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**THESIS**

**CRISIS IN BALUCHISTAN: A HISTORICAL ANALYSIS  
OF THE BALUCH NATIONALIST MOVEMENT  
IN PAKISTAN**

by

Justin S. Dunne

June 2006

Thesis Co-Advisors:  
:

Peter R. Lavoy  
Brig. Feroz Khan

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**CRISIS IN BALUCHISTAN: A HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE BALUCH  
NATIONALIST MOVEMENT IN PAKISTAN**

Justin S. Dunne  
Major, United States Marine Corps  
B.S., United States Naval Academy, 1995

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

**MASTER OF ARTS IN NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS**

from the

**NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL  
June 2006**

Author: Justin S. Dunne

Approved by: Peter R. Lavoy  
Thesis Co-Advisor

Feroz Khan  
Thesis Co-Advisor

Douglas Porch  
Chairman, Department of National Security Affairs

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## **ABSTRACT**

Since January 2005 Pakistan's Baluchistan province has been embroiled in a rash of violence that threatens to deteriorate into civil war. Is this recent violence yet another recurrence of state-periphery tensions, or is it a qualitatively new phenomenon which threatens U.S. and Pakistan interests in the region? This thesis analyzes the historical causes of Baluch political violence in order to determine why Baluchistan is again enmeshed in bloody conflict. Violence in Baluchistan historically has been the product of several factors: a fiercely independent Baluch people that eschew outside interference; the lasting legacy of British policy; mismanagement by ruling Pakistani regimes; and historical grievances that have allowed Baluch leaders to mobilize support for their nationalist cause. The argument of this thesis, however, is that the particular timing of the most recent surge of violence in Baluchistan is a result of a change in the relationship between the central government and Baluchistan brought about by the province's growing strategic significance. While the United States currently views the conflict in Baluchistan as an internal matter, growing violence and continued instability in a region where the presence of the Taliban and Al Qaeda is widespread makes this a crisis worthy of U.S. attention.

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# I. INTRODUCTION

## A. PURPOSE

In 1973, with Pakistan's central government still reeling from the stinging defeat that resulted from the succession of East Pakistan and the creation of an independent Bangladesh in 1971, ethnic nationalists in Pakistan's southwestern province of Baluchistan began a bloody four-year insurgency that threatened to further dismember Pakistan and destabilize all of southwest Asia. Now, three decades after the rebellion was put down by the government forces of President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Baluch nationalist zeal has again sparked a wave of violence that threatens to explode into a full-blown insurrection with vast implications not only for Pakistan and other regional players, but for the United States and the Global War on Terror (GWOT).

But what is the cause of this latest resurgence of nationalist violence in Baluchistan? Baluch leaders such as tribal chief Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti argue that the current violence is a product of decades of exploitation of the Baluch people at the hands of the Pakistani central government. He and other Baluch nationalists point to inequities in natural gas royalties, the influx of large numbers of non-Baluch workers into the province, and an increased military presence as evidence that the central government is set on reducing the Baluch people to "slaves and third grade citizens" in their own land.<sup>1</sup> The central government, on the other hand, labels the violence in Baluchistan as the work of a small band of "miscreants," led by a few militant tribal leaders who do not represent the majority of the Baluch population and whose efforts to undermine the development of Baluchistan are purely aimed at maintaining the "backward" feudal tribal system from which they garner their great power and wealth.<sup>2</sup> Which of these arguments is correct? Is the current violence in Baluchistan driven by a mass based movement spawned from historical and present day grievances, or is it simply a product of elite manipulation by tribal Sardars attempting to hold onto power?

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<sup>1</sup> Nawab Akhbar Khan Bugti. Interview posted on [www.balochvoice.com](http://www.balochvoice.com), 1 August 2003, accessed 30 April 2006.

<sup>2</sup> "English Rendering of President's Address to the Nation" Associated Press of Pakistan, 17 January 2006 accessed from [www.fbis.gov](http://www.fbis.gov), 17 January 2006.

The purpose of this thesis project is to analyze the root causes of Baluch violence throughout history in an effort to determine why Baluchistan is once again embroiled in a bloody clash between ethnic Baluch tribesmen and the forces of the Pakistani state. Violence in Baluchistan throughout its history has been the product of several contributing factors: a fiercely independent Baluch people that eschew outside interference in their affairs; the lasting legacy of the techniques and policies implemented by the British during their century long rule of British India; mismanagement by ruling Pakistani regimes; and real and perceived historical grievances that have allowed Baluch leaders to mobilize support for the nationalist cause. The fundamental argument of this thesis, however, is that the critical factor that has determined the particular timing of past insurrections, and the most recent surge of violence in Baluchistan, is the existence of a major change in the dynamic between the central government and Baluchistan. In other words, the fundamental contributing factor to violence in Baluchistan has been a change in the status quo. Throughout history, this change has been brought about because of both internal and external pressures on the Pakistani government that pushed the ruling elite toward major policy decisions that exacerbated existing grievances, and ultimately spawned violence.

In order to support this argument, this thesis provides a historical analysis of Baluchistan, its nationalist movement, and instances of major violence, over three significant periods: during the rule of the British in the nineteenth century; from the partition of British India in 1947 until the conclusion of the fourth Baluch revolt in 1977; and from the beginning of the current unrest in January 2005 to the present. The intent of this historical analysis is to not only to provide for a comprehensive understanding of the various factors which have contributed to violent outbreaks in Baluchistan throughout its history, but more specifically, to determine the reasons behind the current spate of violence that threatens to drag Pakistan into a civil war.

## **B. BACKGROUND**

In December of 2005, after numerous attacks by Baluch tribesmen on the natural gas pipeline near the Baluch town of Sui, as well as rocket attacks directed at President Musharraf's entourage during a visit to the Baluch city of Kohlu, the Pakistani government launched a large military operation to rid the province of the "miscreants" it

believes are set on disrupting the government's aggressive development projects. Pakistani officials have downplayed the increasing Baluch violence as the acts of a few malcontents who do not represent the population as a whole. But despite the increased involvement of central government forces, violence has continued. The unrest in Baluchistan has steadily increased since January of 2005 when the failure of the Pakistani government to bring four Pakistani soldiers to trial for the alleged rape of a local female doctor sparked attacks on the Sui gas fields by Baluch tribesman. This increased violence, as well as the emergence of more violent nationalist organizations such as the Baluchistan National Army, threaten to plunge the province into a bloody civil war—with dire consequences for both Pakistan and the region.

The rugged and sparsely populated province of Baluchistan has been home to numerous insurrections since Pakistan's formation in 1947. Like those in 1948, 1959, 1962, and 1973, the current uprising in Baluchistan has implications that go far beyond the region. The province of Baluchistan is economically and strategically important, not only to the central government of Pakistan, but to other regional and global powers including India, Iran, China, and the United States. For Pakistan, Baluchistan provides vast mineral and energy resources—thirty-six percent of Pakistan's total natural gas production, coal, gold, copper, silver, platinum, aluminum and uranium come from the Baluchistan province.<sup>3</sup> Baluchistan is also the potential transit zone for two economically beneficial international pipelines (Iran to India and Turkmenistan to India), and home to two of Pakistan's three naval bases (Gwadar and Ormara). In addition to providing Pakistan with the rights to the largest deep water port in the region, and the potential for millions in revenue, Gwadar, will provide Pakistan with strategic depth that their main naval base at Karachi—which has been blockaded by Pakistan's arch rival India in the past—does not.<sup>4</sup> Additionally, Baluchistan's vast land area provides the

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<sup>3</sup> Frederic Grare, "Pakistan: The Resurgence of Baluch Nationalism," *Carnegie Papers* 65 (January 2006): 4.

<sup>4</sup> Iran's Chabahar port, built with Indian assistance, is the other major port within the region. While Chabahar lacks the capacity of Gwadar, it still competes with Gwadar over which port will serve as Central Asia's main conduit to warm water ports. For more see Ziad Haider, "Baluchis, Beijing, and Pakistan's Gwadar Port," in *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs*, Winter/Spring 2005, 95-103.

central government with the ability to disperse its expanding strategic arsenal in order to increase its survivability from any potential attack by its arch-rival India.<sup>5</sup>

While the government of General Pervez Musharraf is steadfast in its belief that its program for development in Baluchistan will benefit both the local Baluch and Pakistan as a whole, many Baluch nationalists argue otherwise. They point to the fact that Baluchistan was the last province to be granted access to Baluchistan's vast gas resources, as well as what they view as a disproportionately low percentage of the energy revenue produced from within their border, as evidence of the central government's deliberate policy of exploitation. Another point of contention among nationalists is the development of the port city of Gwadar. While the central government argues that the massive port project will provide opportunity and great benefits to Baluchistan, many Baluch are concerned that they will be left on the sidelines as jobs and revenue go to outsiders—principally the Punjabis who dominate the government in Islamabad. The natural gas issue and the Gwadar project are only two of numerous contested issues between the Baluch and Pakistan's central government, but they are representative of the basic grievance that has led to increased violence and unrest in recent years. Put simply, the Baluch desire more say and less interference with their political and economic destiny. Unfortunately, the divergent views of Baluch nationalists and the central government continue to push the crisis towards the precipice.

If the violence in Baluchistan escalates into civil war, each of the above mentioned powers would be forced to reevaluate its regional goals as well as its specific methods for attaining them. It would follow then that each is interested in avoiding any such calamity. Yet so far, the escalating violence in Baluchistan has caused little reaction outside of Pakistan except in India where the Indian government has criticized Pakistan's handling of the volatile situation and not surprisingly linked it to the ongoing peace talks between the two adversaries. The rest of the world, however, has seemed content to let the government of President Pervez Musharraf handle the situation as it sees fit.

Pakistan's solution to the expanding Baluchistan crisis seems to be two pronged. First, the central government continues to push ahead with several massive development

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<sup>5</sup> From an interview conducted with Brig. Feroz Khan, 1 June 2005.

projects—the Gwadar port as well as major dam and road projects—which it believes will bring prosperity to all of Pakistan, including Baluchistan. Simultaneously it has used military and para-military forces to crush what it views as a small number of “miscreants,” led by greedy tribal leaders, set on keeping Baluchistan underdeveloped and backwards. The Baluch nationalists view the central government’s development projects as further examples of the long history of the “colonization” of Baluchistan in which the Punjabis—who dominate both the government and military hierarchy—seek to exploit the province at the expense of the Baluch people.<sup>6</sup> Additionally, they view the central government’s recent military operations as heavy handed and simply an excuse to oppress the local Baluch and establish a more robust military presence within the province—something the Baluch fiercely oppose.<sup>7</sup>

While not impossible, it is unlikely—save the injection of massive support from an outside player—that the current Baluch nationalist movement will result in an independent Baluchistan. Furthermore, it is unclear that the nationalists even desire this as their ultimate goal. What is more possible, and increasingly likely however, is that prolonged and escalating violence will continue to plague Baluchistan and as a result, disrupt the national endeavors of Pakistan and the region’s major players. This is clearly a state of affairs that Pakistan, as well as the United States, wishes to avoid.

