thereafter, several underground political groupings, including an anti-colonial ‘Quit Balochistan’ movement were launched. In
the following years, the Kalat State National Party (KSNP) replaced the Anjuman and intensified its activities to support the notion of an independent, united Balochistan, after the withdrawal of the British Raj. Simultaneously, the Baloch nationalists started publishing newspapers and one of them, *Al-Baluch* from Karachi even published a map of an independent or Greater Balochistan comprising the areas of Iranian Balochistan, Kalat, Baloch principalities, British Balochistan, and some parts of Sindh and Punjab (Khan, 2005:113-114 & also see Harrison, 1981:22-23). Of particular note, bulk of the leaders and members of Baloch movement, for the first time were drawn from the different classes besides the feudal and tribal mode in the hope to broaden the social base of the movement. For instance, the urban bourgeoisie (large and small), educated youth, nationalist-minded members of the clergy and tribal aristocracy together spearheaded the Baloch movement that marked the beginning of far-reaching changes in Baloch political history (Breseeg, 2004:202).

The present chapter attempts to analyse that what has been the nature of interaction between age-old Baloch ethnicity and the new state of Pakistan? What has been the affect of the approaches, strategies and policies of the state of Pakistan on the ethnic consciousness of the Baloch people? It will also be an attempt of the present chapter to note down that what steps have been taken by Islamabad to suppress the Baloch consciousness. External involvement in Balochistan will also be discussed in detail.

When British withdrawal from India came close, the goals of the movements on the sub-continent shifted rapidly towards independence. The Baloch national movement was no exception. The KSNP and different nationalist political organisations joined the Khan and started to work more on the consolidation of Kalat state’s legal status as a sovereign state. They hoped that Kalat would become the nucleus of a Baloch state following colonial withdrawal and thus, would attract other Baloch areas (Breseeg, 2004: 221). Mir Ahmad Yar Khan, the last ruler of the Kalat State wrote to the British Government requesting the restoration of the international status of the Khanate. As a matter of fact, the Khanate was considered to be a part of India under the Government of India Act, 1935, which was strongly resented by the Khan and Baloch nationalists. Hence, the Khan submitted a protest to government viewing the same as an infringement of the Treaty of 1876 (Baloch I, 1987:170). Equally, the Kalat Prime Minister forwarded a letter to Secretary for the Department of Political and External Affairs, expressing the concern of his government:
It is true that the Government of India Act of 1935 holds Kalat state as situated in India, but the state was never consulted in the drafting of this Act, nor was the state, in any way, a party to it;... an Act passed by one Government for the administration of his own territories can have no legal effect, one way or other, in respect of the territories of the other government. Were it not so, this would be equally ‘legal’ for the British Government to include Persia and Afghanistan within the borders of India by introducing a clause to that effect in one of its Acts (Baloch I, 1987:170).

However, the British subsequently informed the Khan that the Treaty of 1876 was still valid as the government recognises it in every respect and henceforth will characterise the relations between the British and Kalat (Breseeg, 2004:232). While making a strong legal case for independence, the Khan of Kalat further declared that the legal status of Kalat like Nepal is different from other princely states in Indian subcontinent as both have direct treaty relations with Whitehall unlike the native states, which dealt with the British Indian Government in New Delhi (Harrison, 1981:23). It was on this basis, the Khan did not join the Chamber of Princes in Delhi, invariably arguing that they were on a separate footing and not part of the British Indian Empire. It was against this background, the Kalat was not really forced to join either India or Pakistan at the time of partition in 1947, but the Khan made it clear that he sought independence (Foreign Policy Centre Paper, 2006:19).

When the British Cabinet Mission came to India in March 1946, Mir Ahmad Yar Khan approached the M.A. Jinnah (then legal adviser of the Khanate) to discuss the future status of his state in the scheme of independence for India. Jinnah presented a memorandum to the commission stating that:

Kalat expected to restore its pre-1876 status by regaining its full independence and recovering its sovereign rights over all the Kalat territories held or leased by Britain upon the cessation of her power in India. As stated by the memorandum, the state of Kalat: “...will become fully sovereign and independent in respect to both internal and external affairs, and will be free to conclude treaties with any other government or state....The Khan, his government, and his people can never agree to Kalat being included in any form of Indian Union...”(Breseeg, 2004: 229).

Not only this, M.A. Jinnah also tried to convince the mission in 1946 regarding the status of Balochistan, giving the references of several representatives of the British, who had served and described the Kalat as a sovereign and independent
state. Take the case of Sir W.L. Merewether, who was in charge of the British Government’s relations with Kalat in 1872 had written as follows:

…there can not, in my opinion, be least doubt of the course which should be followed with regard to Kalat or Balochistan as it should be correctly termed. H H 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” (Breseeg, 2004, 229).

Additionally, Jinnah informed the mission that geographically the Kalat state does not fall within the territorial limits of India. The Cabinet Mission however, viewed all these demands as legitimate, but left them unresolved. Notwithstanding, the Khan and Baloch nationalists continued their activities seeking independence. Hence, the chief secretary of the Kalat State was sent to Delhi with a draft of the new position of Kalat State as prepared by the legal experts. It resulted in a round table conference held on August 4, 1947, in which representatives of the British Government, the Government of Pakistan and the Government of Kalat participated and, they agreed upon as:

Kalat State will be independent on August 5, 1947, enjoying the same status as it originally held in 1838, having friendly relations with its neighbours. In case the relations of Kalat with any future government become 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 (Breseeg, 2004:232).

The same agreement was however formally announced on August 11, 1947, accepting the Balochistan as a sovereign entity. It stated: “the Government of Pakistan recognises Kalat’s status as an independent, sovereign state; this status is different from that of Indian states” (Baloch I, 1987:173). Following the announcement of the agreement, the Khan declared Kalat’s independence in public speech on August 15, 1947, a day after the creation of Pakistan. While addressing to the audience in Balochi (unlike the colonial rule when the mode of communication was English, Persian or Urdu), the Khan stated: “Today is our country independent, and I can express my views freely and openly” (Baloch I, 1987:178). This decision was subsequently supported and approved by the Darul-Awam, the lower house of the Kalat that was especially convened in September 1947 for this purpose. It is to be noted here, the
possibility of special relations between independent Kalat State and Pakistan was not ruled out. Meanwhile, the Khan prepared a written constitution of the Khanate that provided a bicameral legislature, *diwan* consisting Darul-Umara (the House of the tribal chiefs or Upper House) and the Darul-Awam (the House of Commons or Lower House), besides the other provisions. In no times after the introduction of constitution, the Khan declared the holding of election for diwan, first time in the history of Balochistan, where the KSNP won 39 out of 51 seats in the house. On December 13, the Khan summoned the Lower House to discuss the issues confronting the Kalat state. One of the important decisions taken by the house was embracing Balochi as the official and national language in the state of Kalat besides constituting a committee to study and report how Balochi language may be introduced as a medium of instructions in the schools (Baloch I.1987: 179-180).

However, the Khan was perturbed following the change in Pakistan’s policy towards Balochistan. This was reflected when the Khan visited Pakistan in October 1947, as the head of a sovereign state. As a matter of fact, he was received as the King of Balochistan by thousands of Baloch in Karachi, where the Khan urged them to “make every effort for the upliftment of their country and to raise their educational standard” (Breseeg, 2004:235). But the Khan, contrary to the diplomatic tradition was not received by the Governor General or by the Prime Minister of Pakistan, was a clear signal reinforcing the shift in Pakistan’s policy vis-à-vis the Khanate, which upset the Khan (Breseeg, 2004:235). Not only this, M.A. Jinnah treated the Khan like a subordinate prince of British India and advised him to expedite the process of joining the Khanate with Pakistan. Nonetheless, the Khan refused to comply with the advice of Jinnah and said:

> As Baluchistan is a land of numerous tribes, the people there must be consulted in the affairs prior to any decision. I take, according to the prevalent tribal convention, no decision, which can be binding upon them unless they are taken into confidence by their Khan (Baloch I, 1987:183).

Therefore, the Khan in order to discuss Jinnah’s proposal of accession summoned the session of Kalat State’s Assembly, *diwan* on December 12, 1947, where the *Dar-ul-Awam* unanimously opposed the incorporation of the Kalat into Pakistan, viewing the same as an infringement of the agreement arrived at between the Kalat State and Pakistan on August 4, 1947 and against the Independence Act of 1947. However, the Assembly offered to negotiate with Pakistan besides affirming the
position that “Kalat was an independent country and would only enter into treaty relations with Pakistan” (Breseeeg, 2004:232). Among those who in the meetings of the Diwan spoke in clear terms strengthening the notion of an independent Balochistan was Ghaus Bakhs Bizenjo, then an assembly member from the majority party, the KSNP and, who later became the Governor of Balochistan. His speech in the Kalat Assembly on December 14, 1947 is worth mentioning here, where Bizenjo articulated the case of the Kalat’s independence vis-à-vis the state of Pakistan in the best possible way, while condemning the unfriendly attitude of Pakistan state. He argued:

We have a distinct civilisation and a separate culture like that of Iran and Afghanistan. We are Muslims but it is not necessary that by virtue of being Muslims we should lose our freedom and merge with others. If the mere fact that we are Muslims requires us to join Pakistan then Afghanistan and Iran, both Muslim countries, should also amalgamate with Pakistan. We were never a part of India before the British rule. Pakistan’s unpleasant and loathsome desire that our national homeland, Balochistan should merge with it is impossible to consider. We are ready to have friendly relationship with that on the basis of sovereign equality but by no means ready to merge with Pakistan. We can survive without Pakistan. But the question is what Pakistan would be without us? I do not propose to create hurdles for the newly created Pakistan in the matter of defence and external communication. But we want an honourable relationship not a humiliating one. If Pakistan wants to treat us as sovereign people, we are ready to extend the hand of friendship and cooperation. If Pakistan does not agree to do so, flying in the face of democratic principles, such an attitude will be totally unacceptable to us, and if we are forced to accept this fate then every Baloch son will sacrifice his life in defence of his national freedom (Bizenjo quoted in Foreign Policy Centre Paper, 2006:20).

But, the Government of Pakistan did not bother what the Khan and Baloch nationalists were talking about. Instead, it started campaigning against the Khan to join Pakistan and, even threatened to use force if the Khan did not agree with their proposal of merger. Realising the gravity of the situation, the Khan instructed the Commander-in-Chief of Khanate’s forces, Brigadier General Purves to reorganise the forces besides approaching the Commonwealth Relations Office and Ministry of Supply in London for getting arms and ammunition. But the British refused to supply any arms to the Khanate without the approval of Pakistan Government (Baloch I, 1987:183). It is to be noted here that initially the British favoured the independence of
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Balochistan as per the 1876 treaty, because they thought to use Balochistan as the base of their future activities in the region. But in 1944, Maj. Gen. RC Money, in-charge of strategic planning in India prepared a report on the post-war scenario, where he cautioned the British government that independent Balochistan will not serve the British interests in future. Hence, by 1946 when the partition of Indian subcontinent was almost decided, the British felt that it would be better to locate the base in Pakistan instead of a weak Balochistan. (Foreign Policy Centre, 2006: 22). The correspondence between Mountbatten and the Secretary of State Lord Listowell in September 1947 on this subject further reinforces this fact, where the latter advised Mountbatten that “it was the location of the Kalat on the frontier that what had been promised in theory can not be allowed to be implemented in practice, because, that (Independent Balochistan) would be too risky and dangerous” (Ray, 1998:22). Therefore, the British directed its high commissioner in Pakistan to do anything for keeping Balochistan under the control of Pakistan. Of particular note, the British at that time were keen to use Balochistan against the Iran, where the new nationalistic government under the prime-ministership of Mossadegh nationalised the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (Foreign Policy Centre, 2006:21-22). While on the other hand, Khan sought help from India and Afghanistan, but could not get any support. This inturn provided an opportunity to Pakistan in subduing the national activities aiming independence of the Kalat State, as it had become apparent to Pakistan that the Khan was merely playing for the time. Thus, the Government of Pakistan announced on 18th March, 1948 the accession of the states of Lasbela and Makkoran, which were feudatories of the Kalat State. This robbed Kalat of more than half of its territory, including its access to the sea. Finally, the independence moves came to an end on April 1, 1948, when the Pakistan Army instructed its garrison commander in Balochistan to march on Kalat. The Khan, hearing of the movements of troops in Pasni and Jiwani, including the fear of further problems surrendered and accepted the merger by signing the instrument of accession with Pakistan (Breseeg, 2004:236-237 & also see Harrison, 198125-26). This was done all against the fact that Jinnah had close relations with the Khan of Kalat on the one hand and the Khan having made large financial contribution to the Muslim League earlier on the other. In any case, this ended the 225 days of independence of the Kalat confederacy formed by the Mir Ahmad Khan’s ancestors almost 300 years earlier (Foreign Policy Centre Paper,
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2006:21). Nonetheless, the merger was strongly opposed by the nationalists; wrote a Baloch writer:

Nasir I united all. Nasir II endeavoured to maintain it. Khudadad Khan fought for the whole of his life to organise a government. Mahmud Khan II prepared the coffin for the state, and Ahmad Yar, the present Khan, buried all and the glory and vanity of his line (Baloch I, 1987: 189).