### **C. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE BALUCH PROBLEM**

During his March 2006 trip through South Asia, President George W. Bush described the efforts of Pakistan in the fight against terror as “unfaltering.”<sup>8</sup> While his comments came at a time of growing tensions between the United States and Pakistan over U.S. cooperation with India on nuclear technology, and U.S. concerns that Pakistan is not doing enough to secure its porous border with Afghanistan, President Bush’s praise for the Musharraf regime highlights the ongoing importance of Pakistan as a crucial partner of the United States in the Global War on Terror.

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<sup>6</sup> Grare, 3.

<sup>7</sup> B. Raman, “The Baluch Resistance Movement,” South Asia Analysis Group, 15 Aug 2004, accessed from [www.saag.org/papers11/paper1087.html](http://www.saag.org/papers11/paper1087.html) on 5 January 2006.

<sup>8</sup> Terrance Hunt, “Bush: Pakistan Steadfast in War on Terror,” Associated Press Online, 4 March 2006, accessed from [www.web.lexis-nexis.com](http://www.web.lexis-nexis.com) on 16 May 2006.

The events of 9/11 not only altered the relationship of the United States and Pakistan, but also between Pakistan and the people of its western borderland. In the wake of 9/11, the United States put heavy pressure on the Pakistani government to exert increased control over its western provinces and federally administered tribal areas—regions previously left nearly untouched by the central government. Pakistan responded with large scale military operations along its western border area to crack down on Islamic militants—including both Taliban and Al Qaeda fighters—but this required that the central government override long standing local autonomy arrangements with tribal leaders who have historically held sway over that region. The reluctance of Baluch tribesman to give up their local autonomy and their desire for increased control over local governance and resources has led to a resurgence of violence by Baluch nationalist groups that threatens to destabilize the already fragile state of Pakistan.

Future stability in Pakistan depends on many factors but an equitable solution to the emerging Baluchistan crisis is surely one of them. Ultimately, no one gains from a prolonged and bloody insurrection and a prompt resolution is in the best interest of all players—the Baluch, Pakistan, the United States and the entire region. For the Baluch, a stable Pakistan will be better able to focus on economic development—one of their primary grievances. An independent Baluchistan, while ideal in the eyes of some Baluch, would not be granted without a long bitter fight with the central government that would only prolong the Baluch people’s suffering. For Pakistan, an independent Baluchistan would open the flood gates for other irredentist claims that would threaten to dismember a state that has struggled since its creation to establish a Pakistani “nation” and maintain control over its ethnically diverse population. Additionally, the economic and strategic importance of Baluchistan makes stability there indispensable to future Pakistani success.

With regards to other regional players, neither Iran nor Afghanistan desires an independent Baluchistan and continued unrest will only exacerbate current border security issues between Afghanistan and Pakistan. For the United States, Pakistan’s support for military operations in Afghanistan as well as the efforts of Pakistan’s police and military to crackdown on terrorists within its borders have been crucial to the U.S. led Global War on Terror. While there is as of yet no clear evidence that Baluch tribesmen have united with the large number of Taliban and Al Qaeda currently operating

in the border area between Afghanistan and Pakistan, this possibility only adds to the potential danger that the growing crisis could effect stability in the region.

Any increased instability in Pakistan could ultimately lead to a regime change that could critically hinder U.S. efforts in the region. More broadly, a strong, stable and democratic Pakistan could act as an example of democracy to the rest of the Muslim World—a role Iraq and Afghanistan are still years from fulfilling. While Pakistan may be far from that example today, its future stability—at least in the near term—relies heavily on the policy choices of President Pervez Musharraf. With respect to Baluchistan, it is yet unclear whether the central government’s solution to the crisis—combining massive development projects with firm military operations to crush militant Baluch nationalists—is having the desired effect and the steady increase in violence within Baluchistan since early 2005 indicates that the central government would be wise to reevaluate its approach. Failure to do so may plunge Pakistan into civil war.

#### **D. METHODOLOGY**

The three specific time periods addressed in this thesis were chosen because they encompass the periods of greatest violence in Baluchistan. While the various Baluch tribes never united in their struggles against British authority, nineteenth century Baluchistan was riddled with clashes between Baluch tribesmen and the British Indian Army.<sup>9</sup> The partition of British India in 1947 was followed by three decades of bloody conflict between the central government and militant Baluch nationalists that included four organized insurrections. After nearly thirty years of relative peace following the bloodless coup that brought General Zia ul-Huq to power in 1977, violence once again returned to Baluchistan in January of 2005.

In addition to violence, each of these periods included at least one major policy shift, or decision, by the ruling regime—either British or Pakistani—that had a direct impact on the level of violence in Baluchistan. Under British rule, violence surged after the Frontier of Separation policy was abandoned for of the Closed Border policy. Violence subsided after Sir Robert Sandeman’s Forward Policy was instituted in the late nineteenth century, only to have it surge again after partition of British India in 1947.

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<sup>9</sup> James W. Spain, “Political Problems of a Borderland” in *Pakistan’s Western Borderlands*, ed. Ainslee T. Embree (Karachi: Royal Book Company, 1979), 4.

The Pakistani government's effort to centralize power and end ethnic division by instituting the One Unit Policy was followed by nearly three decades of violence. One Unit and other policy decisions, including the dismissal on two separate occasions of the democratically elected Baluch provincial government, sparked violent uprisings that often took years to quell. General Zia ul-Huq's policy of "non-provocative firmness," instituted in the wake of a bloody four year Baluch insurgency, brought a period of relative peace to Baluchistan that went uninterrupted for nearly thirty years. Yet the onset of the Global War on Terror in the wake of the events of 9/11, and the subsequent decision to begin several major development projects in Baluchistan demanded that the central government abandon "non-provocative firmness" and reassert its authority over Baluchistan—the result has been the latest wave of violence.

The three time periods analyzed in this thesis collectively build the case that the most recent spate of violence in Baluchistan is the product of several factors that have existed since 1947: the impact of British rule, a perceived legacy of betrayal, misguided policies of the central government, and both real and perceived grievances regarding economic exploitation and ethnic dispossession that have been utilized by Baluch leaders to mobilize support for the nationalist cause. Yet the analysis in the chapters below will also demonstrate that most, if not all of the above factors have existed since 1947. The factor that explains the specific timing of past revolts, and the burgeoning insurrection in Baluchistan today, is a change in the status quo of the relationship between the central government and its Baluchistan province.

## **E. ROADMAP**

In order to understand the various factors that have led to the resurgence of Baluch nationalism in recent years—and the violence that has been associated with it—it is first necessary to appreciate the history of the Baluch people. Chapter II of this thesis expands on the brief background provided above by examining the unique character of the Baluch people, the influences (both internal and external) that shaped their early history, and the impact of British rule on the political memory of the Baluch people. The main finding of this chapter is that ineffective British techniques for dealing with the tribal people of their western border area exacerbated a deep seated suspicion of outsiders that has been part of the Baluch ethos for centuries. Additionally, the incessant violence

between the British Raj and Baluch tribesmen during the nineteenth and early 20<sup>th</sup> century served as a precursor to the violence to come.

Chapter III concentrates on Pakistan's first three decades of independence after the partition of British India and details how the misguided choices of several Pakistani governments exacerbated the grievances of the Baluch people and ultimately led to violence. Specifically, this chapter addresses the difficulties of state formation in Pakistan; the shortcomings of government policies such as One Unit and Basic Democracies; as well as the specific actions taken by the central government that contributed to growing discontent among the Baluch people that manifested itself in armed insurrection. The major finding of this chapter is that several key policy decisions by the central government between 1947 and 1977 contributed to growing feelings of exploitation and marginalization among Baluch that had a direct impact on the outbreak of violence.

Chapter IV encompasses an analysis of the current violence in Baluchistan. This chapter first examines the main issues that remain in dispute between the Baluch and the central government in order to determine their impact on the current crisis. Second, this chapter analyzes the ethnic dimension of the conflict in order to identify how and why Baluch tribesmen have been mobilized to take up arms against their central government. Finally, this chapter examines the various factors which have increased the strategic significance of Baluchistan—the Global War on Terror, the deep-sea port in Gwadar, and the regional dynamics of Southwest Asia—in order to highlight how these events have led to a change in policy and the exacerbation of existing tensions. The findings of Chapter IV support the conclusion that the policy shifts of the Musharraf regime in the wake of 9/11, and the decision to develop a deep-water port in the Baluch city of Gwadar, exacerbated existing problems within the province and ultimately led to the current crisis.

The final chapter of this thesis summarizes the project's findings and offers policy recommendations for both Pakistan and the United States with regards to the violent situation in Baluchistan.