This unfair amalgamation of the Khanate led to widespread anti-Pakistan protests throughout the Khanate. The National Party that championed the cause of a Greater Balochistan incorporating all the Baloch areas into an enlarged Kalat State was pivotal force spearheading much of these agitations. That is why, many of its leaders like Mir Gaus Bakhsh Bizenjo, Mir Abdul Aziz Khurd etc were arrested (Baloch I, 1987: 190). Under these circumstances, Prince Abdul Karim – the younger brother of the Khan and the former governor of Makkoran province – declared a revolt proclaiming the independence of Kalat and issued a manifesto in the name of the Baloch National Liberation Committee challenging the accession agreement signed by the Khan. It is to be noted here, Prince had the tacit support of the Khan besides having the support of some nationalist leaders (Harrison, 1981:26). Meanwhile, he appealed to the leading members of the nationalist political parties (like the KSNP, the Baloch League and the Baloch National Workers Party) to join him in the fight against Pakistan (Baloch I, 1987: 190). But the nationalist leaders had different views so far as the future line of action was concerned. One faction was in favour of armed struggle in the form of guerrilla war. The leaders like Mohammad Hossein Anka, a prominent journalist, Malik Saeed Dehwar, the secretary general of the National Party, Abdul Wahid Kurd, Quadir Baksh Nizami etc fall in this category. Whereas Ghaus Bakhsh Bizenjo, Gul Khan Nasir, along with some other leaders of the KSNP were reluctant to follow the path of challenging the well-trained and well-equipped Pakistan Army (Breseeg, 2004:240). Notwithstanding, Prince Abdul Karim after brief skirmishes with security forces crossed over to Afghanistan along with nearly 1000 persons, who called themselves as “Baloch Mujahideen” (holly warriors) and, encamped at Sarlath in the province of Kandahar (Baloch I,1987:193). Prince anticipated obtaining Afghan support since Afghanistan had objected the incorporation of Baloch and Pashtun areas in Pakistan and had even opposed the admission of Pakistan to the United Nations (Harrison, 1981:26). While during their
stay in Afghanistan, the Mujahideen followed a variety of measures in order to strengthen the movement and important among those are:

The sending of messages to the Baluch Chiefs of Eastern and Western Baluchistan asking them to join in the struggle; The running of a propaganda campaign in Baluchistan, aimed at the creation of unrest, disturbances and revolt as well as the enlistment of a national liberation; The search for international support, particularly from Afghanistan and the Soviet Union (Baloch I, 1987:193).

Besides, they also launched the propaganda campaign on two fronts. The first was the national cultural front, where a series of pamphlets were distributed all over the Balochistan, aiming to cause an uprising against the oppressive regime of Pakistan. The other was the religious front, where the Fatwa (religious order) was issued by Maulvi Mohammad Afzal, a prominent religious leader, urging the Muslims of Pakistan and especially, the soldiers to wage a Jihad (Muslim holy war) against the non-Islamic Government of Pakistan. Meanwhile, Prince organised a liberation force called the Baloch Mujahideen, comprising the ex-soldiers and officers of the Khanate’s army, besides appealing to the people to help in recruitments. Interestingly, Karim announced to offer the rank of major to any person recruiting 100 men and the rank of captain by recruiting 50 men. Moreover, the Baloch liberation army had an agency called ‘Jan-nisar’, whose primary job was to provide information, destroy the communication system and to keep vigil on the activities of the traitors. Likewise, there was a secret unit ‘Jan-baz’ (darer) to kill the all traitors. But in spite of having such well scheme of things, Prince failed in waging war against Pakistan, because Afghanistan refused to provide any sort of help to these Mujahideen followed by the silence of Stalinist Russia concerning assistance. Even Iran showed its inability when approached for help. As a result Khan issued a Farman (royal order) on 24 May, 1948 proclaiming Prince and his party a rebel group and appealed the people not to have any connection or extend any help to them. Subsequently, Pakistan deployed army to the posts of Panjpai, Chaman Chashme and Rastri near the Afghan border to check the rebel’s ration supply being provided by the pro-liberation elements and more importantly, to control their activities or any attempt to invade. Finally, Prince Abdul Karim in the wake of above mentioned realities retuned to Balochistan on 8th July, 1948. However, according to Harrison he returned following the assurances of safe conduct and amnesty from the Pakistan Army and, the Pakistani officers even swore
an oath on the Koran to provide the safe conduct. Notwithstanding, the Pakistan forces dishonoured this agreement and arrested Karim, along with more than one hundred of his supporters following minor skirmishes with the Pakistan army. Thereafter, Karim was tried by a special *Jirga* court on 27 November, 1948, where he was sentenced to ten years of rigorous imprisonment, including a fine of Rs.5000 (Baloch I, 1987:194-199 & also see Breseeg, 2004: 241-244 & Harrison, 1981:26). The KSNP, which was accused of having links with Karim, was banned and, its members were put under observation. It is worth mentioning here, the official version of Pakistan was that Prince Abdul Karim returned with Afghan backing and after reaching, he launched guerrilla operations against Pakistan in the area of Jhalawan, where the unit of General Akbar Khan’s seventh regiment soon tracked the guerrillas down, forcing Prince Abdul Karim to surrender (Harrison, 1981:26). Needless to add, the Baloch national movement was crushed by the Pakistan in 1948, establishing this fact that the Baloch did not accept the accession of Kalat with Pakistan.

In the post independence era, Baloch ethnic ambitions continued to haunt the state of Pakistan in terms of territorial unity and integrity. Prince Abdul Karim’s adventure though had little significance as he lacked what Inayatullah Baloch had called “powerful backer” (internally and externally), but it contributed greatly to casting an aura of distrust over relations of the Baloch with Islamabad in the times to come. Actually, this event led to widespread belief among the nationalists that Pakistan had betrayed the safe conduct agreement, including the Baloch people and hence, Karim has since become a rallying symbol for the Baloch movement. Moreover, the said event was viewed as the first of a series of “broken treaties” that made for continuing discontent and simmering tensions among the Baloch against the Pakistan government (Harrison, 1981:27 & I. Baloch, 1987:201). Another glaring instance of walking out of a proposal committed to the Baluch nationalists was witnessed in June 1954. As the ruling elite constituting Punjabis and Mohajirs was trying to attain and maintain monopoly over the state power and was pursuing highly centralised policies to this effect, they dismissed the Balochistan States’ Union Assembly in June 1954 and dissolved the Union itself in 1955 while merging the latter in the Western Wing of Pakistan as per the One Unit scheme in 1955. Here it is worth mentioning that the idea of constituting Balochistan States Union was mooted by the Pakistan Government, which involved merging the states of Las Bela, Makkoran, Kharan and Kalat. The relevant covenant of 12th April 1951 which was
accepted by the rulers of the constituent states and approved by the government of Pakistan, provided for a council of rulers, with one of the rulers elected as its president. The *Wazir-e-Azam* (Prime Minister) was to be nominated by the government of Pakistan. Hence Mir Ahmad Yar Khan became the President in 1951 and Agha Abdul Hamid got appointed as Prime Minister in 1952. An interim constitution provided for a legislative assembly of 28 elected and 12 nominated members. Formation of such a Union led to the political consolidation and formal organisation of the Baloch states. However, distrust of the Pakistani elite regarding the political aspirations of Khan of Kalat led to single-handed dismissal of the assembly of the Union in 1954 and dissolution and merger of the Union of States into the Western Wing of Pakistan in 1955 (Breseeg, 2004: 260-261). These developments catalysed the politicization of ethnic identities in the province and the Balochs reacted sharply against these policies. Needless to say, Pakistan’s approach in case of Balochistan was not much different from that of the colonialists or if anything, Pakistan’s treatment was worse as compared to the British rule in this region, because the new state was more interventionist than its predecessor (Khan, 2003:286).

Moreover, in order to strengthen the grip over Balochistan, the Pakistan state systematically excluded the Baloch people from the power sharing and decision making arrangements that further fanned the flames of their alienation from the national political mainstream. According to one study, out of 179 people who were named to the central cabinets in Pakistan from 1947 to 1977, there were only 4 Baloch tribesmen (2.2 percent) from Balochistan, only one of them held this position prior to 1970s. The same was true in case of the civil employees in Balochistan. In 1972, their ratio was just 5 percent in the state bureaucracy and more importantly, they occupied the lower positions in the officialdom. Equally was the situation in case of Baloch representation in defence forces. They along with Sindhi constituted only 5 percent in the ethnic composition of Pakistan military corps in the 1970s, followed by the Mohajir with 10 percent, Pashtuns 15 percent and Punjabis 70 percent. Though Zulfikar Ali Bhutto introduced the quota system in 1973 to give balanced representations to all the four provinces on the basis of relative population, but the relative smallness of Baloch population vis-à-vis other provinces could not change the situation more. It is worth mentioning here, the Baloch had to share even this meagre quota allotment with the non-Baloch settlers in Balochistan, who could contest their share under the domicile clause (Jetly, 2004:11-12). Not only this, the ruling elite in
Pakistan made several attempts to merge the distinct Baloch identity into an all-embracing Pakistan identity. They curtailed the powers of tribal chieftains as a part of this strategy besides using handpicked tribal chiefs to control the territory on their behalf, enhancing the power of those sardars locally and ousting others who challenged state control. For further politico-economic integration of the province with the rest of the country, efforts were also made to transform the semi-feudal economy into a market oriented national economy. Likewise, the central government made huge investments in specific areas in order to strengthen central control over the province through the construction of modern roads, cantonments etc (Bokhari: 2003: 871 & Crisis Group Asia Report, 2006: 3). In short, the arbitrary attitude of the central government, combined with the centre’s denial of political and administrative autonomy was the root cause of the Baloch displeasure with the centre and hence, the seeds of ethnic conflict and tensions were sown from the beginning in the Pakistan state structures.

Meanwhile, Abdul Karim again attracted the attention of the authorities after his release from the jail in 1955. This time, he launched a new political party, Ustaman Gal (People’s Party), with an objective of making Pakistan a people’s republic, establishing a Balochi province and preserving the Balochi language and culture. The party’s first meeting was held in Karachi and was attended by prominent Balochi and Sindhi nationalists. However, the membership of the party remained confined only to the Baloch, which advocated the peaceful and constitutional methods for achieving its demands. It is also believed that Ustaman Gal leaders thereafter, went to Quetta for broadening the base of the party, where Abdul Karim approached prominent sardars, together with appealing the KSNP and other Balochi organisations for merging with Ustaman Gal. Interestingly, all this occurred at a time when politics in Pakistan was in flux. That is, the country was struggling to have a constitution framing of which was being delayed due to irresolvable differences over key issues, including the sharing of power between the centre and the provinces. The position of the Muslim League was continually getting weaker due to factionalism, while the central bureaucracy taking the leverage of this void was steadily strengthening its power. The One Unit Policy adopted by the Pakistan State in 1955 further deepened the crisis. Actually, the ruling elite comprising Mohajirs and Punjabis feared that the three minority provinces of West Pakistan would combine with Bengalis against them. Hence, they decided to consolidate the Western Wing into a single provincial
entity by subsuming all the administrative units of West Pakistan, including the princely states for the larger purpose to counter Bengali numerical strength. The minority provinces and their nationalist leaders decided to oppose this move jointly and formed a broad coalition of nationalist and left leaning parties known as Pakistan National Party (PNP). The new party besides opposing the One Unit Policy accused the central government for denying their constitutional, national and economic rights. Even Balochs reinforced their nationalist agenda. In 1956 Ustaman Gal joined this coalition. Not only this, Khan of Kalat who had initially agreed with the central government’s One Unit Policy, later on stood against it and revived his demand for an independent Balochistan with the help of the tribal chieftains in his former domain, primarily to restore Baloch areas to Kalat, which the Khan wanted to rule under his leadership and which were taken away by the British. Also due to the rising momentum of Baloch nationalist sentiments, Khan had to abandon the support for the One Unit. Following his decision to oppose the scheme, the Khan convened a meeting with key Balochi sardars at Karachi in January 1958 for insisting upon the government to restore Kalat state (Titus & Swidler, 2000: 50-52). In this gathering Baloch sardars of Dera Ghazi Khan and Sindh were reported to have participated. Nevertheless, the major opposition to the One Unit Plan came from the Ustaman Gall and NAP (Breseeg, 2004:286).

In 1956, the PNP joined hands with the East Pakistan based Awami League and formed a new party, National Awami Party (NAP). The party stood for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Pakistan, and stressed that the country should adopt independent and non-aligned policy in its foreign relations. The party demanded that the One Unit Scheme be abolished and the provinces be reconstituted on linguistic basis. Further, it demanded that the land reforms and the nationalisation of industry, be carried out. In 1957, in the West Pakistan’s provincial assembly, NAP was able to muster enough votes against the One Unit Scheme. As the protests against this centralising scheme intensified, unrest in Balochistan grew by leaps and bounds. Meanwhile, the Khan of Kalat changing his initial stance started opposing the scheme. As a result, the Commissioner of the province started accusing him of joining hands with Afghanistan, for securing the independence of Balochistan (Titus & Swidler, 2000: 52). The central government accused that Abdul Karim and an uncle of the Khan had been clandestinely working closely with Afghanistan for waging an armed struggle against the government of Pakistan (Breseeg, 2004:287).
For this, it was alleged that they have gathered an army of more than 80,000 tribesmen. The ridiculous reason given by government in support of its allegation was the visit of Khan’s Afghan wife to Kabul for a holiday. It was on this pretext, General Ayub Khan ordered the army to move into Kalat on October 6, 1958. They arrested the Khan and seized his ancestral property. The civilians who demonstrated in his favour were also assaulted besides jailing more than 300 Baloch political leaders and supporters from the nearby towns. Another unfortunate political development was imposition of martial law by Ayub Khan on this excuse on the very next day (Harrison, 1981:28). He took various extreme measures like sacking of the central and provincial governments, dissolution of the constituent and provincial assemblies, banning all the political parties in the country, detention of several NAP leaders on the pretext of treason. However, the Khan including his followers nullified these allegations and termed them as a calculated strategy to impose the martial law throughout the country. Meanwhile, there is also a view point which holds that the Pakistan army had planned around 15 September to seize the power, well before the so called “the rebellion by the Khan of Kalat” (Breseeg, 2004:287). In this way an essentially ‘political’ crisis was allowed to precipitate, and the solution imparted was military instead of political. This further deepened the crisis as the Baloch nationalists embarked upon an armed struggle against the despotic state.