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## II. FROM THE KHAN TO THE CROWN: THE LASTING LEGACY OF BRITISH RULE ON BALUCHISTAN

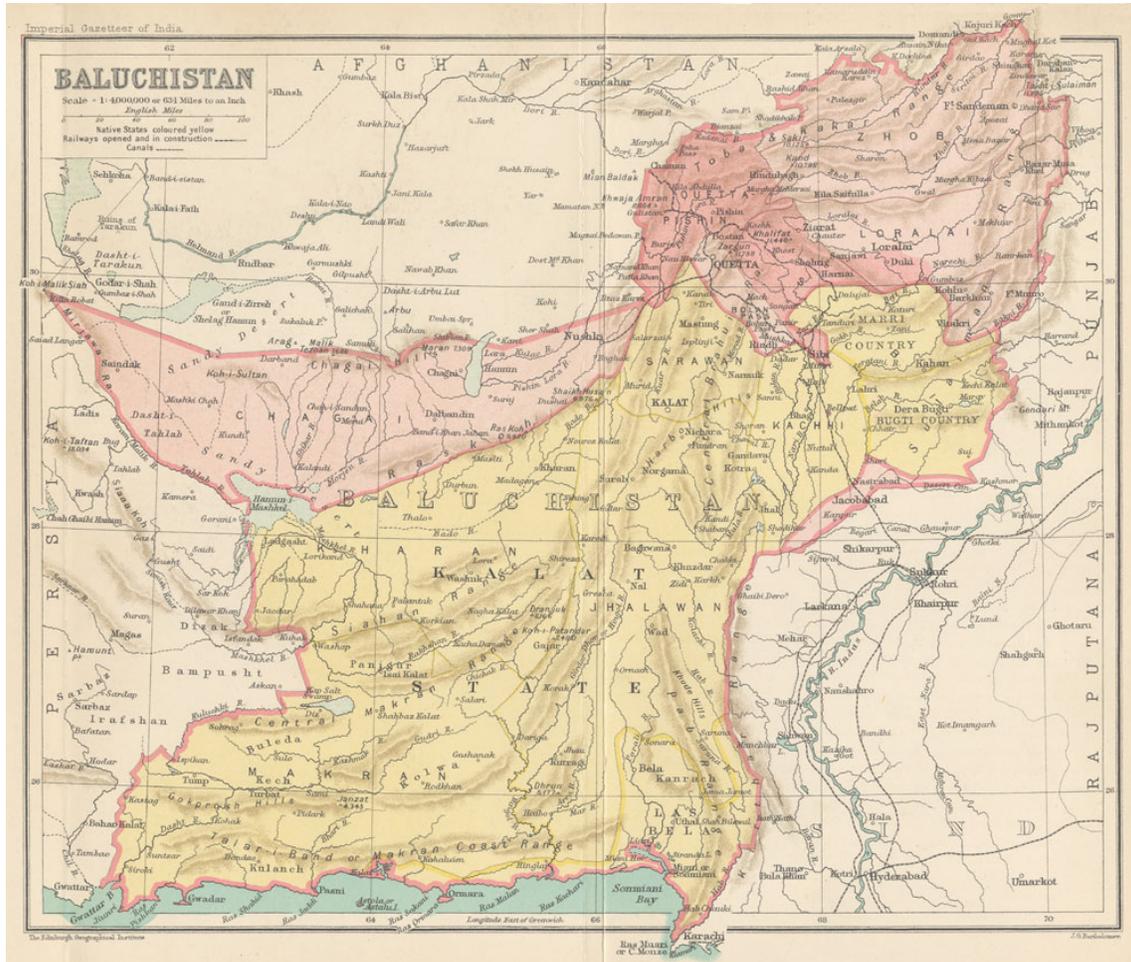


Figure 1. Figure 1. Baluchistan under British rule<sup>10</sup>

### A. INTRODUCTION

In 1833, Lord William Bentick, the chief administrator of the government of British India, led an effort to push the crown's influence west into the frontier of Sind and Punjab. While control of this area was key to the expansion of British trade in Central Asia, it would also counter Russian expansion from the north and allay British fears that Russian influence in the area would turn the local tribes against British rule. According to Bentick, not only would the expansion of influence to the west secure British

<sup>10</sup> J.G. Bartholomew, *Baluchistan* (Imperial gazetteer of India. New edition, published under the authority of His Majesty's Secretary of State for India in Council. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907-1909) accessed from <http://dsal.uchicago.edu/maps/gazetteer/index.html> on 10 June 2006.

dominance in the region but it would also usher in “a new era of civilization, happiness and of blessing” to the peoples of the western borderlands.<sup>11</sup> Yet the task of controlling the frontier area on colonial India’s western border proved to be a tremendous challenge as frontier administrators including Edwardes, Taylor, James, Lumsden, Mackleson, and Abbot would find as they were forced to put down some semblance of a rebellion nearly every year between 1849 and 1947.<sup>12</sup>

During their century-long rule over South Asia the British employed several techniques of administration in an effort to effectively maintain control over the restive tribes of the western borderlands. These methods included the “Frontier of Separation,” which combined techniques of direct control and negotiated alliances; the “Closed Border System,” which attempted to exert direct control over local tribesmen; and the “Forward Policy,” which attempted to establish control through a technique dubbed “peaceful penetration.” Which of these techniques was most successful? Perhaps more importantly, what has been the lasting impact of these policies on both the Baluch people and the subsequent Pakistani governments that sought to bring the restive western border area under their control? An analysis of these techniques, the reasons they were employed, and the level of success each policy incurred, is crucial to understanding the subsequent policies of the Pakistani government after 1947.

The primary conclusion drawn from the analysis in this chapter is that the most successful British technique for administering control over the tribal people of its western frontier was the “Forward Policy.” While this policy reinforced the power and autonomy of the tribal chiefs, and as a result laid the foundation for subsequent conflict between the Baloch and the Pakistani central authority,<sup>13</sup> it also proved to be the most successful technique to maintain peace, foster development, and provide for substantial levels of government influence. For reasons that will be discussed in subsequent chapters, the central government of Pakistan abandoned the techniques of the “Forward Policy” in the

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<sup>11</sup>Ainslee T. Embree, *Pakistan’s Western Borderlands* (Karachi: Royal Book Company, 1979), 29.

<sup>12</sup> Exceptions to this include the Sepoy Mutiny (1857), the Second Afghan War (1878-1880) and World War I (1914-1918). James W. Spain, “Political Problems of a Borderland” in *Pakistan’s Western Borderlands* ed. Ainslee T. Embree (Karachi: Royal Book Company, 1979), 4.

<sup>13</sup> Rashed Rahman, “The Crisis in Balochistan,” *South Asian Journal*, 8 (April-June 2005) accessed from [www.southasianmedia.net](http://www.southasianmedia.net) on 26 January 2006.

years following independence and attempted to more directly exert their control over Baluchistan. This reversion to a policy a kin to the Closed Border system resulted in four armed revolts during nearly three decades of violence in Baluchistan between 1947 and 1977.

Today, much like its British predecessors, the Pakistani government continues to struggle with the proper balance between central government authority and the traditional tribal system that has dominated the region for centuries. This chapter analyzes the lasting legacy of the clash between British imperial rule and the tribal system which dominates Baluchistan in order to gain perspective on the current clash between Pakistan's central government and militant Baluch nationalists. In order to fully understand the uneasy and often volatile relationship between the central government and the tribal people who inhabit its southwestern province it is first necessary to understand the Baluch as a people. As such, this chapter begins with an examination of the harsh geography that encompasses Baluchistan. It continues with an analysis of the customs and traditions that define the Baluch as a people as well as an account of the Baluch tribes and their tribal system. Next, this chapter explores the early political development and foreign influences that shaped the political landscape in Baluchistan and concludes with an examination of the various techniques used by the British during their century long rule over the tribal areas of present day Pakistan.

## **B. GEOGRAPHY**

The province of Baluchistan comprises over 134,000 square miles of rugged and inhospitable land. It is divided into four major areas known as the Upper Highlands, the Lower Highlands, the Plains and the Deserts. The Upper Highlands, known as Khorasan, is a mountainous region that falls within the central and east central portion of the province. The Lower Highlands are bracketed by three mountain ranges: the Mekran, Kharan, and Chaghi. The Plains is a region that is further subdivided into areas known as Kachhi, Las Bela, and the Dasht River valley. The Deserts make up the northwest portion of the region and are marked by their unique mixture of sand and black gravel.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> A.B. Awan, *Baluchistan: Historical and Political Processes* (London: New Century Publishers, 1985), 5.

Baluchistan is bordered on the north and east by its respective provincial neighbors, the North West Frontier Province (NWFP), Punjab, and Sindh. To the west is Afghanistan and Iran and to the South is the Arabian Sea. Baluchistan, NWFP and the Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA) make up Pakistan's Western borderlands—an area that stretches from the Arabian Sea north along the eastern edge of the Iranian plateau to the mountainous area of the Hindu Kush and the Pamir mountains.<sup>15</sup> Baluchistan has over 470 miles of coast line but possesses no rivers that run year round and it receives less than five inches of rainfall a year. It is a region that can be described as “bleak and inhospitable,” arid, rugged, and harsh.<sup>16</sup> Temperatures in Baluchistan range from frigid (-40 degrees C) to sweltering (130 degrees C). The stark contrast between its rugged mountains and arid expanses of semi-desert wasteland has resulted in a unique people, whose tribal structure, traditions and customs reflect the harsh environment in which they live.

### **C. CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS**

The province of Baluchistan is multi-lingual, multi-ethnic and multi-cultural. Due to the barren and infertile physical environment, the people of Baluchistan have historically been nomadic, although in recent years many tribes have abandoned their nomadic ways and settled permanently. In addition to Baluchi, several other languages are spoken within the province including Brahui, Pashto, Sindhi, and Saraiki. The Baluch, Brahui, and Pathans are all Muslim, yet the Baluch tend to be more casual in their observance than the more “fanatical Pathans.”<sup>17</sup> While each of the ethnic groups that populate Baluchistan have unique characteristics, they all conform to a similar tribal culture that values loyalty and hospitality, believes in “an eye for an eye and a life for a life” and adheres to the simple rule that “he shall take who has the power, and he shall keep who can.”<sup>18</sup>

The Baluch have a long tradition glorifying independence, battle, and personal bravery and they adhere strictly to a deeply inbred code of honor, Ryvaj, that—very

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<sup>15</sup> Embree, xi.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, xii.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Awan, 2.

similar to the Pashtoonwali Code adhered to in much of Afghanistan and Pakistan's NWFP and FATA—is grounded in the tenets of revenge, sanctuary, hospitality and suspicion of outsiders.<sup>19</sup> Henry Pottinger, a nineteenth century British officer who traveled extensively in the western frontier of British India, commented on the Baluch's strict adherence to their code of hospitality and honor in this way: "When they once offer, or promise to afford protection to a person who may require or solicit it, they will die before they fail in their trust."<sup>20</sup> A Baluch is bound to honor their code above all else—including his life—and it is this code that has frustrated the designs of foreigners throughout its history and given the peoples of Baluchistan a cultural and racial awareness strong enough to transcend international as well as internal political boundaries.<sup>21</sup>

#### **D. TRIBES AND THE SARDARI SYSTEM**

The Baluch people can be divided into seventeen groups and some four hundred sub-groupings.<sup>22</sup> The two major groups are the "Eastern," or Sulaiman Baluch, and "Western," or Mekran Baluch. Sulaiman Baluch are the larger of the two groups, but are only dominant numerically in one (Sibis District) of Baluchistan's twenty-six districts, and traditionally, the Mekran have been viewed as the "original nucleus" of the Baluch people.<sup>23</sup> The Sulaiman Baluch include the Bugtis, Buledis, Buzdars, Dombkis, Kaheris, Khetrans, Magasis, Marris, Mugheris, Rinds and Umranis tribes while the Mekran are made up of the Buledi, Dashti, Gichki, Kandai, Rais, Rakhshani, Rind, Sangu and Sanjrani.<sup>24</sup> While the Rind tribe is first in the social hierarchy of the Baluch tribes, the two tribes which have become dominant in modern Baluch politics, and been at the center of the recent unrest, have been the Bugtis and Marris.