However, Pakistan Army’s expedition into Kalat followed by the arrest of the Khan led to the second Baloch rebellion against the central government in less than one decade, the first occurred in 1948 by Abdul Karim following the forceful annexation of Balochistan by the Pakistan. Though this revolt jolted the central government, but the events of October 6 were not as bloody as described in Khan’s memories and, nor the magnitude of this revolt were as high as enumerated in the government accounts, according to Selig Harrison. However, it was a symbolic culmination of the high handed approach of the central government towards the Baloch that triggered a chain reaction of violence and counter violence in Balochistan. The situation turned violent when the army patrolling the Jhalawan district asked the tribesmen to turn in their arms at local police station and, they refused to follow the army’s verdict. This demand rather provoked the Baloch because they believed having guns as their birth right. This inturn led to the frequent clashes, in which the army deployed tanks and artillery both in towns as well as in the remote areas all over the district. In the wake of growing tribal strength, the army intensified their activities
and barricaded all the points leading from Jhalawan to adjoining Sarawan that culminated into a fêted battle on 10th October 1958 at Wad, a remote mountain village. Nauroz Khan, a chief of the Zehri and, who was 90 years old at that time hurriedly gathered a tribal force numbering 750-to 1000 spearheaded this revolt. What provoked him were the atrocities being committed by the security forces on the Baloch people, including the confiscation of his property and house (Harrison, 1981:28). It is to be noted here, Nauroz Khan had also taken part in a series of armed revolts against the British government during the 1920s and 1930s (Breseeg, 2004:288). As the movement spread across the area, especially in the villages of the Jhalawan, several tribesmen joined him in the hills with great nationalist sentiments. His demands included the immediate release of the Khan and abolition of the One Unit scheme beside the others. The government instead of finding the political solution of this problem relied heavily on the military methods to subdue the dissidents. The army intensified the military activities and, it bombarded several villages suspected of providing help to the rebels and their livestock was also auctioned. When the army saw no end of hostilities in sight, it repeated the earlier trick to control the erring tribesmen through deception. The representatives of the government were sent to the hills, where they met with rebels in 1960 to discuss peace terms. It is believed that government officials took oath on Koran that, if they lay down their arms the government will receive them honourably for peace negotiations and, the Baloch demands would also be considered kindly. However, the official version did not agree that such accord was ever concluded. But in nationalist account, it was because of this accord Nauroz Khan agreed to surrender and, when he along with his supporters came down from the hills were surrounded and taken into custody. In the trial at Hyderabad, Nauroz Khan and seven of his followers, including his elder son were sentenced to death on charges of sedition. Since Nauroz Khan was too old his death penalty was turned into life imprisonment and finally, he died in 1964 (Breseeg, 2004: 288-289).

But in no way, the government could impair the strength of the rebels. On the contrary, these events contributed largely to the emergence of Baloch ethnicity as a potent force in the times to come. Baloch nationalists earned sympathies from all over the country. A large number of Baloch people started flaunting identity symbols like growing beard and wearing traditional clothes. Another vital outcome of these events was internationalisation of the Baloch issue. In short, the impact of these
developments on the Baloch national movement was visible and far reaching as the identity consciousness among the Baloch people got crystallised and propagated to the maximum (Breseeg, 2004: 290).

In the aftermath of these executions Ayub Khan visited Quetta. On the eve of his visit a meeting of Baloch political activists was organised who had cautioned Ayub Khan of applying military methods to solve the political crisis in the state. But the military dictator could not hold back his annoyance and rather warned the Balochs of “total extinction” in the wake of continued opposition. Assertive of their political rights Baloch nationalists led by Sher Mohammad Marri laid the foundations of Parari Movement (1963), that aimed to fight guerrilla war to attain the objectives of withdrawal of the Pakistani army from the province, revocation of the One Unit Plan and restoration of Balochistan as a united province. Parari – which is a Baloch word meant to explicate a person or group with objections that can not be resolved by negotiations. In 1968 the Army led by Major general Tikka Khan, put down a show of force to eliminate Pararis who retaliated fiercely. In another demonstration of arbitrary and overbearing attitude of the government, prominent tribal sardars including Akbar Bugti, Attaullah Mengal and Khair Bakhsh Marri were toppled from their chieftainships. Such an illustration of arbitrariness is not to be found even during the British rule. The deposed chieftains were replaced by some pliant sardars, by Amir Mohammad Khan of Kalabagh (then Governor of West Pakistan). Yet in an act of defiance the tribesmen assassinated these new appointees in 1963. Suppression of Baloch aspirations and employment of military methods to get them straight has rather reinforced the unity of the Baloch people. Thus one finds that even the Baloch urban youth started joining the Pararis in the hills and the Baloch Peoples Liberation Front (BPLF) became stronger. In the weekly paper, Chingari published by the Pararis, the aim of the movement was described as Baloch self-determination, though it did not define the concept. The views, denouncing the One Unit Plan were expressed in the most explicit terms, were published in the paper. The Parari movement was closely linked with NAP and perceptively shared the objective of self-determination in terms of autonomy with it (Breseeg, 2004:291-292 & Harrison, 1981: 30).

The Pararis carried out guerrilla warfare against the Pakistani army in a most extensive and well planned manner. They were inspired by the concept of “Popular War” that was prevalent in Algeria, Cuba, China and Vietnam. The guerrilla activities
of the Baloch nationalists covered a vast mountainous area with one of the toughest terrains in the region. Main targets of the guerrillas included the army personnel and their auxiliary service personnel like army engineers and army signals. The extent and vastness of the operations of this organisation can be estimated from the fact that its network of about 23 camp bases employed a command force of 900 full time activists who carried out various functions that included organising and training reserve forces, operating schools and medical facilities, and manning logistical supplies in areas under their control. Not surprising then that the Pararis could continue their warfare for nine years till Ayub Khan resigned and the governance was taken over by Yahya Khan, who negotiated a truce with the former through his Governor of West Pakistan, Air Marshal Nur Khan. As Yahya Khan took over the reigns of the country, he announced Legal Framework Order that provided for first general elections on the basis of universal adult suffrage. Also One Unit Scheme was abolished and the provinces were restored in the West Wing of the country. This paved the way for the “federal solution” to the ethnic problems of the country (Breseeg, 2004:293-294).

Besides adaptation of One Unit plan, which was widely opposed by the minorities, Ayub Khan curtailed the political activities and followed developmental policies based on “functional inequalities”. This led to chaos in the society and almost every section of society was opposing him. Thus not only the political activists of different hues but even the workers, professionals and students stood against him. Labour unions organised demonstrations against rising prices and demanding higher wages, improved medical and housing facilities. Student wings like Baloch Student Organisation (1967) also jumped into the fray demanding better educational facilities. However, this student organisation later on widened its range of activities and adopted almost the entire agenda of NAP. It was also observed that many of the student leaders came forward to join guerrilla warfare during 1970s (Titus & Swidler, 2000: 57).

Ultimately, Balochistan was accorded the status of province in July 1970 that reinforced the failure of the One Unit Policy, which had earlier invited vehement criticism and violent protests from the regional political organisations in the West Pakistan (Amin, 1988:115). Nonetheless, this significant development also exposed the underlying divisions in Balochistan. The stake holders in the region did not have one view. There were three different positions in this regard. The first fervently supported by Samad Khan Achakzai, a prominent Pashtun nationalist that stressed to
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curve out the Pashtun areas from the former British Balochistan and merging them with NWFP. The second was to reconstitute the former British Balochistan and Kalat as separate provinces and, was advocated by an odd coalition led by the Nawab of Balochistan’s largest Pashtun tribe, the Jogezais and the founder of Balochistan Muslim League, Qazi Isa. The third was merging of the two into single province and had the backing of Baloch nationalists besides the key Pashtun notables led by the Sardar of the Raisani tribe. Quetta, the Bolan Pass and Sibi were the disputed areas where Baloch and Pashtun had expressed their respective historical claims. What is more, the same issue even caused the split in the NAP. This happened when Nawab Khair Bakhsh Marri, then president of the Balochistan, NAP warned the party that if it supported Samad Khan’s rationale on the issue he would resign. However, this split was not clearly on ethnic lines, because when Samad Khan distanced himself from the party by floating his own working group of NAP, many Pashtuns members of the NAP’s Balochistan branch openly detached themselves from Samad Khan, as was the case of Wali Khan who stayed the party’s head. However, the government went ahead with the third option of merging the British Balochistan and the Kalat into single province. Though this decision infuriated the Pashtuns but their anger was shadowed by the forthcoming election and, Samad Khan formed his own party, the Pushtunkwa National Awami Party and jumped into the electoral fray (Titus & Swindler, 2000: 58-60).

In the general elections of 1970, there was a strong support to the regional parties, which had been advocating substantial political, cultural and economic autonomy for the constituent provinces. Hence Awami League led by Sheikh Mujibur Rehman emerged victorious in National Assembly and Provincial Assembly of East Pakistan. However, the PPP came forward as a second largest party at the national level and won decisively in the provincial assemblies of Punjab and Sindh. Similarly, in Balochistan and NWFP, the NAP sharing its commitment towards provincial autonomy with Awami League was voted as the largest party in respective provincial assemblies. Here it may be mentioned that the PPP was centrist in terms of its conviction regarding the extent of provincial autonomy to be provided to the constituent provinces. The resultant discord between Awami League and the PPP, over the implementation of six-point programme of the former could not lead to any power-sharing formula. As the military solution was sought to suppress the following civil-disobedience movement in East Pakistan, the situation went out of control and
the aggrieved province embarked on the path of secession. Following Indo-Pak war (1971) on this issue, East Pakistan won its independence (Amin, 1988:116-118).

As discussed earlier, in West Pakistan the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) led by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto came to power at the centre. The party also won decisively in Punjab and Sindh provincial elections. However, the performance of the PPP in Balochistan and the North Western Frontier Province (NWFP) was pathetic. It could win only one seat from the Frontier and none in Balochistan. In these two provinces, the National Awami Party (NAP) emerged as the single largest block of seats, signalling the beginning of regional character of Pakistani politics (Khan, 2003:287 & Amin, 1988: 116). Encouraged by its performance, the NAP along with the Jamiat Ulema Islam (JUI), a religious party articulated their demands and forced the centre to provide them constitutional safeguards. This resulted into a tripartite agreement among the PPP, the NAP and the JUI. This prompt conclusion can be attributed to the peculiar position of Bhutto who on the one hand was concerned about delicate internal political situation and on the other, was in dire need of demonstrating national unity at home particularly in dealing with India. As part of the agreement, the centre agreed not to appoint the Governors without the prior consultation with the majority party in these two provinces. It was also negotiated that the national government would be organised on the basis of parliamentary form of government, but with a strong centre. Ultimately, in 1972, the NAP in alliance with JUI formed the first ever-elected Baloch government in the province under the Chief Ministership of Attaullah Mengal and Ghaus Bux Bizenjo as a Governor (Amin, 1988: 123-124).

Since Islam, liberalism and Marxism had great influence on Bhutto, he quested to rebuild the new Pakistan around these three traditions. He however, mobilized the public support primarily on the socialist slogans and highlighting the flaws of successive regimes like growing income inequalities, social injustice and highly centralized system of governance. He emphasized that both Islam and socialism are not mutually antagonistic rather Islam evangelizes equality as well as justice and socialism is a modern way to realize it. He found the federal political system as the only solution to the ethnically heterogeneous country like Pakistan. Therefore, he followed a policy of sharing power with ethnic elites and provided them several constitutional guarantees such as considerable amount of provincial autonomy, balanced development, the right to their language and culture etc (Amin, 1988: 119-120). This move not only slowed down the regional tendencies but also
demonstrated that ethnic elites had an equal stake and interests in national integrity. Take the case of Pashtun leaders who after assuming the office assured the central government on several occasions that they would totally support the national interests and would defend country’s integrity, internally as well as externally. Unfortunately, this consensus between the People’s Party and regional ethnic elites did not last long, as the former feared that the growing popularity of regional political parties may provide a viable alternative to its rule at the centre. This fear can also be attributed to the fact that the NAP governments both in Balochistan and the NWFP were displaying a more patriotic and pro-Pakistani nationalist image, where as the Sindh government led by the PPP exhibited its inclination towards ethno-national cause in the province. For instance, the Pashtun leaders in NWFP introduced Urdu as the official language in spite of widespread protests and demands for adoption of the Pashtu language as the official language and to rename the province as Pushtunistan. Here it may be mentioned that the interim constitution that was in operation before the inaugural of the Constitution of Pakistan (1973), empowered the elected provincial assemblies to adopt and implement such demands, but even then the leaders of the province opted for Urdu. Similar was the case in Balochistan. On the other hand, the PPP imposed Sindhi as the official language in the Sindh and started addressing Sindhi grievances by favouring Sindhis in the provincial jobs and services. These measures led to the linguistic riots resulting in unprecedented violence in the province that in turn created wedge between the native Sindhis and Urdu-speaking ‘new Sindhis’ for all times to come. However, under the mounting pressure created by this violence, the provincial government modified the language bill and declared both Sindhi and Urdu as the official languages of the province. Hence the central government reverted to subordinating the provincial governments to the central authority. Such an attitude was further concretised by the political disposition of Wali Khan of NAP who tried to get political leverage in the provinces of Punjab and Sindh by projecting his image as a patriot and pro-Pakistan leader. This had annoyed Bhutto, as he viewed such attempts as challenge to his national stature and authority (Amin, 1988: 125-127).

Bhutto’s quest for appropriating and controlling power motivated him to adopt divide and rule policy that resulted in introduction and induction of regionalism in the provincial political processes. Thus he manipulated regional and ethno-cultural divisions and pitted one group against the other in order to monopolise authority even
in the provinces. Bhutto never allowed emergence of any united political opposition, which may pose any threat to its rule at the centre. Thus he joined hands with the rival political forces of the NAP in both Balochistan and the NWFP in order to restrict the NAP on the one hand and to broaden the support base of People’s Party in these provinces on the other. He made Khan Abual Quyyum, who was known for his anti-NAP stance and belonged to the Muslim League (Q), as a cabinet minister at the centre and consigned him the interior ministry. Quyyum became instrumental in creating political problems in NWFP particularly by instigating Mazdoor Kisan Party in NAP’s strong hold areas, which included Mardan and Peshawar. In Balochistan, Bhutto exploited the already existing ethnic divisions between the Baloch and the Pashtuns while patronizing Abdul Samad Khan Achackzai, a leader of splinter faction of the NAP, who was striving for Pashtuns’ rights in Balochistan. Besides, Sardar Akbar Bugti also played as a pawn in the hands of centre. Even in other parts of the country similar policies of fuelling the ethnic divisions among the constituents were followed that politicised the ethnic identities. Bhutto even did not spare his home province where he exploited the differences of Sindhis versus Mohajirs and thus, politicized the ethnic identities for his party interests. Not only this, Bhutto tried to lure the members of the provincial assemblies of Balochistan and NWFP in order to turn the NAP-led coalition ministries into minority (Amin, 1988: 124 &127).

Various other political, legal and extra-legal methods were followed by Pakistan government in order to dismantle the provincial governments of Balochistan and NWFP. Bhutto annulled the Frontier Crimes Regulations and the Jirga System (of Tribal elders) as part of his “frontline Policy” for establishing firm control and brought them under the jurisdiction of High Court and Supreme Court. To deal with the internal situation, the High Treason Act of 1973 and the Private Military Organization Ordinance were introduced (Dixit, 1996:20). In addition, he directed the federal bureaucracy not to cooperate with the local NAP governments in both the provinces for creating law and order situation; so that the centre could get the pretext to intervene (Amin, 1988: 127). Even the armed forces in Pakistan did not relish the installation of these local governments, especially in Balochistan. They were apprehensive that their superior position in the ruling establishments may be threatened due to the process of decentralization. Moreover, given its Punjabi ethnic composition, the Pakistan Army desired the political balance in favour of Punjab vis-à-vis other provinces and to do away with the possibility of its retired servicemen and
bureaucratic settlers being displaced from Balochistan. However, the plea of national security was put forward in order to camouflage these objectives. The survival of Baloch government was further jeopardized when Shah of Iran strongly opposed the step of granting autonomy to the Baloch, because he feared that his own Baloch subjects may demand similar arrangements. His nervousness was further escalated by the meddling of Iraq in the internal affairs of the Iranian Balochistan on the one hand, and Soviet support to the nationalist forces on the other. Acting on these fears, the Shah of Iran build up enormous pressure on Islamabad to suppress the slight expression of Baloch identity and did not allow the use of Baloch language or dress in the schools. As both Iran and Pakistan were members of the US-Bloc and Iran was oil-rich, the Bhutto regime did not want to ignore its wishes of suppressing the Baloch ethnic upsurge. The other key factor that escalated the worries of Pakistan government was the overthrow of Afghan monarchy in early 1973 and the entry of Sardar Daud Khan as a premier of Afghanistan who showed his keen interest to support the Baloch secessionists (Amin, 1988: 98-99). All these factors made the central government’s intervention inevitable that culminated into the dismissal of Baloch rule.

When the NAP government came into power in Balochistan, the province had a plethora of problems to be dealt with. Most pressing among these were the underdevelopment of the province, extremely low literacy rates and exploitation of the provincial resources by the centre without sharing benefits with the respective province itself and the under representation of the Balochs in the provincial administrative services. For instance, if one compares Balochistan’s development vis-à-vis Punjab in terms of per capita income, one finds that it stood at $54 which was 60 percent of that of Punjab. Similarly, the literacy rate for Balochistan was merely 6 percent, while the national average was 18 percent. Its share in the industrialisation was hanging around 0.7 percent despite having huge natural resource deposits in the province. The condition of infrastructure for development of industry and other employment generating projects was also abysmal and, there was almost no private sector in the province due to lack of investment. As far as Baloch representation in the provincial services is concerned it was estimated that out of 830 higher civil service officials in the province, there were only 181 Balochs. And there was only one Baloch working as head of one of the 20 provincial departments in 1972 (Khan, 2003:287).
To rectify these discrepancies and redressing the long-standing Baloch grievances was thus, a major task of NAP government in Balochistan. It is worth mentioning here, the central government led by Z.A. Bhutto had its own reservations regarding the installation of this government in the province as also it was very cautious about the reforms the latter purported to implement. A letter written by Bhutto to Ghous Bux Bizenjo before the latter’s appointment as governor of the province, which later on appeared in the White Paper on Balochistan issued by the Government of Pakistan in 1974, bears the testimony of this fact. In the letter Bhutto expressed his concerns regarding the fair treatment to all the inhabitants, including locals and non-locals and directed the Governor to make sure that in no way the non-locals would be targeted. Similarly, he reiterated the central control over the Sui gas installation and advised to maintain law and order around these assets of national importance. The central government’s anxiety about the new nationalist administration is also supposed to grow from its fear that the latter might put forward its demands for share in the revenues and/or consumption of the gas itself. Another issue was highlighted in Bhutto’s letter that concerned the protection of national integrity. Thus Bizenjo was directed not to allow any kind of anti-national activities in the province, which might not only impair the national image, but even the country’s relations with the neighbouring countries. This was particularly true in the light of disapproval of Shah of Iran of any kind of provincial autonomy to the Balochs, given the nationalist aspirations of the ethnic group in its side of the international border and the Soviet support for it. Given these misgivings, tensions were obvious to grow in the centre-provincial relations. In short, the repressive nature of the state of Pakistan must be regarded as an underlying cause behind these tensions. Clearly, the government at the centre, both civilian and military has throughout been authoritarian in nature and unwilling to share the authority with the provinces for their own doubts and fears (Khan, 2003:287-288).

The new NAP led government in Balochistan first of all attempted to replace the non-Baloch administrative personnel by the ‘sons of the soil’. The provincial government held the view that without indigenization of the administration, the government would not be able to rectify the underdevelopment that was caused by unending exploitation of the resources of the province at the hands of the centre, through the provincial administration, which was manned primarily by non-Balochs (Jaffrelot, 2002:29 & Khan, 2003:289). Efforts were also made to bring the police and
law enforcement forces under the provincial control besides resisting Islamabad’s habitual interference in the provincial matters. But, these actions aimed at asserting regional authority and disallowing central government’s interference in the provincial affairs were strongly opposed by Bhutto for being incompatible with the national constitution that did not recognise preferential treatment for the sons of the soil (Breseeeg, 2004:314). The central government looked with suspicion the moves of the provincial government to repatriate the non-Balochs. Meanwhile, the provincial government found that large area in the province, which was under the control of the local tribal chiefs, was essential for the growth and equitable development of resources in the province, it endeavoured to establish state authority over it to take forward its way towards reforms. For this, it requested assistance from the central government in the form of security forces which were however denied (Khan, 2003:289). It should be mentioned here that when NAP came to power the civil armed forces, which was available for the service of Balochistan and NWFP, was dismantled by the federal government. Besides in order to paralyse the provincial administration it is alleged that at the behest of the central government, a strike was induced in the police force purportedly in protest against the progressive reforms the provincial government tried to introduce in the force. Not only this, the Governor of Punjab, Ghulam Mustafa Khar withdrew Punjabi bureaucrats serving in the province. Even the senior secretaries of various departments were discouraged from following the instructions of the provincial political leaders. The former tended to oblige the PPP for their security of service and promotions as they were made to believe that the NAP ministries are short-lived. Also their position was weakened by the Administrative Reforms of 1973, which were introduced by Bhutto. The cumulative effect of these reforms was that the civil bureaucrats became subservient to the political masters, in general. All this affected the administration and governance in Balochistan. As a result, the NAP government created and made recruitment in the newly constituted force, Dehi Muhafiz (rural police). This force was constituted with approval of the Governor’s Conference, which was headed by Prime Minister Bhutto himself (Breseeeg, 2004:312-313). But such a move of the NAP government antagonised the local sardars. When the former attempted to wrest control over the areas in question, it was resisted by the tribal chiefs. The NAP government actually tried to curb the influence of erring tribal chiefs over their respective territories, in the name of collective good of the Baloch society. But these tribal chiefs had always
resisted outside intervention be it the British authority or the Pakistan state, and so did they do in case of intervention from the NAP government. Meanwhile, there was another source of dispute and contention between the locals and non-Baloch settlers regarding the arable lands (Khan, 2003:289). The provincial government recommended to the central government to carry out nationalisation of all the land and distribute it to the tillers. But ironically, the Bhutto government that too advocated it did not pay any heed to such a suggestion and on the contrary, blamed the provincial government for all the fallouts of such type of disputes (Breseeg, 2004:314-315).

When all these tactics failed, the central government fabricated a law and order situation in Pat Feeder and Las Bela districts of the province to discredit the NAP government. When Dehi Muhafiz and followers of NAP attempted to flush out the intruders, in a rather queer move the central government sided with the latter and sent its own armed forces and militia for their aid. And as the reports came in from all parts of the province about army and militia deployment, to the dismay of the provincial government, the controlled media propagated that it was on the request of the NAP government that military was sent to the province. Anyways Mengal government succeeded in restoring the law and order on its own. However, it was contended that Mengal government is trying to create a situation of civil war (Breseeg, 2004:315).

Meanwhile, the central government in its bid to malign Mengal government tried to give international and conspiratorial dimensions to the Baloch problem. It alleged that both Mengal and Bizenjo were hands in glove with Iraq and the Soviet Union for dismembering both Pakistan and Iran. Interestingly, these allegations coincided with the sensational seizure of Soviet made 300 machineguns and 48000 rounds of ammunition from Iraqi Embassy in Islamabad. The central government displayed these arms of Soviet make to foreign diplomats and media and alleged that these were intended for the insurgents in Balochistan, though no concrete evidence was given to substantiate this fact. While, the Iraqi officials accused the anti-government personnel working in Iraqi intelligence agency for this incident in order to undermine the Saddam regime. In any case, Baghdad subsequently clarified that these weapons were actually destined for the insurgents in Iranian Balochistan. This explanation was also accepted by Western intelligence sources (Harrison, 1981:35). It is worth mentioning here, in those days both Iraq and Iran were backing dissident
groups within each other’s country – Iraq by patronising Iran’s Baloch and Iran by backing Kurdish minority in Iraq – in a bid for superiority in the Gulf. The arms discovery was however the shocking news for the USA which then equated the security of Iran with its own national security. As a result, in response to a plenty of domestic and international pressures, the first ever-elected government of Baloch people was dismissed on February 12, 1973 and both Mengal and Bizenjo were accused for anti-national activities (Shah, 1997:99). They were arrested later on along with majority of the provincial assembly members and the NAP chief, Nawab Khair Bakhsh Marri. All these measures of central government were seen in Balochistan as an assault both on the provincial autonomy and on the distinct identity of Baloch people.

In resistance, Baloch nationalists waged a powerful revolt against the centre and began to ambush the army convoys that soon turned into a bloody civil war. In this civil war Pararis, under the leadership of Mir Hazar Ramkhani, played a central role. During the struggle they emerged as a well organised group, which later on came to be known as the Baloch People’s Liberation Front (Harrisom, 1981:34). While realising the gravity of the situation, Bhutto flew to Tehran and after his meeting with the Shah, he proclaimed that Iran would provide US$200 million in emergency financial aid to Pakistan. Subsequently, Bhutto dispatched security forces to Balochistan. There were around 55,000 Baloch insurgents including 11,500 organized combatants, who gave a tough fight to the Pakistan Army numbering around 80,000 at the height of conflict. Almost every section of the Baloch society was involved in one way or the other in the fighting that was more widespread as compared to the conflicts of 1950s and 1960s (See Akhtar, 2007:75). The Baloch gave a tough fight to the Pakistan Army. Here the fighting at Mali village is worth mentioning. Thus in August 1973 with the purpose of avenging an ambush in which Pakistani forces suffered heavy causalities, the army entered into the village. The army entrenched itself in one of the corners of the village and started searching ruthlessly for the hideouts and hidden weapons in the huts. During the process they did not discriminate between men, women, children or elder people. They instructed the villagers in the village square by making lines. Those who resisted these instructions were shot. As many of the villagers started surrendering, seventy two years old Mir Luang Khan of this village, who was elder brother of Baloch poet and political leader – Gul Khan Nasir, showed an extra ordinary courage by challenging the army with his outmoded rifle.
He outcried that he would prefer to die rather than allowing the troops to violate Baloch honour by meddling with the honour of the female members of his family. Soon many young and strong men in the village joined him. The hand-to-hand fighting between the villagers and the soldiers that followed lasted for at least four hours. The army later on conceded that they had to call for reinforcements for cowing down the villagers. Baloch eyewitnesses also claim that before Mir Luang Khan was shot dead while hiding with the followers in the village mosque, at least fourteen of the Pakistani soldiers were killed. However, the army denied this version of the Balochs (Harrison, 1981:36-37 & also see Akhtar, 2007:75).

The exploitation of provincial resources by the centre was one of the issues infuriating the Baloch nationalists, and by July 1974 they succeeded in disrupting the outflow of the resources from the province by severing most of the main roads and railway links connecting Balochistan with the rest of the country. For instance, the key Sibi-Harnai rail link was frequently interrupted as a part of the larger strategy to obstruct the coal shipment from Baloch areas to the Punjab. The oil exploration, including drilling and survey operations especially in the Marri belt was also targeted. As the guerrillas kept mounting their attacks on the army encampments heavy causalities were incurred upon the army personnel. This led the army to employ brutal methods and equipments including the US-supplied Huey-Cobra helicopter gunships provided by Iran and flown by Iranian pilots to put down the insurgents. Thus despite the familiarity of the guerrillas with the terrain at the key points on the roads and the trails, they were cornered by ever-present Huey-Cobra helicopter gunships that continuously sprayed gunfire upon their hideouts and routes (Harrison, 1981:37).