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<sup>19</sup> James W. Spain, "Political Problems of a Borderland" in *Pakistan's Western Borderlands* edited by Ainslee T. Embree (Karachi: Royal Book Company, 1979), 2.

<sup>20</sup> Henry Pottinger, *Travels in Beloochistan and Sinde* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 57.

<sup>21</sup> In his essay, "Political Problems of a Borderland," James W. Spain describes the "Pukhtunwali Code" of the Pathan people which dominates their every action and created their strong ethnic identity. While the name Pukhtunwali refers specifically to the Pathans, or Pashtuns, similar codes and the same sense of ethnic identity exists among the Brahui and the Baluch.

<sup>22</sup> Rajshree Jetly, "Baluch Ethnicity and Nationalism (1971-1981): An Assessment," *Asian Ethnicity*, 5, 1 (February 2004): 10.

<sup>23</sup> Fred Scholz, *Nomadism and Colonialism: A Hundred Years of Baluchistan 1872-1972* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974), 27.

<sup>24</sup> Scholz, 27.

Within the Large Brahui population, concentrated in the central mountain region south of the Baluch capital of Quetta, there are three subdivisions: the Brahui nucleus, the Jhalawan Brahuis, and the Sarawan Brahuis. The Brahui nucleus tribes include the Achmadzai, Gurguari, Iltazai, Kalandari, Kambrani, Mirwari, Rodeni, and Sumalari. The Achmadzai tribe occupies the top of the social hierarchy among Brahui, and is the tribe of the Khan of Kalat, but a Jhalawan tribe, the Mengels, have become the most powerful player in Baluchistan politics.

The basic political organization in Baluchistan is the tribe and their loyalty is to the tribal chief. Their traditional form of government is the Sardari system: a centuries old system in which tribesmen pledge their allegiance to Sardars, or tribal chiefs, in exchange for social justice and the maintenance of the “integrity of tribe.”<sup>25</sup> Sardars are traditionally elected by a Jirga, or council of elders within a tribe. The Jirgas are also responsible for dispensing justice—and perform the three-fold duties of police, magistracy and justice.<sup>26</sup> Within Baluchistan, there are four levels of Jirga: local, district, joint and shahi.<sup>27</sup> Local Jirgas primarily deal with lesser crimes and disputes while district Jirgas deal with more serious crimes such as major theft and murder. Joint Jirgas handle intra-tribe disputes having to do with serious crimes and tribal enmity. The Shahi Jirga, composed of the Sardars of the respective tribes, is reserved for major issues or decisions such as the 1947 decision to include British Baluchistan into the nascent state of Pakistan.<sup>28</sup>

#### **E. EARLY POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT AND FOREIGN INFLUENCES**

The vernacular name for the region that makes up Pakistan’s Western borderlands is *Yaghistan*, “Land of the Unruled.”<sup>29</sup> Much of what has made this region so intractable has been discussed in the preceding two sections—the dangerous combination of a harsh and rugged physical environment; a people with a long tradition of independence and

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<sup>25</sup> Dr. Mansoor Akbar Kundi, “Tribalism in Balochistan: A Comparative Study” in *Tribal Areas of Pakistan: Challenges and Responses* edited by Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema and Maqsoodul Hasan Nuri (Islamabad, Pakistan: Islamabad Policy Research Institute, 2005), 20.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, 22.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, 21.

<sup>28</sup> Kundi, 22.

<sup>29</sup> Spain, 2

battle; and deep seated code which breeds suspicion of outsiders. Yet that does not mean that Baluchistan has been untouched by foreign influences. Quite to the contrary, the conquest of “great civilizations” including the Greeks, Arabs, Hindus, Turks, and Persians all passed through Baluchistan. The southernmost region of Baluchistan, known as Mekram, is an excellent “avenue of approach” that allowed these great civilizations to expand and unite their empires from the Middle East to South Asia. While never truly conquered (at least not until the region came under British control in the nineteenth century), the area that now comprises Baluchistan fell under the influence of the Phoenicians during the second and first millennia BC, various Persian dynasties beginning with King Darius in 522, and the Arab Empire after their army’s conquest in the seventh century.<sup>30</sup> It should also be noted that there was significant influence by the Indo-Greeks in the third and second centuries BC, the Hindu Rai Dynasty in the seventh century and the Mughal Dynasty in seventeenth and eighteenth century. Because there was limited revenue to be extracted from Baluchistan, these empires had little reason to be involved in the day-to-day administration of the region. Direct involvement of the ruling power would increase nominally between the fifteenth and eighteenth century as the Baluch tribes were required to provide warriors for royal armies and the need for the safe passage of trade through the borderlands became increasingly important. Yet it would not be until the late eighteenth century that any significant political identity would begin to take shape in Baluchistan.

Mir Chakar Rind would, in the fifteenth century, be the first Baluch monarch to attempt to unify Baluchistan under a single political entity. While he would ultimately fail in this endeavor, his successful invasion of Punjab in the early part of the sixteenth century would solidify him in history as a leader who personified Baluch martial virtues.<sup>31</sup> Baluchistan would finally become united in 1666 when the Baluch tribes elected Mir Ahmad Khan as the ruler (Khan) of the state of Kalat. Under Ahmad Kahn, the Kalat state would extend from Kandahar in Afghanistan, to Bandar Abbas in Iran, across present-day Baluchistan to Dera Gahzi Khan in Punjab. But it would be under the

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<sup>30</sup> Awan, 18.

<sup>31</sup> Selig S. Harrison, *In Afghanistan’s Shadow: Baluch Nationalism and Soviet Temptations* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1981), 12.

forty year rule of Ahmad Khan's grandson, Mir Nasir Khan, who ruled from 1741, that the institutions of a central government would begin to take shape. Under Nasir Khan, the State of Kalat was divided into two units: one area that was directly administered by the Kahn through administrators (*Naiibs*) which consisted of the territory of Kalat plus annexed territory and conquered lands, and a second area composed of two provinces, Sarawan and Jhalawan, which were administered independently by Sardars appointed by the Khan.<sup>32</sup> In exchange for providing military troops to the Kahn, Sardars were provided with a fief of land. At the lower levels of society, each village would elect a head, and villages would be grouped together and elect a chief. Chiefs of individual tribes would be elected by the tribal elders, with the Khan reserving the right of confirmation.

Nasir Khan also established the foundations of a bureaucracy which included a prime minister, legislative councils (a lower chamber that was chosen by the tribes and an upper chamber consisting of tribal elders), and a central tax collector. Additionally, Nasir Khan would establish a centralized code of regulations that incorporated a system to settle disputes and gave individuals the right to appeal legal decisions to a higher authority. Unfortunately, the unity created under Nasir Khan would collapse after his death in 1805, and his passing would coincide with the emergence of the "Great Game" between Russia and Great Britain during which the peoples of Baluchistan would get their first taste of British imperial rule.

#### **F. FRONTIER OF SEPERATION**

From the earliest decades of the nineteenth century, the threat of Russian expansion from the north required the British to devise a strategy for bringing the Indian frontier under their control. This fact was recognized by several influential members of the British government, most notably Sir Alfred Lyall who served as the Foreign Secretary of the Government of India and as Lieutenant-General of the Northwest Province. Lyall's concept for the administration of the western borderlands, later to be echoed by many within the British government including the influential Lord Curzon, argued for the creation of a Frontier of Separation. In contrast to a Frontier of Contact in which the British and Russian empires would come into direct conflict, the Frontier of

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<sup>32</sup> Awan, 31-32.

Separation called for a “narrow strip of territory, a few hundred miles across” to provide a buffer between the two empires. This buffer would not only prevent inevitable clashes between the Russians and the British but also prevent Russian influence from affecting “smoldering discontent” within India.<sup>33</sup>

Yet the Frontier of Separation required the British to redefine the forms of government utilized to maintain their influence in this newly created buffer zone. The solution would be the Three-fold Frontier. Under this plan, the First Frontier would be composed of the outer edge of directly administered territory. This area was governed in much the same fashion as the rest of British India—the Government of India exercised full administrative control and British law and political systems were the norm. The Second Frontier was an area under “indirect control” in which the forms of law and administration, especially the systems of taxation, were not applied.<sup>34</sup> Day-to-day administration in the Second Frontier was left in the hands of tribal chieftains but the Government of India still maintained some semblance of control—mainly through the influence of the army. These “unadministered areas” were similar in many respects to the Princely States of the interior of British India in that they had a certain degree of political autonomy. Yet unlike the Princely States, the Second Frontier was not integrated into mainstream Indian life and they maintained a unique sense of separateness that is still evident today throughout the western borderlands.

The Third Frontier represented the outer edge of the British area of influence. This area fell beyond any demarcated boundaries and represented the “gray area” that provided protectorate or buffer states against Russian influence. These states were independent and only tied to the Government of India through treaties or other forms of political obligation. An example of this would be the Tripartite Treaty of 1838 in which the Government of India, the Sind Ruler Ranjit Singh and the Afghan Chieftain Shah Shuja came to an agreement that effectively prohibited the Afghan ruler from entering into foreign relations without the knowledge of the Government of British India.<sup>35</sup> The effect would be the alignment of the frontier area with the sub-continent and the British

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<sup>33</sup> Embree, 26.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, 27.

<sup>35</sup> Embree, 30.

vice central Asia and the Russian Empire. Yet fears over Russian expansion would remain and lead to the First Afghan War in 1839. This war would end in a British defeat, but it would have a lasting effect on British policy in its western frontier.