However the major turning point in the war that incurred heavy material and moral damages on Pararis and guerrillas that tamed them to inactivity for the following three years was the fierce six-day battle at Chamalang in the Marri region. The Marri nomads used to come to Chamalang valley in summers, which serves as rich grazing pasture lands. In 1974, men remained in the highlands for the war purpose but the women, children and the elders came down to the pastures and settled in their tents spread over an area of fifty square miles. The Pakistani army officers tactfully started attacking these helpless folk, in order to draw out their men from the highlands. Full fledged army operation named Operation Chamalang was launched on September 3, 1974, as a result of which Pararis and guerrilla units came out and formed a large human chain, around their families and livestock. The fight between
the belligerent parties went for three days and three nights. The Pakistan army employed artillery fire, F-86, Mirage fighter planes and Huey-Cobras against the guerrilla fighters. Thus as the latter ran out of their ammunitions, the important units and leaders among them strategically fled from the war scene only to regroup and resume fight from the soils of the southern Afghanistan. As far as casualties in this battle are concerned, army claims that 125 guerrillas were killed and 900 were captured. Independent accounts state that at least 50,000 sheep and 550 camels were captured and sold by the army at negotiable prices to the non-Balochs in Punjab. On the other hand, the Balochs claim these to be exaggerated accounts and report to have killed 446 Pakistani soldiers. On the whole, by the time the military regime of Gen. Zia-ul Haq ordered withdrawal of the army and temporary truce was accorded, it was estimated that more than 5300 insurgents and 3300 troops were killed in the insurgency that went on till December 1977 (Khan, 2003:290 & Harrison, 1981:38).

As mentioned, important of Parari leaders and units had sought shelter in the camps on the Afghani soils, bordering Afghanistan and Pakistan. Officially Afghanistan’s government described these to be refugee camps but actually these were sanctuaries for the guerrilla fighters, who came here for supplies, strategy meetings, to take a break and seek medical assistance. Pararis now widened their membership base, changed their name to Baloch People’s Liberation Front, and started their own monthly publication, *Jabal* (Mountain). However, the situation in Pakistan changed with the ascent of Zia ul-Haq. As soon as Zia took the reins in his hands, he freed the captive Baloch leaders including Bizenjo, Mengal, and Marri and about 6,000 other Baloch prisoners. Zia entered into a truce agreement with these leaders, who on their part attempted to persuade the other less moderate leaders to end the ongoing fight and give peace a chance. But the Parari leaders like Mir Hazar were sceptical of the utility of the truce agreements and pressed on the preparedness for an armed action against the Pakistani state. On its part though the Zia regime assured of amnesty for the guerrillas who had gone to Afghanistan, but failed to address the real issues of autonomy to the province and favourably restructuring the politico-constitutional system of Pakistan (Dunne, 2006:38 & Harrison, 1981:39). Also Zia did not agree to withdraw the forces from the interior of Balochistan and provide the compensation to the Baloch victims of the military action as demanded by the Baloch leaders and masses. Zia also refused to shift the Chief Secretary of Balochistan, who was a Punjabi had played a key role in fomenting misunderstanding between the
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provincial and federal governments during the Bhutto regime. Hence it could not last long and faded into history for the time being (Shah, 1997:100).

If one takes a close look on the factors that led to the weakening of the Baloch insurgency, at the outset one finds that the failure on the part of the Baloch rebels to recognise its significance and work towards restructuring the Baloch society in a considerable manner proved to be a dominant factor in this regard. Clearly, the Baloch national movement was largely built on the,

uncertain social and cultural foundations of fragmented society’ that had only a miniscule middle class, widespread illiteracy, underdeveloped literature, (inadequate) base of nationalist activists, and no real history of mass participation in the political process (Dunne, 2006:38).

Baloch society has remained inflicted with intra and inter-tribal factionalisms. Without sorting out these internal divisions which had longlasting benefits, they remained focussed on their immediate objectives that included releasing of the NAP activists, restoration of their government and greater autonomy for Balochistan province and redressal of economic grievances. Also, no significant emphasis was given to educating the populace. Particularly few Sardars were averse to the idea of educating the people and making them politically aware and conscious. Baloch rebels were not united even in their political agenda. Thus there were radical elements in the Balochistan Peoples Liberation Front (BPLF) who raised their demand to form Greater Balochistan by uniting the areas of Balochistan falling under Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan; however they were very small in numbers. They are regarded as independent Marxist-Leninist faction, who has ties with Nawab Khair Bakhsh Marri. The Baloch Students’ Organisation (BSO), which had its base in all Balochi schools provided with monetary and material support to the rebels. To tackle with these rebels, the government followed the colonial policy by employing special levies on a tribal basis and fixing responsibility of the rebel activities on the local leaders. As a result, it was reported that the guerrillas refrained from attacking these militias (Titus & Swidler, 2000:62). The lack of a foreign mentor and the calculated policies of the Zia regime also slowed down the Baloch movement. Though Baloch rebels had sought and expected substantial external support from the international community, but largely they had to meet with disappointment in this regard. As far as Zia’s “Carrot and Stick Policy” is concerned it proved quite successful in suppressing the
insurgency movement in Balochistan. Hence where on the one hand Zia extended
general amnesty to even the rebels who fled to Afghanistan, granted subsidies and
attempted to promote developmental projects, which though were more strategically
and militarily oriented, in the province to woo back the rebels, he adopted tough
measures against the dissidents on the other. Zia appointed a serving lieutenant
general of the army Rahimuddin Khan, as the Martial law Administrator and the
governor of the province of Balochistan with sweeping powers to tackle with the law
and order situation in the province. The latter functioned as dictator of the province
and kept the influential Sardars out of the political circles. It is believed that during
his rule till 1984, even the nationalists found it hard to overlook his authority.
However, neither Zia nor general Khan could eliminate the nationalist sentiments of
the Baloch people. Thus during this phase, the Baloch People’s Liberation Front
(BPLF) consolidated and prepared itself for the future course (Foreign Policy Centre,
2006:36).

By the end of 1979, Bizenjo and other moderate leaders found it increasingly
difficult to bring to the conclusion the negotiations between the two warring parties.
Meanwhile, the military regime banned all the political activities and resuming the
political arrests, the police concentrated on the Baloch Students’ Organisation
activists. Marri and Mengal, who suspected the intentions of Zia to replace the
military regime with a proportionate electoral system that would marginalise the
ethnic minorities, including the Balochs, went into voluntary political exile in Europe
on the pretext of medical treatment. While keeping the doors open for negotiations
with the state of Pakistan, they tended to muster the support from the international
community for an independent Balochistan (Harrison, 1981:40). Military regime
fuelled the already existing Baloch-Pashtuns rivalries by patronizing the latter at the
expense of the former. Zia, in order to consolidate his rule and weaken his opponents,
had created and nurtured divisions between various ethnic and sectarian groups within
the provinces and the country as a whole. For example, in order to neutralise the
Sindhis, he propped up the Mohajirs. Similarly, in order to counteract the Balochis in
Balochistan, it is alleged that Zia went into some kind of understanding with the local
Pashtun leaders (Shah, 1997:101). The outcome of this ‘divide and rule’ policy of
General Zia was noticed for the first time in 1991, when the decision of the provincial
government to open an agricultural college at Mustang, a Baloch dominated area,
raised a storm. Pashtuns demanded that college should be shifted to Pishpin, a
Pashtoons inhabited area. It culminated into spiralling violence which led to the clamping of curfew in Quetta (Dixit, 1996:27). The inter-ethnic schism in the province was further widened with the emergence of Pakhtunkhawa Mili Awami Party (PMAP) on the provincial political scene in 1991. Under the leadership of Mahmud Khan Achakzai, this Pashtun ethnic party demanded for the bifurcation of Balochistan and formation of a new province comprising of Pashtun territories stretching from Chaman on the Afghan border, up to Sibi in the South and including the provincial capital, Quetta. This demand was however strongly rejected by Baloch nationalists and radical parties like BSO, on the grounds that historically, the entire Balochistan province belonged to Baloch nation in which Sibi and Quetta had remained the centres of Baloch power in the past (Shah, 1997:102).

Meanwhile, in December 1979 when Soviet forces entered into Afghanistan and, Balochistan once again became the attention of international community in general and western media as well as scholarly circles in particular. Of particular interest was, the possibility of Soviet and Afghan support to Baloch secessionist movement and the fear of super-power confrontation over this issue. This peculiar situation was exploited very carefully by the military regime of Pakistan. General Zia first convinced the West that Soviet Union has an eye over the strategically important region and wants to use the Baloch card for making inroads into the Gulf. This resulted in the massive western aid to Islamabad. The extent of assistance can be gauged from the special development programme launched by the military regime in 1982 in which five new airports, one naval and three fishing harbours were built, primarily for the military use (Khan, 2003:291). Secondly, Zia encouraged the Afghan refugees to settle in Balochistan in a bid to change demographic composition against the Baloch. According to one estimate, 5,00000 Afghan refugees crossed over to Pakistan, by mid-December of 1980, in the wake of the Marxist coup in Afghanistan (Dupree, 1988:846). Out of these, nearly 50,000 Afghan refugees were settled in Balochistan. Being predominantly Pashtuns, these Afghan refugees easily got mixed up with the local Pashtuns of Balochistan. They intermarried with the local Pashtun tribes. This turned the Balochs into minority in their own homeland and undermined their ability to control the political destiny of their province (Bokhari, 2003:869). No doubt that the Baloch on several occasions have sought the early repatriation of the Afghan refugees. In 1994, they even boycotted the proposed census until the Afghan refugees were repatriated to Afghanistan. Thus they have continuously and
consistently blamed the successive central governments for hindering the repatriation process of Afghan refugees by yielding under the Pashtun pressure and being too liberal towards them as well as by meddling in Afghanistan’s internal conflict (Shah, 1997:111). Meanwhile, it was seen that the Balochs find themselves as caught between the Durand Line controversy. They resent that in some Afghan maps Balochistan is referred to as “southern Afghanistan” and that the Balochs are associated with the Pashtun irredentism, particularly in the propaganda by Afghanistan. It is argued in the scholarly circles that Pakistan could have strategically allied with the Balochs in this regard as both of them share identical views about the Durand Line. But manifesting short-sightedness the state had perpetuated hostility towards the Balochs and the latter have blamed the Pakistan government for wasting opportunities and offers from the Afghanistan government to negotiate agreement on Durand Line (Shah, 1997:109).

In the following two decades (1978-98), the Baloch national movement lacked well defined and articulated demands to deal with the centre as well as a specific and integrated approach to garner the public support. This was largely due to the split first in the NAP along the ethnic lines and later on, among the Baloch nationalists themselves. Consequently, one of the factions led by Wali Khan formed the Awami National Party (ANP) and the other faction led by Baloch leaders formed a new version of the Pakistan National Party (PNP) which further splintered, with Bizenjo retaining his control over the PNP. Mengal went into exile in London where he joined hands with the other exiled ethnic elite from Pakistan and formed the Sindh-Pashtoon-Baloch Front with the aim of restructuring Pakistan into the confederation of states and later on, he became a vocal supporter of the Pakistan Oppressed Nations’ Movement (PONM). The most radical and militant Baloch nationalists, Marri crossed over to Afghanistan where he along with his armed supporters sustained the movement till his return to Pakistan in 1992. The other factor that eclipsed the Baloch national movement was the losses of the previous insurgency in terms of both life and property. The deliberate strategies of successive central governments, of both civil and military junta, exploited the situation and played the decisive role in both exhausting and dividing the Baloch leadership (Khan, 2003:293 & Titus & Swidler, 2000:63).

Here it needs mention that in such a situation when no ethnic group or political party was in a position to influence and/or force the centre towards conceding their
demands on their own, a new strategy of forming an alliance to protest/agitate and make the state fall in line with the ethnic demands, emerged among the ethnic groups. Thus PONM came into existence, which provided not only a platform to the ethnic groups to express their views including the issues of provincial autonomy and rights and power of the sub-national groups vociferously but also to criticize the government for the denial of proper treatment to the smaller nationalities. The Baloch leaders got actively involved in the PONM since its inception. It has provided a platform wherefrom the Balochs, as other ethnic minorities, has exposed the hitherto hidden designs of the centre, to subordinate and exploit the Baloch community as well as their natural resources. The organisation was also cardinal in mobilizing the public support against Punjabi domination in all walks of public life. Simultaneously, though, the Balochs and other ethnic groups tended to give democracy a chance (Baid, 2002:10).

As the Baloch leaders plunged into the competitive democratic process in the years following 1988, more divisions propped up between them. Thus in November 1988, Sardar Akhtar Mengal formed the Balochistan National Movement, which played a key role in the coalition government formed by the Balochistan National Alliance of Nawab Akbar Bugti. During his reign, Bugti picked up a quarrel with the central government for introducing “People’s Rural Development Programme” in his province without consulting his government. Later on, his coalition government was dismissed by the governor of the province, following various defections and inter-party and intra-party rivalries. With the approaching of mid-term elections in 1990, increase in the factional tendencies was seen. Thus Bugti broke away from the BNA and launched the Jamhoori Watan Party (JWP) which made an alliance with the Pakistan Muslim League of Nawaz Sharif. This initiated a new trend whereby the Baloch leaders entered into the alliances with one or the other national party and formed coalition governments with them at the centre in order to enter and remain in the power. However, this did not bring much political stability in the province. From 1988 to 1994, the province witnessed rise and fall of four provincial governments led by Nawab Bugti, Humayun Marri, Taj Mohammed Jamali and Nawab Zulfikar Ali Magsi respectively. In December 1991, a new party, the Balochistan National Party (BNP) was formed by the combination of factions of Mengal and Bizenjo. In the February 1997 provincial elections, this BNP which was supported by PPP formed a coalition government in the province. At the same time, in the National Assembly, it
supported the government led by PML (N). However, in 1998 protesting against the conduct of nuclear tests in the territory of Balochistan without consulting the provincial government, Mengal resigned. In order to show their rage against the national government in this regard the young Baloch had even took the arms and hijacked a plane as symbol of their protest. Meanwhile, Mengal had some other grievances also against the national government. He resented that the distribution of the share of the royalty of the natural gas produced in the province was unfair, as the province was getting nominal amount of the royalty as the maximum share went to the national government. He was also critical of the decisions of the National Finance Commission, which according to him were adverse to the interests of the province of Balochistan (Foreign Policy Centre, 2006: 33-34 & Shah, 1997: 101-102). Balochs were infuriated also because of delay in the compensation and relief to the flood-hit coastal region of the province, as was assured by the then Prime Minister. In addition to this Nawaz Sharif government had leased out the Gwadar Fish Harbour, which was highly resented by the people of the region (Hasan, 1998:55). However, Nawaz Sharif was involved more in strengthening his personal rule and less in finding the solutions of glaring problems confronting the country, especially the ethnic contentions. This resulted into the fragmentation of the political system as it grew more provincial in character than national. The Baloch people stood up in arms many times against his way of governance and handling the provincial matters (Baid, 2002:10 & Breseeg, 2004:348).

Despite the continuous central intervention in the provincial matters and political instability, no major ethnic confrontation was reported in the province during 1990s. This is largely ascribed to the introduction of representative participatory institutions that kept the ethnic groups, including the Balochs, engaged. As a consequence, Baloch nationalists represented by various political parties articulated their grievances and demands through the political mechanism in place of the militant methods. Thus the stresses and strains in the relationship with the Islamabad were now aired and channelled in the political realm. Differences with central governments led by Benazir Bhutto or Nawaz Sharif over issues such as royalties and employment did not degenerate into conflict in the 1990s, even after prime ministers reneged on pledges of provincial autonomy and dissolved the provincial governments. During the decade of democracy, Baloch politics, within the province and at the national level focused on demands for regional autonomy in the political, administrative, economic
and social spheres. With the return of the military rule in 1999, the ethnic competition and bargaining in Balochistan once again transformed into conflict. Here it is to be noted that with the coming of army rule, which is predominantly Punjabi and Pashtun in terms of its ethnic character, Balochs find it difficult to deal with a government with which they cannot relate themselves, whereas in case of democratic governments a sense of ‘government by consent’ exists and hence, it is easier to associate with democratic governments (Crisis Group Asia Report, 2006:6-7).

The coup of 1999 aggravated the situation in the province. The military regime made no sincere efforts to solve the Baloch problem and had rather radicalized Baloch people by putting maximum emphasis on the exploitation of their natural resources for managing Pakistan’s economy. A statement by Sardar Attaullah Mengal aptly illustrates this tendency of the government, thus:


Needless to say, the government of Pakistan badly needs an economic boost to save the country and there appears to be no source of income to supplement its resources except the underground wealth of Balochistan. It is unfortunate that the government and the future of the people of Balochistan have come in direct conflict with each other. It is not possible for both of them to survive; one of them will have to survive at the cost of the other. Naturally, the people of Balochistan being the weaker element will end up paying the price (Zulfiqar, 2001:57).

When Musharraf took over the reins by displacing Nawaz Sharif, he promised to introduce democratic reforms in the country and vowed that provincial grievances would be addressed by devolving power to them (Crisis Group Asia Report, 2006:7-8). However, he failed on his promises. Musharraf’s entire concentration was directed towards consolidating his regime and appropriating all the powers in his hand. Thus, he manipulated the constitution and the office of the president which was merely a symbolic in nature, was now made all powerful. Further, he retained the post of army chief and further centralised his authoritarian rule. As a façade of reforming local government and devolving power to the people, he introduced local government schemes. This scheme bypassed the provincial governments, who were now deprived of their rights as provided in the constitution of 1973. Baloch nationalists outrightly rejected this devolution plan which they described “…as a mechanism to impose a unitary form of government in the name of decentralisation”, which also counteract
the principle of provincial autonomy. According to Baloch leader, this devolution plan has:

Aimed at transferring administrative and financial power to local governments (and has) undercut established political parties and drained power away from the provinces. (It has) …strengthened military rule and may actually raise the risk of internal conflicts (Crisis Group Asia Report, 2006:7-8).

Meanwhile in the national elections of 2002 which are widely believed to be rigged in order to sideline Baloch as well Pashtun nationalist parties, Musharraf managed to set up a coalition government involving Muslim League Quaid-e-Azam (PML-Q) and Muttahida Majlis-i- Amal (MMA) in Balochistan. In this way Balochs were marginalised both at the centre and in their own province which was being governed by Pashtun Islamists with the support of military. As a result, Baloch nationalists rejected the military’s electoral, political and constitutional manipulations and reverted back to militant and violent methods. Meanwhile, Baloch and Pashtun nationalists remained divided in Balochistan. Clearly, there is Mahmood Khan Achakkzai and his Pashtun Khwa Milli Awami Party (PKMAP) who either demand the creation of separate province for Balochistan’s Pashtun majority areas or its merger with NWFP. Further it demands equal rights for both Baloch and Pashtun in the province until the boundaries are redrawn. On the other hand, there are moderate Pashtun parties who joined their Baloch brethren in challenging Musharraf’s political order. Also the Baloch put behind their internal oppositions and divisions to unite against the mullah-military alliance (Crisis Group Asia Report, 2006: 6-8).

Since 2000 the tensions between the state and the province was brewing. A new Baloch armed rebel group-the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA), made its presence felt since early 2000. In order to materialise its project of providing a surface trade-link with Central Asia through Chaman and Kandahar (in Afghanistan) akin to Silk Route, Pakistan authorities with support from China had initiated the development of Gwadar port and road and rail links to it, as discussed earlier. This was not liked by the Baloch nationalists who felt that whatever development will take place as part of this project will benefit the people from other provinces, especially as the local Balochis are too poor and illiterate to get any fair share in the opportunities arising from this project. Moreover, even the government did not undertake, as demanded by the Baloch leaders, to give preference to the locals as far as employment in this project was concerned. They aired many a times their grievances in this regard.
through the platform of PONM. In the wake of post-9/11 military operations in neighbouring Afghanistan, Islamic extremist activities increased in Pakistan in general, and the border provinces of NWFP and Balochistan, in particular. As far as Balochistan is concerned, *Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal* (MMA), an alliance of religious parties, led the provincial government, which was tilted in favour of Islamic precepts and denounced ethnic sentiments. But the ethnic sentiments of the Baloch people could not be suppressed and the Baloch nationalists came back to action, protesting against the ‘intrusion’ of the central government in the provincial matters (Crisis Group Asia Report, 2006: 8 & Friday Times, 2005:1). Actually in the name of building bases in the border areas of Balochistan for backing up US ‘war on terror’, Musharraf had started building bases in Pasni, Gwadar, Dalbandin and Jacobabad (Sindh) as part of his larger plan to tighten his grip over the province. This angered the nationalists, who started opposing almost all the state sponsored development projects in the province. This included Mirani Dam project near Turbat. There are other grievances also. As the Baloch agriculture has been in a sorry state of affairs for years now, they, like Sindhis fear that plans to construct dams at Kalabagh or the Thal Canal will further deprive them of more water. Both Kalabagh and Thal will benefit the Punjabis (Sood, 2005: 8 & also see Dunne, 2006:56). No doubt that during their struggle against the Pakistani government, Baloch militants had invariably targeted and damaged the developmental projects. They also targeted and killed the foreign nationals employed in these projects. For instance in May 2004, three Chinese engineers working in Gwadar Port Implementation Authority were killed by Baloch militants. Balochs feel that they are underrepresented in the government. According to an estimate, out of a total of 14 provincial government secretaries in Quetta, only four were Baloch; out of 3,200 students at Balochistan University, only less than fifty were Baloch; similarly out of the total of 180 faculty members, only 30 were Baloch. Abdul Rauf Mengal, a Baloch MP, stated that as on March 2005, there were very few government servants from Balochistan in Islamabad and not a single Baloch was found in foreign missions abroad. As a result Baloch find it difficult to relate and associate with the state, which for them is alien (Bansal, 2005:258). Balochs were also resentful of the influx of Afghan refugees prompted by the central government which was threatening to reduce them to a minority in their own province.

By 2005, the tensions between the Baloch people and the military regime escalated. In fact the magnitude of the conflict, quantum of the arms used and the
level of destruction and devastation that ensued clearly indicate that the militant acts in Balochistan had actually turned into a full-fledged insurgency (Crisis Groups Asia Report, 2006: 8). BBC reported that during 2004, 30 bomb attacks took place in Quetta alone. The same year, there were 626 rocket attacks in the province that among other targets hit the Sui Gas Fields and some railway tracks. There were 122 bomb explosions along the gas pipelines. In the conflict that erupted in Sui in the aftermath of the incident of gang-rape of a lady doctor in 2005, the insurgents fired 14,000 rounds of small arms, 436 mortars and 60 rockets in just four days. As a result, in addition to the already present 7,000-10,000 Frontier Corps men and 750 Defence Security Guard (DSG) men in the region, 300 army troops were moved to the area. Besides, between 3,000 and 4,000 rangers were deployed just outside the area on the Sindh, Punjab border (Bansal, 2005: 253). Even the helicopter gunships were marshalled to put down the Bugtis and Marris. Here it needs mention that the upsurge was sparked in the resource-rich areas under control of Marris and Bugtis in the districts of Dera Bugti and Kohlu. The Pakistan Human Rights Commission alleged that Pakistan had been using US supplied Cobra helicopter gunships as well as US F-16 fighter planes against Balochi civilians in its indiscriminate attacks on the guerrillas (The Tribune, April 12, 2006:11 & also see Nooruzzaman: 2005:10).

For most of the militant acts during the insurgency the hitherto lesser known organisation Baloch Liberation Army claimed its responsibility. Unconfirmed reports suggest that this organisation is led by Nawabzada Balaach Marri, the Moscow-educated son of Nawabzada Marri (Bansal, 2005:255). In July 2004, this organisation was running more than 150 training camps, housing 3000 to 5000 armed rebels who were getting salaries varying from 5000 to 15000 Rupees, across the province. Meanwhile, the BLA have also a visible political face (Khan M.I, 2004:53-55). In 2006 the central government reinforced the involvement of the BLA in the acts of violence in the province and, accused it for planning, engineering and executing majority of incidents in the province. Subsequently, this organisation was declared a terrorist organisation and was banned for its alleged involvement in terrorist activities. It was propagated that some tribal leaders of the province, headed the BLA (Mir, 2005:45). It was also declared that anyone found having links with the said organisation would be tried under the Anti-Terrorist Act (The Tribune, April 11, 2006: 9). Meanwhile, there were certain new developments in the Baloch rebel ranks. In addition to the traditional structure of Sardari system that provided leadership in
exchange for loyalty and guaranteed privilege, a new pattern of leadership emerged whereby young leaders with a modern outlook and an unemotional view of the crisis of the province came forward to lead the Baloch movement. For instance, Baloch Students Organisation (BSO) leaders that include Sanaullah Baloch, Hameed Baloch, Amaullah Baloch fall in this category. As far as the strategy of the militants is concerned, it was observed that barring few incidents they have generally avoided head on conflict with the security forces and resorted to primarily ambush and guerrilla warfare. Their choice of targets and use of weapons seemed to be assiduously and suitably selected. The insurgents seemed to be meticulous in handling the sophisticated weapons. They promptly took responsibility for their acts and sought to propagate their views through media. They were particularly very good in carrying out psychological operations. In fact, these tactics – proficiency in planning out the operation and the level of skill in implementing them has driven the thought in various circles that there must be some kind of foreign backing to these insurgents (Bansal, 2005:256). The nationalist leaders of Balochistan allied with the leaders of other ethnic groups, like Sindhis, Mohajirs, etc.

In July-August 2004, militants carried out attacks on MMA Chief Minister of the province. The rape of a lady doctor, Shazia Khalid in Sui gas plant by the Army captain, Hammad and three of his subordinates, further fuelled the already existing tensions. As the army declined involvement of the accused and the government did not take any proactive action against the perpetrators of the crime, Bugtis were irked. As a consequence, the outraged, Bugtis joined the ranks of the rebels and vowed resistance (Friday Times, January 14-20, 2005: 1). Bugti tribesmen and other Baloch militants attacked the Sui installation, gas pipelines and security forces by firing of hundreds of rockets on the main plant (The Hindu, August 8, 2005:5). This caused major disruption of gas supply that affected the Pakistani economy and the life of urban Pakistanis. The extent of damage can be estimated from the fact that Sui fields meets nearly 43 percent of the industrial and domestic consumer demand in Pakistan. The army retaliated causing heavy civilian casualties in the district of Dera Bugti (Bansal, 2005:254).

In 2005, ruling party officials that included PML-Q president Shujaat Hussain and Secretary General Mushahid Hussain, tried to defuse the situation by initiating talks with Nawab Bugti. However, President Musharraf took an inflexible position and blamed Bugti single-handedly for the entire unrest in the province, which led to
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stalemate. The attack on the public meeting of the President at Kohlu on 14 December 2005, by the Baloch rebels broke the temporary lull and led to further deterioration of the relations between the state and the Baloch nationalists. Actually army had decided to establish a cantonment in the district of Kohlu, which provoked the Baloch militants. Army also decided to construct military cantonments at Dera Bugti, which has largest gas installations and in Gwadar, which is the Chinese-built and financed deep water port on Balochistan’s southern tip, and is the site of a Pakistani naval base. Meanwhile, in order to avenge the attack on President, the Army deployed both the regular troops and the paramilitary forces in the province. An attack was launched on 17 December 2005, against Marri tribes in Kohlu district. According to U.S. intelligence sources, about 25,000 troops including six army brigades and the paramilitary troops were stationed in the province. According to Baloch sources, there was heavy loss of life and property following indiscriminate aerial bombings by the security forces (Crisis Group Asia Report, 2006:8-9). Dr. Abdul Hayee Baloch, President of the National Party, went to the extent of saying that the situation in Balochistan was like that of former East Pakistan in 1970 (Zulfiqar, 2004:59). The government cordoned off and limited media access to the worst hit areas, Dera Bugti and Kohlu. The media and various other Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) were denied unfettered access to areas targeted by the Pakistan armed forces. Thus the international community remained unacquainted of the situation (The Tribune, April, 11, 2006:9). Even Asma Jehangir, the then Chairperson of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) was prevented from visiting Balochistan. The HRCP urged the government to abstain from any military action in the province and resolve the crisis through political dialogue. It condemned the intelligence agencies for their alleged involvement in the disappearance of the people in Balochistan. It also rubbished the government claims that regular troops are not involved in any kind of military operation in the province (The Tribune, April 12, 2006:11). Meanwhile, as the government had increased military action in the province, the insurgents had stepped up their activities all over the province except the Pashtun belt of the province. The insurgents frequently attacked the gas pipelines, electricity grids, railway tracks, government installations and personnel in almost all Baloch majority areas – from Chagai bordering on Iran and Gwadar on Balochistan’s southern coast, to Hub, the industrial city that borders on Sindh. Not only this, the insurgency spilled over to the Baloch-majority areas of the provinces of Sindh and Punjab. It is believed
that the situation would not have precipitated if the nationalist leaders could be engaged in the dialogue. But the state decided to deal the situation with force. On 26 August 2006, military launched an operation in which the Jamhoori Watan Party (JWP) leader Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti was killed. But he became a symbol of sacrifice for the Baloch cause, in his death. As a result, more and more young Balochs not only from Balochistan but also from the Baloch dominated areas of the Punjab and Sindh joined the militant ranks. Killing Bugti was symbolic of the fact that the Pakistan government was interested in solving the problem militarily. The former was targeted by the security forces in March 2005 also, when his resident complex was hit by as many as seventeen shells. In July 2006 also, his hideout was targeted but he survived (Crisis Group Asia Report, 2006:8-9).