#### **G. THE CLOSED BORDER SYSTEM**

Following their defeat in the First Afghan War, the British moved quickly to exert more effective control of their western territory and protect themselves, not only from Russian encroachment, but from the “restless mountain tribes” that had proved so difficult to govern effectively. Following the annexation of Sind in 1842 and the conquest of Punjab in 1849, the British effectively shut down their western border. For the next three decades, the British implemented the “Closed Border System” in which the British increased their presence (especially militarily) in areas under their direct control and limited their actions in areas not yet pacified to punitive military expeditions against rebellious tribes.<sup>36</sup> These military expeditions proved to be costly to the British as they battled elusive tribesmen who harassed army units with sniper fire and hit and run raids. Yet because maintaining control of key passes for British trade remained an imperative, the British devised a solution that pitted one tribe against another in the hope that the resulting feud would keep both tribes too busy to interfere with the safe passage of British trade. While initially successful, this technique would often result, as it did during efforts to control the Kholat Pass in 1853, in fighting between clans that was so widespread that passes had to remain closed until alternate settlements could be reached.

When all other alternatives proved fruitless, the British implemented a concept of collective responsibility in which entire tribes would be punished for the actions of its individuals in an effort to force the tribes to control its members. This technique included the blockading of passes, rounding up and imprisoning of tribesmen, selling off their cattle and forcing the tribes to pay for British losses and damages. Yet the British still were unwilling to pay the full price of pacifying the “hill tribes.” Their limited techniques of partial pacification, described above, which also included “scuttle and burn” raids of tribal villages, built a deep sense of bitterness among the tribes and a

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<sup>36</sup> Scholz, 91.

growing desire for revenge against British imperialism. This had a lasting effect on the peoples of the western borderlands and contributed to many of the problems Pakistan would encounter almost a century later.

In the wake of the Second Afghan War (1878-1880), the British came to the conclusion that their Closed Border Policy, and its notion that the “trans-border tribes” could be controlled using “subsidies, blockade, occasional manipulation of tribal affairs, and, when absolutely necessary, punitive expeditions,” had not produced the desired effect.<sup>37</sup> The result would be a move towards the “Forward Policy,” a policy that would have a lasting effect on Baluchistan.

#### **H. SIR ROBERT SANDEMAN AND THE BRITISH “FORWARD POLICY”**

Sir Robert Sandeman, British administrator of Baluchistan in the late eighteenth century implemented a unique version of the Forward Policy that many have argued was responsible for British authority taking root “more kindly and rapidly” than in any other province of British India.<sup>38</sup> The “Sandeman System,” as it came to be known, had as its primary objective the welfare of the tribes. In Sandeman’s view, reflective of the traditional view of British presence overseas, the British had a moral obligation to civilize and settle the tribes of the frontier. His technique of “peaceful penetration” was based on knowledge, sympathy and the general assumption that “given the chance to improve their economic lot, the impoverished hillmen would abandon their predatory habits in favor of peaceful one.”<sup>39</sup> While this assumption proved to be somewhat naïve, Sandeman did pacify much of Baluchistan by providing employment to tribesmen building roads, levies and other public works projects. Aided by a large military contingent—although force was never used—Sandeman ultimately secured a treaty with the Khan of Kalat that bound his allegiance to the British.

Much of Sandeman’s success in Baluchistan was a result of the tactics with which he extended British influence in the region. These tactics stressed three fundamental concepts: the active and passive demonstration of British military might; strengthening native authorities through increased participation in local administration and in the

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<sup>37</sup> Spain, 11.

<sup>38</sup> Scholz, 93.

<sup>39</sup> Spain, 13.

responsibility for pacifying the land; and maintaining the native authorities' political and economic dependence on the British colonial authorities.<sup>40</sup> Sandeman understood that the traditional tribal leaders were the best guarantors of peace and order in the tribes and offered the British its only viable option for maintaining control of the strategically vital region of Baluchistan. Yet it is also important to note that while Sandeman's technique of "peaceful penetration" may have been more benign, and more successful, than the more violent approach utilized in conjunction with the Closed Border Policy, the desired end state was the same. The pacification of the tribal areas in Baluchistan, as well as throughout the rest of the western borderlands served, above all else, the interests of the British Empire and did little to further the economic or political development of the region.

Sandeman's success in Baluchistan would lead to his appointment as head of an expedition to extend the Forward Policy to the northern areas of the Indian frontier. The ultimate result of this effort would be the establishment of the Durand Line in 1895 and the eventual creation of the North West Frontier Province in 1901. The Forward Policy would continue to dominate British administration of the western frontier throughout the first half of the twentieth century but even after the partition of British India, the lasting legacy of British rule would continue. As the colonial period came to an end in South Asia, three players would emerge as the dominant forces within Baluchi politics: the Sardars, the activists of the nationalist movements, and the Khan of Kalat. The Sardars became increasingly influential under the British Forward Policy and were the primary beneficiaries of British subsidies and the jirga-levies system in which British led paramilitary corps came under their direct control. In the first decade of Pakistan, the Sardars would enjoy much of the same benefits and political autonomy as they did under the British. But to many Baluch nationalist the Sardars were seen as "divisive, oppressive and agents of outside interests."<sup>41</sup> Generally speaking, however, both groups supported the Khan of Kalat when he declared Kalat an independent state in 1947.

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<sup>40</sup> Scholz, 95.

<sup>41</sup> Paul Titus and Nina Swindler, "Knights not Pawns: Ethno-Nationalism and Regional Dynamics in Post-Colonial Balochistan" in *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Volume 32 (2000), 49.

While the Khan of Kalat would ultimately accept accession to Pakistan in April of 1948, Kalat maintained under Pakistan the same semi-autonomous status it enjoyed under the British. Yet not all parties were happy with the Khan's decision to accede Kalat and shortly after it was announced, the Khan's brother, Abdul Karim, led a revolt against the newly formed government of Pakistan. Karim's revolt would be short lived—he would ultimately be jailed and not released until 1955—but Pakistan problems in its first decade of existence proved to be much larger than a small band of Baluch rebels.

## **I. CONCLUSION**

One of the major problems confronting the infant state of Pakistan in the years immediately following the partition of British India was how to unify a “nation” that before 1947 did not exist in any shape or form. Nowhere was the challenge of unification more difficult than in the western borderlands. As has been discussed above, the British system of governing did little to bring the disparate groups of the frontier together and, much to the contrary, the differences between tribes were often reinforced to suit British needs. While it was to the advantage of the British to preserve the tribal system and the traditional leadership that dominated the frontier because it allowed them to “rule by proxy,” Pakistan viewed the same tribal system as an impediment to the cohesion of the Pakistani state.<sup>42</sup>

Within Baluchistan, Pakistan retained the British practices of providing subsidies to the Khan of Kalat, the Sardars and other privileged persons and using the military to maintain law and order. Unfortunately, the policies of the early Pakistani regimes would be far more reflective of the British Closed Border system than that implemented by Sir Robert Sandeman. It would be these practices that would contribute to a growing separatist movement as many Baluch began to view the policies of Pakistan's central government as being just as corrupt and inequitable as those of the British. As a result, much of the bitterness and hatred once reserved for the British was now squarely aimed at the central government of Pakistan.

In an attempt to quell the dissent in its western borderlands, unify West Pakistan, as well as counter the growing majority of the more homogenous East Pakistan (dominated by Bengalis), the regime of General Ayub Khan implemented the One Unit

<sup>42</sup> Scholz, 100.

Policy in 1955. As the discussion in the next chapter demonstrates, this policy not only represented a failure of the central government to recognize the extent to which the traditional tribal system had become entrenched during the century of British imperial rule, but, more importantly, represented its failure to heed the hard-learned lessons of the British. Unfortunately, Ayub Khan's would not be the last regime to make this mistake.

### **III. BROUGHT TO A BOIL: THE EVOLUTION OF BALUCH NATIONALISM 1947–1977**

#### **A. INTRODUCTION**

In 1973, less than three decades after the partition of British India and the creation of the independent state of Pakistan, the Pakistani central government became embroiled in a pitched battle against Baluch militants that left 5,300 Baluch and over 3,000 Pakistani soldiers dead.<sup>43</sup> The Baluch insurgency was ultimately crushed by the forces of Pakistani president Zulfikar Ali Bhutto but the embers of Baluch discontent that were fanned to a flame in the early 1970s have once again ignited into violence in Baluchistan. Much like in 1973, the violence today threatens to derail the central government's attempts to assert its authority and establish Pakistan as a strong centralized state. The 1973 insurgency was not the first, nor was it the last time Baluch nationalists clashed with the central government's authority, but this seminal event does serve as an excellent focal point for analysis of the Baluch nationalist movement. The 1973 revolt was the culmination of years of growing discontent among Baluch nationalists that not only sheds considerable light on the underlying causes of Baluch dissatisfaction (both then and now), and the impact of various central government policies on Baluchistan, but also the potential destructive power of the current clash between Baluch militants and the Pakistani army.

What were the specific causes of the 1973 revolt and what lessons can be drawn from it? In order to answer this question, one must first understand the events that precipitated the crisis, as well as the specific policy choices made by the central government in addressing it. The Baluch revolt between 1973 and 1977 pitted militant Baluch nationalists against the Pakistani army, but it also highlighted two divergent views on the state of affairs in Baluchistan. Baluch nationalists viewed the central government in Islamabad as obtrusively dominating the internal affairs of the province, unnecessarily involving the Pakistani armed forces in local conflicts, and parceling out Baluch natural resources—in this case the limited amount of arable lands—to Punjabi outsiders with ties to the central government. In the view of the central government,

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<sup>43</sup> G. Parthasary, "Disquiet on the Western Front," *Pioneer*, 12 January 2006.

however, Pakistani leader Yahya Khan had lived up to his pledge—which ended the Baluch revolt of the 1960s—to concede many of the Baluch demands: abolishing the One Unit Policy, establishing a consolidated Baluch province, and allowing for local elections. Furthermore, in the eyes of the regime in Islamabad, the violence that erupted in 1973 had less to do with the assertion of the central government’s authority in Baluchistan than it did with the “belligerent and uncompromising” assertions of the tribal Sardars who had artificially stimulated discontent among the Baluch people in order to maintain their own grip on power.<sup>44</sup>

The argument of this chapter is that in the wake of the British withdrawal from South Asia in 1947 subsequent central governments alienated Baluch nationalists with their misplaced attempts to create a Pakistani national identity and to solidify the central government as the supreme authority in Pakistan. These efforts, which included such policies as “One Unit” and “Basic Democracies,” resulted in heightened discontent and feelings of alienation among many Baluch nationalists that culminated in the 1973 insurgency. Much of this discontent remains and continues to fuel the Baluch nationalist movement—and the growing levels of violence—that exists today.