The military operations in Balochistan were however, condemned all over the world, and the international community urged the then military regime to halt these operations immediately. Sixty seven members of the European Parliament, including its then vice president, Janusz Onyszkiewiez presented a petition to the forum’s then President, Mr Josep Borell, to urge the government of Pakistan to stop the killing of the innocent people in Balochistan. Musharraf was accused of butchering the people of Balochistan to punish them for asserting their rights. It was held that the situation in the province deteriorated because of the military government’s attempts to tarnish the image of Baloch leaders and pitting tribe against tribe (The Tribune, April 11, 2006:9). Interestingly, the US government described the prevailing crisis as the internal matter of Pakistan and washed its hands off (The Tribune, April 12, 2006:11). As far as reaction of government of India is concerned, it had been cautious and restrained. The statement from Ministry of External Affairs expressed that “military can’t solve political issues” (The Tribune, August 29, 2006:10).

After the general elections of 2008 in the country, the newly set up democratic government took several conciliatory initiatives towards the province. Thus in February the PPP government offered a public apology to the people of Balochistan by acknowledging “the atrocities and injustices committed” against the province. Further Balochistan’s overdraft with the State Bank was converted into a soft loan that gave much-needed financial respite to the province. The centre also promised the constituent provinces greater autonomy and control over their resources by scrapping the concurrent list and sought to outline a new and equitable criterion for the National Finance Commission award (Dawn, Editorial Friday, 27 Mar, 2009). In
response the Baloch nationalist organisations, including Balochistan Liberation Army and the Balochistan Republican army decided to suspend their armed struggle indefinitely (The Tribune, 4 September 2008:10). As a result of September 6 presidential elections, Asif Ali Zardari became the President of the country. He has recently announced a Rs 46.6 billion worth ‘Balochistan package’ on 30 March 2009. A large part of the money under this package is earmarked for building four large dams in the province. Meanwhile, some Baloch nationalist groups have rejected this package outrightly. Notwithstanding the above mentioned moves and initiatives of the government, the people of Balochistan can prosper and feel involved in the process of overall development of the province only when they are rightfully granted the control over its immense mineral and fossil-fuel wealth, including the long- awaited ‘provincial autonomy’ (Dawn, Editorial, March 30, 2009).

EXTERNAL INVOLVEMENT IN BALOCHISTAN

International law does not codify any clear distinction between insurgency and belligerency. Though the inflicted states tend to use the term ‘insurgency’ to indicate the rebel’s cause as illegitimate, the ‘insurgents’ tend to view and project the state itself as being illegitimate. On the other hand, recognition of insurgency within a state, as belligerency, tantamount to conferring upon the insurgent group, statehood, albeit, for purposes of warfare only. Hence insurgents tend to gain status of belligerency and gain the legitimacy for their cause by approaching international community (see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/insurgency). However, such a situation arises very rarely and in a protracted stage. Normally, the insurgents approach international community and organisations for pressing and getting restored their human rights and group rights as assured by United Nations and international normative regime. Besides these legal interventions, there are other politico-strategic and extra-legal ways through which the foreign powers intervene and/or involve in the insurgent movements within another state or the insurgents approach for outside support.

As far as Baloch insurgents are concerned, they have approached international agencies against the atrocities of the Pakistan state numerous times. Balochs have held demonstrations worldwide, against the violations of human rights in Baloch areas of Pakistan as well as Iran. For instance in March 2005, Balochistan Rights Movement demonstrated at 10, Downing Street, London and in May 2006, a Baloch
Conference was held in Oslo, Norway, and so on (See Balochistan Dossier, 2006). Meanwhile, as mentioned earlier, the magnitude, the quality and quantity of weaponry, the level of planning and strategies of guerrilla warfare, ‘indicate’ possibilities of some foreign hand in the insurgent movement in Balochistan (Bansal, 2005:259). Thus, even though there is no concrete evidence to date, regarding foreign involvement, but strategists and political analysts give various reasons supporting their arguments regarding involvement of one or the other country in the Baloch insurgency. In fact, the Pakistani establishment alleged the involvement of more than one foreign mentor in Balochistan for abetting insurgency. Meanwhile, the Baloch nationalists as well as some other academicians contend that such accusations of Islamabad are nothing more than propaganda on the part of the state to justify its military course to suppress the voice of the nationalists in the province, on the one hand, and to create divisions among Baloch people and obstruct the unification and articulation of Baloch national sentiments, on the other (Akbar, 2008:1-2). Others argue that due to large scale trafficking of arms and drugs that go on unabated in the province, as well as the ensuing income, it cannot be said with certainty that the Baloch nationalists require any external financial support. Through this medium enough income could be generated to finance the supply of weaponry to the local armed groups. This possibility cannot be overruled, seeing the magnitude and the value of the consignments confiscated by the government, from time to time. Thus, in April 2005, the Governor of Balochistan disclosed that arms valuing around 6.4 million Euros have been sneaked into Balochistan during the proceeding six months. Interestingly, these arms were smuggled into the province, despite the presence of about 600 check posts all over the territory. Hence the collusion of officers of the security forces in this lucrative arms trafficking can also be not ruled out. Apart from this, the remittances from the Balochs, working in the Gulf countries, can also be pointed out as another source of financial help and assistance to these groups (Grare, January 2006: 10).

In order to study the external involvement, one should keep in mind that it is the geo-strategic location of Balochistan which has not only invited the neighbouring countries or the superpowers to intervene in the region but has also eclipsed the aspirations of Baloch people to be independent (Breseeg,2004:363). For instance, it was the geo-strategic interests of the British colonisers in this region that, at the first place, led to the peculiar political predicament of the Baloch people, which has
continued to haunt them till date. For attaining the supremacy in the South-Central Asia, which included Balochistan, the British actively got involved in the famous ‘Great Game’ vis-à-vis the Czarist Empire and Persia, in the nineteenth century. The colonial rulers left no stone unturned to check the Russian advance towards the British Indian Empire (Breseeg, 2004:363-364). As a part of their strategy to meet any Russian misadventure in this regard, the Britishers bifurcated the region between Iran and Afghanistan. In this way they tried to please Tehran, which could be of help in meeting any eventuality. Thus, the region that historically could not be controlled permanently by any of the invaders got subdued by the Britishers through tact. While contesting for strategic supremacy in the region, Britishers did not pay any attention to the economic development in the region. Not surprisingly, the new state of Pakistan continued the British Raj perception of geopolitics after 1947 and made alliances with the West during the Cold War by following the theory of a ‘Soviet pursuit of warm waters’ in the region (Ahmed, 2004: 8). The current energy rivalry among regional and international powers has further added to the geopolitical and geostrategic significance of Balochistan (Wirsing, 2008:41).

Apart from the geo-strategic location, regional as well as international political environment has led various foreign powers to support the independence of Balochistan and gain control over or wield influence over the region, for securing their respective national interests. However, in the absence of any concrete evidence regarding involvement or official support of any foreign powers, political analysts have probed the pros and cons for potential foreign supporters to involve into the Baloch political movement in Pakistan. In this section various viewpoints and politico-strategic calculations are discussed, on the basis of which, one can ‘speculate’ the involvement/non-involvement of foreign powers, during cold-war and post-cold war period, in the Baloch secessionist movement.

When Pakistan got independence, the world community was getting engulfed by Cold-War, during which, the superpowers sought to expand their spheres of influence worldwide. This rivalry effected the Baloch issue also (Breseeg, 2004:365). General scenario during cold-war was that, neither of the superpowers was supporting or willing to support any secessionist ethno-nationalist movement in any country, lest it might escalate into theatre of full-fledged armed conflict between the superpowers. As they were competing for the allegiance of the third world countries, they did not want to antagonise them; by supporting secessionist movements within their territorial
bounds, unless and until there was any ‘strategically vital’ cost of involvement. Also with the looming threat of nuclear confrontation, both the superpowers were inclined to maintain the ‘Balance of Terror’ (Bokhari, 2003: 890).

In the Cold War period, in order to secure its strategic interests across the globe, America tended to provide material and financial support to its allies. This was particularly true of the newly emerged Third World states, which were vulnerable and struggling for political stability (Breseeg, 2004: 365). These states were used as superpower satellites in their respective regions. This was evident by the American role in installing the Shah of Iran to power in 1953 and its interests in developing strategic ties with Pakistan, as part of larger Western strategy of encircling the Soviet Union in the mid-1950s. Therefore, United States’ national security interests in the Baloch question were nothing more than to maintain the territorial integrity of Iran and Pakistan. Hence the US adopted a seemingly indifferent posture towards the Baloch issue (Breseeg, 2004:365-366). Similarly, despite the suspicions of the Iran and Pakistan regarding the support of the erstwhile Soviet Union to the Baloch movement, it had never displayed, at least publicly, any interest, nor did it become involved directly, in the issue of Baloch nationalism. Notwithstanding this, both Iran and Pakistan ha continued to suspect the Balochistan issue, to be a part of an overall Soviet plot for gaining access to the Indian Ocean and controlling the Persian Gulf through Balochistan (Breseeg, 2004: 365-366).

As far as Soviet strategic interests in Balochistan were concerned, it was argued that as the Soviet Union would be competing with the Western world for strategic Middle East petroleum resources, particularly, Persian oil, it would be interested in setting up its military installations along the Balochistan coast near the Strait of Hormuz. So much so that Soviet interests and intervention in Afghanistan (1979) was also viewed in this light. Apart from this, referring to the traditional interests of Soviet Union in warm-water ports, many analysts argued that it is only a matter of time until Moscow annexes the Baloch areas to a Greater Afghanistan or unleashes a Soviet-supported Baloch guerrilla struggle for independence there (Harrison, 1981:195).

However, critics do not completely agree with the argument that it is Soviet-block energy shortage that determines the Soviet policy in the region, as they regard this view as exaggerated. Similarly, on military issues, experts differ with respect to the strategic importance of the Balochistan coast. It is also argued that in spite of the
usefulness of the Gwadar and the other ports, Moscow would not be much interested in it due to heavy developmental and maintenance costs that it would have to incur on it. Moreover, Moscow has an alternate in the form of port of Aden. In any case, military analysts held that due to its distance from the oil installations in the Persian Gulf, Balochistan cannot be a useful invasion route, and for Moscow it would be a better option to use airborne divisions rather than infantry forces if it should ever attempt to capture the oil fields (Harrison, 1981:196).

Meanwhile, Moscow had explicitly been opposing the Baloch nationalist goal of an independent Greater Balochistan (Harrison, 1981:196). Consequently, it failed to develop a strong Soviet-oriented Communist party in either the Pakistan or Iranian Baloch-areas. For most of the time the non-communist nationalist elements remained dominant in Baloch political life. Thus if Soviet Union had to promote the independence movement in Balochistan, it had to support it through non-communist elements, which was seen as a costly affair, militarily and in terms of risks also, as Soviets did not have any organisational base in Balochistan. There were risks of confrontation with US also. However, a prime reason that came in the way of Soviet Union coming out openly in support of the Baloch cause was regarded to be the mutual apprehensions between the Soviets and the Baloch nationalists, as the former regarded the non-communist nationalists as inherently “unreliable allies” (Harrison, 1981:196). They apprehended that after achieving independence Baloch nationalists could turn to some other foreign supporters to oust them. Hence they were reluctant in supporting the Baloch insurgency. It is reported that in 1981, though Soviet Union was building its communist network in Baloch areas, but it stopped short of supporting Balochistan’s independence. Meanwhile, for its general political interests in the region, the Soviets were expecting and were hopeful of fundamentalist Islamic regime change in Pakistan and Iran, with more compliant regimes, therefore, they were not interested in short-term policy goals in the turbulent Baloch regions of these countries. Actually, Soviet Union had two different reasons to involve or not to involve in Balochistan movement. Firstly, its larger interest of wielding prospective political influence in Pakistan and Iran prompted it to keep away from the Baloch crisis, whereas its desire to reprimand both Pakistan and Iran for their support to Afghan rebels, could have led it to support the secessionist movement in respective Baloch areas of these countries (Harrison, 1981:197-198).
Meanwhile, the Balochs also had their own apprehensions while seeking assistance from Soviets. They felt that, once the Soviets came to their rescue, they would use the opportunity to build up a communist movement in their area, and convert Balochistan into a Soviet stooge. But at the same time the principal Baloch leaders have been making candid expressions of hopes that the Soviets can prove to be their potential liberators. Actually they had kept their options open for dealing with any external support they would or they could eventually get in fulfilling their political aspirations. Hence even though they criticized the US for its military assistance to the Punjabi- and Persian-dominated governments in Islamabad and Tehran, respectively, and condemned it for pursuing its “reactionary” policies in the third world, they were keen to receive help from it (Harrison, 1981:197).