The 1973 insurgency was a seminal event for both Baluchistan and Pakistan, yet it cannot be fully understood without an appreciation of the vast difficulties of state formation faced by Pakistan in the decades following its creation in 1947. In order to address these difficulties, and their subsequent effect on Baluchistan, this chapter begins with a brief analysis of nationalism theory as it applies to state formation in Pakistan and Baluchistan. The chapter follows with a historical analysis of events within Baluchistan and the policy decisions of the central government during the period that began with the partition of British India in 1947 and ended with the cessation of hostilities between the Baluch and the Pakistani Army in 1977. Specific events and policy measures to be analyzed include the One Unit Policy and the Basic Democracies project instituted by Ayub Khan during the 1950s; the central governments reaction to the 1973 insurgency; as well as the impact of Afghanistan on the Baluch nationalist movement. But the impact of

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<sup>44</sup> Harrison, *In Afghanistan’s Shadow: Baluch Nationalism and Soviet Temptations*, 34.

these events and policies on Baluch nationalism cannot be fully appreciated without first understanding some general concepts and theory regarding nationalism and state formation.

## **B. THE STATE, THE NATION AND NATIONALISM IN PAKISTAN**

Baluch nationalism has been at the root of unrest within Pakistan's southwest province since 1947. But what is Baluch nationalism? The answer to this question begins with an understanding of what scholar Stephen Cohen has called the "idea of Pakistan"—the notion that India's Muslims required a homeland not only for their protection but to fulfill their "cultural and civilizational destiny."<sup>45</sup> This notion was the genesis of the movement spearheaded by Muhammad Ali Jinnah and the Muslim League during the early twentieth century for the creation of an independent Muslim state in South Asia. In theory, Pakistan was to be created as a haven for Muslims—a stable and prosperous state where Muslims could live free of persecution from the Hindu majority of India. This theory became reality in 1947 when British rule rescinded from South Asia and the independent state of Pakistan was born. But as Jinnah and the subsequent leaders of Pakistan would come to realize, the creation of the *state* of Pakistan was far easier than the creation of the *nation* of Pakistan.

Despite the fact that they are commonly used interchangeably, a *state* is quite separate from a *nation*. While a state is primarily a political-legal concept—one that can be codified by law—a nation is primarily psycho-cultural, and is often harder to identify. By one definition, a state is the "principal political unit in the international political system corresponding to a territory, a relatively permanent population, and a set of ruling institutions."<sup>46</sup> A nation, in contrast, is "the largest group that can command a person's loyalty because of felt kinship ties." Put another way, a nation is a group of people who view the other members of their group as their "fully extended family" and who possess a "common destiny" normally associated with claims on a particular territory.<sup>47</sup> But it is

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<sup>45</sup> Stephen Phillip Cohen, *The Idea of Pakistan*, (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2004), 2.

<sup>46</sup> A *country*—another term often used interchangeably with state and nation—is simply the territorial component of a state. Lowell W. Barrington, "'Nation' and 'Nationalism': The Misuse of Key Concepts in Political Science," *PS: Political Science and Politics* 30, 4 (Dec., 1997): 713.

<sup>47</sup> Walker Connor, "Beyond Reason: The Nature of the Ethnonational Bond" in *Ethnicity*, ed. John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 71.

essential here to also recognize what nationalism is not. Nationalism is not simply patriotism, and it should not be equated purely with ethnic politics. While the political mobilization of people based on ethnicity can be a starting point, ethnic politics alone is not nationalism. Nationalism may encompass many of the same goals, but it goes further than pure ethnic politics. Numerous collectives of people—ethnic groups, religious groups, even professional associations—are united by shared cultural features (myths, values, etc.), but what makes a nation unique is the combination of shared culture *and* the belief in the right to territorial self determination.<sup>48</sup>

Before 1947, there was no Pakistani state, but there was also no Pakistani nation. What did exist in the region at the time were four dominant ethnic groups that—based on the definition provided above—each represented its own nation: the Baluch, Sindhis, Punjabis and Pashtuns. Much like the Baluch, the other “nations” of Pakistan all possess attributes—unique language, culture, customs, traditions etc.—that differentiate them as individual entities. The intent here is not to discuss whether or not Pakistan’s four dominant ethnic groups truly represent nations, but only to highlight the fact that the major common theme among them, and the primary basis for the partition of British India and the creation of the independent state of Pakistan, was religion—Islam. Yet the creation of a state based primarily on a unitary Islamic identity has proved to be a concept riddled with problems—and Pakistan’s turbulent history is testament to that fact.<sup>49</sup>

Another term critical to the understanding of Baluch nationalism is *nation-state*. The general concept suggests that a nation-state exists when the boundaries of the state are approximately coterminous with those of a nation—in other words the existence of a nation, plus political sovereignty.<sup>50</sup> In most developed countries national identity evolved prior to the formulation and solidification of the structures of political authority. The result of this process was the nation-state. In the case of Pakistan, as well as numerous other underdeveloped and newly independent countries, this sequence was reversed. As scholars Mostafa Rejai and Cynthia H. Enloe note, the case among states in

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<sup>48</sup> Connor, 71.

<sup>49</sup> Cohen.

<sup>50</sup> Mostafa Rejai and Cynthia H. Enloe, "Nation-States and State-Nations," *International Studies Quarterly*, 13, 2 (June, 1969): 143.

Asia and Africa, unlike those in Europe, has been that “authority and sovereignty have run ahead of self-conscious national identity and cultural integration.”<sup>51</sup> The result has been the emergence not of nation-states, but of “state-nations.” That is not to say that nation-states are confined to Europe, nor that the “state-nation” is purely a “Third World” phenomenon. France, for instance, was a monarchical state long before the French nation became the *Raison d’Etre*, and examples of nation-states outside of Europe include Iran and Turkey, both of which had a history as a nation long before developing a corresponding state structure.

But there is a difference between a chronological sequence in which the state was established before the nation, as was the case in France, and those instances where the state plays an active role in creating a nation—as was the case in Pakistan. As Rejai and Enloe have pointed out, states actively involved in nation-creating are often the product of decolonization. Using a metaphor, Rejai and Enloe explain:

The condition of the state in a postcolonial country is roughly analogous to a castle—a repository of rules and orders—which in the past had dominated a territory without actually resting upon it, held up instead by stilts representing coercive superiority, technological and organizational innovation, and indigenous deference. The end of colonial rule either weakened or cut through these supporting stilts, leaving the castle precariously hovering above the ground. The task of the castle’s new occupants is to construct a first story or, better, a basement to the castle. Nationalism is the material most commonly employed in this post-independence construction.<sup>52</sup>

This was certainly the case in Pakistan where the “homeland for Muslims” in South Asia that was created in 1947 was a disparate composite of numerous ethnicities, cultures, languages and belief systems, with no “basement” of nationalism upon which to build. As a result, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, and his subsequent successors, faced the daunting task of creating Pakistani nationalism from scratch.

But what exactly is *nationalism*? The simplest definition of nationalism is “a belief held by a group of people that they ought to constitute a nation, or that they already

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<sup>51</sup> Rejai, 140.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 152.

do.”<sup>53</sup> Other definitions differ primarily with respect to whether nationalism is viewed as an “idea” or as a “process.” One camp believes nationalism to be an idea based on such concepts as the nation-state, self determination, national identity, and national superiority. Subscribers to this vision, such as Michael Roskin and Nicholas Berry, define nationalism as an “exaggerated sense of the greatness and unity of one’s people.”<sup>54</sup> Those who view nationalism as a process define it more in terms of the unifying features of a nation—the political expression of a nation’s aspirations for control over a territory they perceive as their rightful homeland.<sup>55</sup> Lowell W. Barrington provides a definition which combines these two visions of nationalism (and provides the basic definition that will be utilized throughout this thesis): “the pursuit—through argument or other activity—of a set of rights for the self-defined members of the nation, including, at a minimum, territorial autonomy or sovereignty.”<sup>56</sup> While territorial autonomy and/or complete sovereignty has been an objective among Baluch “nationalists” for centuries, it was the events in the wake of the withdrawal of the British in 1947 that ignited the sense of Baluch nationalism that continues to burn today.

### **C. THE BIRTH OF PAKISTAN**

The partition of British India was a cataclysmic event for South Asia. Not only did it result in the upheaval of Muslims and Hindus alike as millions left their ancestral homes and villages in order to migrate to their newly created “homeland,” but it ignited a spate of sectarian violence that left over a million people dead. While Baluchistan’s remote location and relative religious homogeneity limited the impact of sectarian violence on the region, and despite the fact that Pakistan’s first Governor-General, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, personally oversaw the administration of Baluchistan

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<sup>53</sup> Ernst Haas, “What is Nationalism and Why Should We Study It?” *International Organization*, 40, 3 (1986): 727.

<sup>54</sup> Michael Roskin and Nicholas Berry, *IR: The New World of International Relations* (Upper Saddle, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1997), 121.

<sup>55</sup> Roy Mellor, *Nations, State and Territory: A Political Geography* (London: Routledge, 1989), 4.

<sup>56</sup> Barrington, 714. More nuanced definitions have included those of Chong-Do Hah and Jeffrey Martin who espouse that nationalism consists of “organizationally heightened and articulated group demands directed toward securing control of the distributive system in society.” Other definitions do not require self government, nor geographic area but only the general desire “to achieve, maintain, and perpetuate the identity, integrity and prosperity of that nation.” See Chong-Do Hah, and Jeffrey Martin, “Toward a Synthesis of Conflict and Integration Theories of Nationalism,” *World Politics: A Quarterly Journal of International Relations* 27, 3 (April 1975), 362, and Rejai, 141.

immediately following Pakistani independence, the assertion of central government authority in Baluchistan ignited latent but lingering nationalistic feelings among the Baluch people that exacerbated the strains of establishing central government authority.

The first Baluch reaction to the assertions of the central government came in late May of 1948, when, following the arrest of the Khan of Kalat and the invasion of Baluchistan by Pakistani forces, the Khan's brother, Prince Abdul Karim, launched a revolt against the Pakistani army in the Jhalawan district in an effort to establish Baluchistan as an independent state. The Khan, threatened with reprisals and guaranteed that his brother and his men would be granted safe passage and amnesty from the Pakistan army, persuaded Karim to surrender. Despite these assurances—perceived or otherwise—the prince and over one hundred of his men were arrested and imprisoned by Pakistani forces. This event led to a widespread belief among nationalists that Pakistan had betrayed the Baluch, and Karim has since become a rallying symbol for the Baluch liberation movement. Additionally, this incident is regarded as the first in a series of “broken treaties” that has created distrust between the Baluch and Islamabad.<sup>57</sup>

#### **D. THE ONE UNIT POLICY**

The task of nation-building in Pakistan was made difficult by several factors. First and foremost, Pakistan, like many post-colonial states, was forced to unnaturally compress the process of state formation. Unlike its Western counterparts who were able to establish stable nation-states only after going through long periods of “wars, bloody nationalist revolutions and colonialization,” Pakistan was granted its independence from Britain relatively peacefully—but also very rapidly. According to scholars sympathetic to the Baluch and other minority causes, the process of state formation in Pakistan was made even more difficult by the unwillingness—often combined with the inability—of the Punjabi dominated central government to accommodate the legitimate aspirations of minority groups.<sup>58</sup> According to this rationale, the demands of the Baluch—which included preserving a distinct way of life, securing autonomy, etc.—were perceived by the Pakistani government as a threat to their centralized power. Their response to that

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<sup>57</sup> Harrison, *In Afghanistan's Shadow: Baluch Nationalism and Soviet Temptations*, 27.

<sup>58</sup> Jetly, 9.

perceived threat has often been the use of coercive power, and the counter response by the Baluch has been ethnic unrest and violence.

In an attempt to bridge the ethnic divide between the various ethnic groups within Pakistan and to promote a national identity the central government attempted to solidify the state by abolishing any semblance of regional identities. This was the policy known as One Unit. Instituted in 1955, the One Unit policy constituted the creation of a single provincial entity that subsumed all the administrative units of West Pakistan—to include the princely states. Yet the One Unit policy failed to establish a Pakistani identity amongst its disparate minorities and, additionally, brought very little development to Baluchistan. The lack of development, which exacerbated Baluch discontent with the central government, was the result of three factors: the ongoing separatist movement in Baluchistan, which made the central government reluctant to undertake any development projects; the lack of provincial representation under the rule of Ayub Khan; and the traditional sardari system entrenched in Baluchistan, which provided little encouragement for development projects within the province.<sup>59</sup>

While the One Unit policy was initially accepted by the Khan of Kalat, the failures of this policy galvanized the nationalist movement in Baluchistan and began to unite several different political parties under a single umbrella known as the National Awami Party (NAP). The NAP was created when two major nationalist parties, the Pakistan National Party (PNP) and the East Pakistan-based Awami League, joined forces in pursuit of their primary objective: the formation of four ethnically defined provinces. Other objectives of the NAP included free elections, land reform, nationalization of industry, and an end to Pakistan's association with western alliances.

Within Baluchistan, as the ethno-nationalist movement of the Baluch began to grow, the Khan of Kalat abandoned his support for the One Unit policy and began an effort to garner support for the reestablishment of an independent state of Kalat. His efforts led to yet another invasion of Baluchistan by Pakistani forces and to the Khan's arrest and imprisonment in 1959. This sparked yet another revolt within Baluchistan, this time led by Nauroz Kahn, the Sardar of the Zarakzai tribe of the Kalat region. Nauroz

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<sup>59</sup> Kundi, 16.

Kahn and his five hundred armed men conducted an insurgent effort against the Pakistani government that took the army over a year to suppress. According to Baluch nationalists, Nauroz Khan agreed to lay down his arms only in return for the withdrawal of the One Unit plan, and the guarantee of safe conduct and amnesty for his men—yet once again, the army dishonored its pledge. Nauroz Khan was arrested, and five of his men were hanged in July 1960 on charges of treason. Nauroz Khan himself died in Kholu prison in 1964, becoming one of the first martyrs of the Baluch nationalist movement and he continues to represent—in the eyes of many Baluch—a symbol of the deceit of the Pakistani government.

#### **E. BASIC DEMOCRACIES**

The Kahn of Kalat's reversal on the One Unit Policy coincided with the imposition of Martial Law in Pakistan and, shortly thereafter, the assumption of power of General Ayub Khan. In an effort to increase the influence of the central government in West Pakistan, Field Marshal Khan instituted a policy known as Basic Democracies.<sup>60</sup> This five-tiered political structure instituted government councils at the local, municipal, district and divisional level that composed of both elected and appointed officials. Many Baluch nationalists, however, viewed the appointed council members as representative of the central government's encroachment on the political autonomy of the local and regional governments.

Basic Democracies was instituted in 1962—the same year that Ayub Kahn's government introduced a new constitution, held nationwide elections and allowed for the reemergence of political parties. The introduction of Basic Democracies also coincided with the build-up of military cantonments within Baluchistan—a move viewed with great suspicion by Baluch nationalists. The '62 election brought several Baluch Sardars—Khair Bakhsh Marri, Ataullah Mengal, and Ahmad Nawaz Bugti—to elected office for the first time.<sup>61</sup> The central government of Pakistan, however, viewed the election of these staunch nationalists as a threat to Basic Democracies' goal of minimizing the

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<sup>60</sup> Upon the partition of British India, the state of Pakistan was divided between West Pakistan and East Pakistan. In 1971, East Pakistan gained its independence from Pakistan and became Bangladesh. For more see Cohen.

<sup>61</sup> Khair Bakhsh Marri, Ataullah Mengal, and Ahmad Nawaz Bugti have played a crucial role in the Baluch nationalist movement since 1947. For more see Harrison, *Shadow: Baluch Nationalism and Soviet Temptations*.

influence of the tribal system. As a result, the elected Baluch leaders were promptly replaced by new Sardars appointed by Islamabad. This event sparked yet another spate of violence that resulted in the murder of the newly appointed Sardars and a wave of attacks on the Pakistani military by Baluch tribesmen.

Much of the violence of 1962 was carried out by Parari, a guerrilla force led by Sher Muhammad Marri, a Marxist-Leninist who was the founder of the Baluch nationalist party Dem Rowak Ulus. Parari—which is the Baluch word used to describe a person or persons whose grievances cannot be solved through talk—had established twenty two base camps throughout Baluchistan by 1963, each manned with two hundred full time fighters and possessing the ability to call on thousands of tribal reserves.<sup>62</sup> Utilizing similar tactics to those used in the revolt of 1948, Parari fighters ambushed convoys, bombed trains, and raided military encampments. The central government responded with stiff military reprisals that included air attacks on rebel strongholds and the bull-dozing of several tribal leaders' vast agricultural fields.

Although Parari grew in significance and military might throughout the 1960s, the dominant player in the Baluch nationalist movement opposing the government of Ayub Khan continued to be the NAP.<sup>63</sup> In Baluchistan, as in the rest of the country, the NAP consisted not only of politicians, but students, workers, and professionals who increasingly viewed the central government's policies as promoting political and economic inequality, and failing to provide adequate education and medical services to the general populace. The primary objectives of the NAP after 1964 were to have Basic Democracies replaced by direct elections; the dissolution of One Unit; and full regional autonomy that left only defense, foreign affairs and currency in the hands of the central government.

Ultimately, the opposition of the One Unit policy led by the NAP, as well as the pressure exerted on the central government by the militant activities of Parari, became too great and the policy was abolished. This policy shift came in 1970 shortly after Yahya

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<sup>62</sup> Harrison, *In Afghanistan's Shadow: Baluch Nationalism and Soviet Temptations*, 30

<sup>63</sup> Parari is significant not only because its military force would grow to over a thousand during the 1960s but also because it would be responsible for establishing parallel governments in many areas of Baluchistan that built schools and provided medical services. See Titus and Swindler, 56.

Khan—who succeeded Ayub Khan in 1969—induced the Pararis to agree to a cease fire by agreeing to redraw provincial boundaries and allow nationwide elections. In 1970, the nationwide election brought to power a NAP-led provincial government in Baluchistan that consisted of Sardars Ataullah Mengal and Khair Bakhsh Marri as the chief administrator and chairman of NAP respectively, and Ghaus Bux Bizenjo, known as Bab-i-Baluchistan (Father of Baluchistan), as governor. The 1970 election would also bring to power the Awami League in East Pakistan—an event that would eventually lead to the suspension of all political activity, civil war and the independence of Bangladesh. Yet it would be the dismissal of the NAP-led Baluchistan provincial government by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in 1973 that would lead to the bloody Baluch insurgency that would consume the province for four years.

#### **F. THE INSURGENCY: 1973–1977**

The insurgency that plagued the Pakistani government from 1973 to 1977 began with the dismissal, and imprisonment, of the Baluch provincial government and the banning of the ruling NAP. It was the contention of Pakistani president Zulfikar Ali Bhutto that the Baluch leaders were conspiring with the Soviet Union and Iraq to dismember Pakistan and Iran.<sup>64</sup> It is unlikely, however, that Bhutto foresaw that his actions would spawn a rebellion that at its peak numbered well over 55,000 Baluch fighters and would take over four years to put down.<sup>65</sup> But the sacking and imprisonment of the Baluch provincial government was only the precipitating event of the 1973-1977 insurgency and the revolt was more than just a militant response to the arbitrary use of power by the central government.

Many of the underlying causes of the 1973 revolt were socio-economic. The per capita income in 1973 was the lowest of all of the provinces in Pakistan.<sup>66</sup> Despite huge reserves of natural gas, valuable mineral deposits, and untapped fisheries off their coasts, Baluchistan remained grossly underdeveloped. What development projects the central government had implemented in the decades after independence were viewed as

<sup>64</sup> Bhutto provided as evidence the fact that three hundred Soviet sub-machine guns, along with 48,000 rounds of ammunition, were found in the home of the Iraqi defense attaché in Karachi. “Indian Author Assesses Baluch Insurgency, Says Unlikely ‘To Die Out in a While,’” *New Delhi Hindustan Times*, 15 January 2006, accessed from [www.fbis.gov](http://www.fbis.gov) on 16 January 2006.

<sup>65</sup> Titus, 62.

<sup>66</sup> Jetly, 11.

disproportionately favoring outsiders. The cumulative effect of these conditions was the creation of a dominant view among Baluch that Baluchistan was being “colonized” by the Punjabis who dominated the central government. The 1973 election of the first legitimate Baluch provincial government was met with high hopes for economic development within the impoverished province, but those hopes were dashed by the actions of the Bhutto regime. What followed was a bloody revolt that would cause thousands of deaths and solidify Baluch hatred of their “Punjabi colonizers.”