As far as Islamabad is concerned it comprehends that both Moscow and Washington have stakes in acquiring bases in Balochistan, if they are to strengthen their Persian Gulf military presence. However, Pakistan had been particularly, anxious and apprehensive about Indian involvement in the secessionist movement of Balochistan and the likelihood of either of US or Soviet Union, or both of them, joining hands with India in her endeavour. Regarding India’s involvement, some prominent American leaders that include, former President Richard Nixon and former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger had expressed their belief that both India and Soviet Union collaborated, for causing dismemberment of Pakistan. Though the Nixon administration failed to present any concrete evidence in this regard, and, the critics dismissed these charges while blaming the administration of its pro-Pakistani tilt vis-à-vis India (Harrison, 1981: 202). At the same time any prospect of Indian involvement in the crisis was also not completely ruled out, as the possible Indian support to Baloch, Sindhi, and Pashtun separatists, during the periods of tensions is often mooted (Harrison, 1981: 204).

As it was discussed in the previous chapter, ethnic-kin states, which are creation of colonial borders that converted into national boundaries, have played prominent roles in the ethnic movements in the neighbouring countries, in the third world. In case of Balochistan in Pakistan, if one traces the history, both Afghanistan and Iran, as ethnic kin-states have played a prominent role in either promoting or subduing separatist tendencies among the Balochs in Pakistan. Hence, while Afghanistan has been encouraging the cause of Baloch nationalists in Pakistan, Iran has consistently helped Pakistan to put down the separatist movement. Afghan
support to the Baloch secessionist movement has been in terms of “material-aid” and not in terms of “politic-diplomatic” support (Bokhari, 2003: 877). Supporting Baloch cause has been part of Afghan strategy to intimidate Pakistan for its long-standing bilateral border dispute. Also, Afghanistan is a land-locked country and depends upon the western corridor of Pakistan to the port of Karachi. As access to the sea has remained a prime concern of the Afghan government, to have a friendly independent state of Balochistan, with its natural port at Gwadar, would be in the interests of Afghanistan (Bokhari, 2003: 878). Afghanistan has never joined hands with Pakistan or Iran to crush the Baloch liberation movement in either country in the 1970s. The traditional goodwill between the Balochs and the Afghans continued in spite of the chauvinistic claims on certain Baloch areas by many Pashtun nationalists. In this regard in 1982, the ex-Chief Minister of the province of Balochistan, Sardar Ataullah Mengal, expressed hopes that the territorial adjustments with Afghanistan, in the event of creation of independent Balochistan, should not pose a problem as the dispute could be resolved amicably (Bresee, 2004:367-368).

Iran’s lack of sympathy towards the Baloch nationalist movement in Pakistan is generated from its internal and external security considerations. As far as internal security considerations are concerned, Persian-ruled Iran has always remained anxious about the political ambitions and aspirations of the Balochs residing within its bounds (Bokhari, 2003:879). Similarly, external security concerns were due to growing hostilities between Iran and Iraq. By the late 1960s, conflict between the two countries had started coming to fore on the issue of Teheran’s alleged involvement and support to the Kurdish rebels in Iraq. Even while Iran has denied these charges, Iraqi government as suspected by Iran has tended to retaliate by supporting the Baloch population of Iran. As a result Teheran became cautious and sensitive towards mounting nationalist movement in Baloch areas of Pakistan in 1970s, lest it might not fuel such separatist sentiments among its own Baloch people. Iranian government became particularly frightful of the Baloch ethnic upsurge in Pakistan that started in 1973, in the wake of the success of Bangla nationalist movement. Also Iran was worried about growing hostility of Soviet Union towards Pakistan, which already was facing challenges to its territorial integrity and internal security. The irritant factor between Soviet Union and Pakistan was the growing ties between the latter and the US as well as China, in the late 1960s. Earlier this has been a major factor that led Soviet Union to take India’s side in the war between India and Pakistan that led to the
dismemberment of the latter (Bokhari, 2003:879-880). In a geo-political scenario, whereby after strengthening its hold in Afghanistan, Moscow would try to support an already powerful Baloch nationalist movement in Pakistan, Iran feared related attempts on the part of the Soviet Union to intensify Baloch disaffection in Iran (Breseeeg, 2004:367-369). Supporting the creation of an independent Balochistan would help Soviet Union to strike at the foundations of Iran also, which was a US ally at that time. Moreover, it would provide Soviet Union an opportunity to extend its influence in the Middle East region. This upset Iran, which worked fervently to help Pakistan in suppressing the Baloch movement (Bokhari, 2003: 880).

Meanwhile, Baloch leaders, who had been skeptical while seeking support from one or the other foreign powers, were doubtful about approaching Afghanistan for support, also. They were doubtful because they felt that Kabul was interested in incorporating Balochistan in greater Afghanistan instead of creating an independent Baloch state (Bokhari, 2003:884). To illustrate this viewpoint, it is held by the Baloch historian Inayatullah Baloch that initially Afghanistan provided considerable support in terms of weapons, training and base of operations, to the Baloch nationalists led by Prince Abdul Karim. Also, the guerrilla movement of Nauroz Khan and later on the Pararis were believed to be substantially supported by Afghanistan. The Baloch guerrillas were provided with safe sanctuaries in the Baloch-populated southern areas of Afghanistan (Bokhari, 2003: 890). But, subsequently, the Afghan government ended this support abruptly. It is argued that Afghan support to Prince Abdul Karim was stopped because Afghanistan did not want to antagonize the British government over the issue of Baloch independence because it hoped for the British support over the more important issue of Pakhtunistan (Bokhari, 2003: 885).

EXTERNAL INVOLVEMENT IN POST COLD WAR PERIOD

As the cold-war ended with the disintegration of the erstwhile USSR, the political conditions in Afghanistan became more and more unstable. This provided ample space to the external powers to intervene in the region, including in Baloch crisis. Where on the one hand, Taliban resurrected in the neighbouring Afghanistan, simultaneously there was resurgence of ethnic conflict in the border provinces of Pakistan, on the other. This generated tensions between Kabul and Islamabad, and both of them started accusing each other of interfering in their respective domestic affairs (Grare, October 2006:3). Recently, the President of Afghanistan, Hamid
Karzai, warned Pakistan and Iran to stop meddling in the internal affairs of the country. While attending the funeral of the Pashtoon nationalist leader Abdul Wali Khan on 17 February, 2006, President Karzai declared that:

If they don’t stop, the consequences will be...that the region will suffer with us equally. In the past we have suffered alone; this time everybody will suffer with us…. Any effort to divide Afghanistan ethnically or weaken it will create the same thing in the neighbouring countries. All the countries in the neighbourhood have the same ethnic groups that we have, so they should know that it is a different ball game this time (Grare, October 2006:7).

Meanwhile, Pakistan’s press has been reporting involvement of Iran and even U.S. in the resurgence of Baloch ethnic upsurge (Ahmed, 2004:2). In the backdrop of now embittered relations between US and Iran, the Pakistanis also suspect that the latter would support Baloch activists in order to counter a Pakistan-U.S. plot to make Baluchistan a base in a future offensive against Tehran. Moreover, it is reasoned that Iran, which has built its own port at Chah Bahar (recently renamed Bandar Beheshti) with Indian assistance, would be keen on becoming the preferred outlet to the sea for Central Asia. Thus building Gwadar port with Chinese assistance in Balochistan would not go down well with Iran. Even Balochistan’s Chief Minister, Jamm Mohammad Yousaf has stated that the possibility of Iranian involvement in the recent turmoil in Balochistan can not be ruled out. Meanwhile, Iran has turned down this allegation while stating that it is not hostile to the Gwadar project. Critics have also ruled out Iranian involvement in Balochistan insurgency on this count and have held that Iran and Pakistan have a common interest in exporting Iranian gas to India, and an insurrection in Balochistan would only harm their chances of building a gas pipeline through the province. Besides this, Iran would also be worried with Balochistan’s claims to its border regions. In fact, Tehran sent helicopters to Islamabad between 1973 and 1977 to help it put down the Baluch insurrection (Grare, January 2006:10). Therefore, it is reported that US is trying to isolate Iran in the region, by propagating its implication in Baloch insurgency. As this will cause animosity between Pakistan and Iran, it is alleged that military action by the US, as and when taken against Iran will not have any opposition or any other fallout in Pakistan.
Finally, the Baloch as well as the Pakistanis see the United States as a potential menace. It is argued that Washington would like to use Baluchistan as a base for an attack on Iran and also would like to get China out of the region. Meanwhile, certain sections of Pakistanis view the political scenario in the region as another “Great Power game” being played in Central Asia since the collapse of the Soviet Union. They believe that the United States, in competition with China and Iran, would like to control the oil supply lines from the Middle East and Central Asia and would also like to use its Greater Middle East initiative to dismantle the major Muslim states and redefine borders in the region (Grare, January 2006:10). It is also supposed that as US has an agenda to create new Kurd state, creation of Baloch state can also be a possibility, for its strategic interests in the region because it may provide an easier way for the US in controlling and striking at the future strategic targets in Central Asia, West Asia, Eastern China than to rely on Afghanistan and Pakistan. The US hand in Balochistan is also being suspected, as Washington does not wish the proposed Iran-India oil/gas-pipe line via Balochistan to materialise. Meanwhile, the US has some high economic stakes in the region, as key US companies are engaged in gas and oil explorations in the region (Bansal, 2005:262-263).

**THE INDIAN FACTOR**

Since independence, India has maintained friendly relations with Afghanistan. It is being argued that New Delhi, as a part of the strategy has attempted to secure her strategic interest in the region by “trapping” Pakistan in the event of a clash along the Durand Line or along the Indo-Pakistan border, by opening up the other side of the border. India’s policy of supporting the government of Afghanistan discontinued in 1992, with Pakistan-backed mujahideen taking control over Kabul (Grare, October 2006:11). In the following years, she has been supporting the Northern Alliance of the different warring factions in the country. After Hamid Karzai’s government was installed in the troubled country, India started establishing and normalising her relations with Afghanistan. As a result, Pakistan became anxious of her presence and her impending role in the region. Particularly, opening of Indian consulates in *Herat*, Jalalabad and Kandahar, which were in proximity to the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, became a serious concern of Pakistan. On July 27, 2003, expressing its concerns over the Indian activities along Afghanistan-Pakistan border, government of Pakistan accused that the Indian consulates have “less to do with humanitarian aid and more to
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do with India’s top-secret intelligence agency, the Research and Analysis Wing” (Grare, October 2006: 12). Pakistan blamed India of printing fake Pakistani currency, carrying out acts of sabotage and terrorism on Pakistani territory and setting up networks of “terrorist training camps” scattered in areas including Qushila Jadid, north of Kabul; near Gereshk, in southern Helmand province; in the Panjshir Valley, northeast of Kabul; and at Kahak and Hassan Killies in western Nimruz province. Though Kabul has assured that it would not allow any anti-Pakistani activities on its soil, but Pakistan could not be satisfied with these assurances. As there was resurrection of subversive activities by the Baloch nationalist groups, since 2000, the Chief Minister, of the province, Jam Muhammad Yusuf, made a declaration on August 13, 2004, that the Indian secret services were maintaining forty terrorist camps all over Baloch territory. Since then the Pakistani press kept reiterating the accusations and claiming that proofs had been found of the Indian consulates’ involvement in Balochistan’s troubles (Javed, 2009:1). Not only this, in May 2003, the government of Pakistan accused India of its involvement in subversive activities in Waziristan. A Pakistani official declared that Pakistan had collected “all required information about the involvement of India in fomenting unrest in North and South Waziristan” (Grare, October 2006:12), suggesting that “the Indian consulates in Southern Afghanistan have been supplying money as well as arms and ammunition to the militants that has added to the trouble and violence in the tribal belt.”40

Reiterating these charges Senator Mushahid Hussain, chairman of the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, in July 2006, said that “RAW [Research and Analysis Wing] [is] training 600 Balochs in Afghanistan,” and insisted that “India [is] propping up the Baloch war”(Grare, October 2006:12). The reasons that generally given for India’s involvement in raking ethnic upsurge in Balochistan is that the former would want to pressurise Pakistan on its Western border to force it to retreat from its terrorist acts in Kashmir, which would give India a chance to steer the “composite dialogue” and end it on terms favourable to her. Also India is supposed to consider China’s role in the construction of the Gwadar port a potential threat to its economic and strategic interests in the region. To substantiate this argument, the former Chief of India’s Naval Staff, Admiral Madhavendra Singh, is quoted as saying that, “…ties forged by the Chinese navy with some of India’s neighbours might endanger India’s vital sea routes to the Persian Gulf”(Grare, January 2006:10). Meanwhile, the ground situation
is so unjust in both Waziristan and Balochistan that even without any external support to the rebels; the nationalists would have continued their struggle for their rights.

To conclude, it may be said that the successive governments, in Pakistan, imposed a centralised system of governance, leaving no space for the sub-ethnic groups in the country, including the Balochs, in the political apparatus. Whenever the Baloch people demanded restructuring of the existing state set up that favour the Punjabis, their demands fell on deaf ears, and they were dealt with heavy hand by the latter-dominated state. This had led to widespread alienation among the Baloch people, who subsequently started pressing for provincial autonomy or outright secession from the state. In place of rectifying its approach, the Pakistani establishment, to justify its repressive policies towards the state and illegitimise the ethnic assertions of the community, embarked upon to overemphasize and propagate the external linkages of the nationalist movement. It has also alleged that it is handful of conservative sardars or tribal chiefs, who are creating trouble for their petty interests. As the central government could not earn the allegiance of the Baloch people and other ethnic minorities in the country, the state tended to legitimize itself in the name of Islam. But the Baloch ethnic identity has a long history and their ethnic bonds and internal solidarity have further been reinforced by the frequent outside interventions and intrusions. Hence the state of Pakistan, in order to integrate the Balochs in the national mainstream, should take these facts into consideration.
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