The revolt of 1973 had little central leadership and consisted of numerous factions organized primarily along tribal lines. But the Baluch militants were uniform in their adherence to their code of Ryvaj and the belief that the actions of Bhutto and the central government was a deliberate insult to all Baluch that needed to be redressed militarily.<sup>67</sup> While some radical elements called for the unification of all Baluch people in Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan, the dominant goals of the insurgency were the release of NAP prisoners; the restoration of the NAP government; greater political autonomy for the province of Baluchistan; more effective local government; and a greater share of the resources of the state. The desired end state for many nationalists was a confederation of states within Pakistan in which the central government would be responsible for defense, foreign affairs, communications, and currency, while local authorities would be left in charge of everything else—including the exploitation of natural resources and the allocation of development funds.<sup>68</sup>

During the four year insurgency, there were one hundred seventy eight major engagements and one hundred sixty seven lesser incidents between Pakistani forces and Baluch militants. The Baluch militants avoided direct confrontation with the Pakistani army and whenever possible, the primary tactic of the insurgency remained ambushing army convoys and harassing its supply lines. At the height of the war, there were over 80,000 Pakistani troops in the province and by July of 1974, Baluch guerillas succeeded in cutting off most of the main roads into Baluchistan and blocking coal shipments from

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<sup>67</sup> Harrison, *In Afghanistan's Shadow: Baluch Nationalism and Soviet Temptations*, 37.

<sup>68</sup> Selig S. Harrison, “Ethnicity and Politics in Pakistan” in *Ethnicity*, ed. John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 298.

Baluchistan to Punjab.<sup>69</sup> At the heart of the Baluch resistance was Parari. Despite having agreed to the cease fire with the government of Yahya Khan, many members, fearing that future confrontation with the central government was unavoidable, went underground and continued to train, garner equipment and organize resistance.

During the years of violence after 1973, the Parari resistance slowly evolved into a well-established movement and became known as the Baluch People's Liberation Front (BPLF). But despite its more centralized leadership, and some courageous fighting in several major engagements with Pakistani forces, the leaders of the Parari resistance came to the conclusion that the only way to keep their movement alive was to abandon their camps in Baluchistan and operate from sanctuaries in southern Afghanistan. The role of Afghanistan is more specifically addressed below but the encampments provided by the Mahammed Daoud regime provided the Baluch resistance with secure base camps from which to plan operations, launch attacks, and rest and refit their fighters.

The army crackdown on the Baluch insurgency was led by General Tikka Khan—who was castigated as the “Butcher of Baluchistan” by anti-government leaders for his role in putting down the Parari resistance.<sup>70</sup> Pakistan's counter-insurgency efforts, reflecting many of the same techniques utilized by the British, included organizing levies among the tribes; holding tribal leaders accountable for the actions of their men; and resettling large portions of the civilian population. The most significant tactic against Baluch militants, however, proved to be the use of helicopter gun ships. In mid-1974, the Pakistani government was provided with thirty U.S.-supplied Huey Cobra helicopters from Iran.<sup>71</sup> These gun ships, many of which were piloted by Iranian pilots, allowed the Pakistani forces to use the helicopter's maneuverability and immense firepower to “herd” tribesmen out of their previously secure mountain redoubts into ever-shrinking areas of sanctuary.

In September of 1974, helicopter gun ships were combined with F-86 and Mirage fighter jets, as well as Pakistani ground forces, in a pitched battle with 15,000 Marri

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<sup>69</sup> “Indian Author Assesses Baluch Insurgency, Says Unlikely 'To Die Out in a While,’” *New Delhi Hindustan Times*, 15 January 2006, accessed from [www.fbis.gov](http://www.fbis.gov) on 16 January 2006.

<sup>70</sup> Harrison, *In Afghanistan's Shadow: Baluch Nationalism and Soviet Temptations*, 33.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

tribesmen—led by Parari guerillas—who had gathered in the Chamalang Valley. The battle, dubbed Operation Chamalang by the Pakistani Army, raged for three days. While most of the Parari units and their commanders evaded capture, official accounts of the battle claim that 125 guerillas were killed and 900 captured. Additionally, at least 50,000 sheep and 550 camels were captured and sold-off to non-Baluch.<sup>72</sup> The Baluch insurgency continued for several years after the battle in Chamalang Valley but the resistance was clearly weakened and the fighting that ensued was increasingly uncoordinated. By 1977, popular support for the resistance began to ebb and an opportunity was presented to General Zia ul-Haq to bring the violence in Baluchistan to an end.

### **G. THE AFTERMATH OF THE '73 REVOLT**

Soon after General Zia-ul-Haq came to power in a bloodless coup in July of 1977, he freed the leadership of the by then defunct NAP and reached an uneasy truce that quelled the violence and effectively ended the insurgency in Baluchistan. Yet despite granting several concessions to the Baluch that included the release of over 6,000 prisoners held in Pakistani prisons, and granting amnesty to guerillas who had fled to Afghanistan, Zia refused any substantial concessions relating to Baluch autonomy.<sup>73</sup> While this successfully ended the insurgency, the four year revolt had politicized the populace, ingrained it with feelings of bitterness and enduring hatred, and instilled in the Baluch “feelings of unprecedented resentment and widespread hunger for a chance to vindicate their martial honor.”<sup>74</sup> But why did the insurgency fail to achieve its goals?

Much like Bengali discontent that led to their successful drive towards independence in 1971, Baluch disgruntlement in the 1970s was driven by economic as well as political grievances. But the Bengalis were relatively homogenous, had a significant middle class, a well-established cultural and literary life, a standardized language, a broad base of nationalist activists, and a history of mass politicization that dated back to the struggle against the British Raj.<sup>75</sup> The Baluch nationalist movement on

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<sup>72</sup> Harrison, *In Afghanistan's Shadow: Baluch Nationalism and Soviet Temptations*, 38.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>74</sup> Selig S. Harrison, “Nightmare in Baluchistan,” *Foreign Policy*, 32 (Autumn, 1978), 139.

<sup>75</sup> Harrison, *Ethnicity*, 300.

the other hand, was built on the “uncertain social and cultural foundations of a fragmented tribal society” that had only a miniscule middle class, widespread illiteracy, underdeveloped literature, only a narrow base of nationalist activists, and no real history of mass participation in the political process.<sup>76</sup> Additionally, unlike the Bengalis who were able to gain the support of India, the Baluch lacked a foreign mentor and, as a result, were never able to pose a legitimate threat to the central government’s hold on power.

## **H. AFGHANISTAN AND THE BALUCH NATIONALIST MOVEMENT**

While the 1973-1977 Baluch revolt eventually came to an end, Afghanistan played a pivotal role in keeping it alive for over four years. Throughout the 1960s, both Afghanistan and Pakistan maintained that each country was supporting sabotage across the Durand Line.<sup>77</sup> Since 1947, the Durand Line had become a primary source of tension between the two nations as the lack of precision in the agreement between the Brits and the Afghans over the demarcation of the border—as well as the Afghans argument that the agreement was signed under duress—provided Afghanistan with an opening to challenge the legitimacy of the Durand Line and further their call for an independent Pashtunistan.<sup>78</sup> Continued accusations of sabotage and rising tensions between the two nations resulted in the breaking of diplomatic ties and led Pakistan to seal its border but during the 1970s Baluch insurgency, Afghanistan opened its borders to rebel fighters and provide them with arms and base camps from which to operate. This created “strategic depth” for the insurgent effort that they would otherwise not have had.

Additionally, the confrontation between Pakistani forces and Baluch militants led to the massive migration of Marri tribesman seeking refuge in Afghanistan. While the majority of the 7000 Baluch refugees who fled to Afghanistan were women and children, many were young men. Although removed from the violence in their homeland, many of these young men spent their formative years in Afghanistan learning about weapons and

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<sup>76</sup> Harrison, *Ethnicity*, 300..

<sup>77</sup> Imposed in 1893 after negotiations between British Foreign Secretary for British India and the ruling Afghan regime, the Durand line represents the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Its exact location is disputed by both Pakistan and Afghanistan. Afghanistan still refuses to recognize it as an official boundary.

<sup>78</sup> Pashtunistan would encompass the Pashtun lands of both Pakistan and Afghanistan, and has been a point of contention between the two nations since 1947.

military tactics and returned to Baluchistan in the 1990s with an increased sense of militancy that has been evident in the current spate of violence.<sup>79</sup>

Just as the 1970s insurgency sent thousands of refugees into Afghanistan, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 created a huge population explosion in Baluchistan as Pashtun, Tajik, and Hazara refugees flooded Pakistan's border area. The effect of this migration on Baluchistan was immense. Not only did the population of the area explode (from just over 85,000 in 1941 to over four million by 1981), but the influx of Afghan refugees led to cross tribal marriages that began to loosen the homogeneity of the Baluch region.<sup>80</sup> But the most influential thing the Afghan refugees brought with them to Baluchistan was the "Kalashnikov culture." While the Baluch tribesman had a long history of martial prowess, they were most familiar with traditional warfare and low intensity conflict. Many of the Afghan fighters crossing the border into Baluchistan during the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan brought with them, and imparted on the local men, their knowledge of modern and heavy weapons such as mortars, rocket launchers, etc. The result of the Afghan influence was a Baluch people that became more militant and warlike than at any other period of time. While this militancy remained relatively dormant throughout the eighties and nineties, it has surfaced once again in recent years and threatens to push Pakistan to the brink of civil war.

#### **I. GENERAL ZIA AND THE "VELVET GLOVE"**

Despite the recent surge of violence in Baluchistan, it should be made clear that the ruling regimes of Pakistan did take significant steps, both before and after the '73 revolt, to improve the economic development of the province. During the Zia regime, the central government implemented a \$1.97 billion Special Development Plan which included \$765 million in road construction and electrification projects.<sup>81</sup> By 1978,

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<sup>79</sup> Kundi, 17.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>81</sup> Harrison, *In Afghanistan's Shadow: Baluch Nationalism and Soviet Temptations*, 165.

education funds had vastly increased the paltry number of schools that existed in Baluchistan and increased the number of students enrolled from several thousand in 1949 to over 1.6 million.<sup>82</sup>

While the central government would point to the fact that the per capita funding for Baluchistan was higher during this period than any other provinces within Pakistan, many Baluch nationalist argued that Islamabad's efforts were self serving and exploitive. As evidence, Baluch leaders would point to examples such as the Sui gas fields—discovered in 1953 with an estimated 9 trillion cubic feet of recoverable reserves—where Baluch royalties only amounted to 12.5% of the well head price opposed to provincial royalties within other resource rich countries such as Canada where royalties equated to 45%.<sup>83</sup> Other grievances included the fact that both the civil service and the military—which had an increasing presence in the province—were dominated by Punjabis.<sup>84</sup>

In addition to Zia's economic development plans, his "velvet glove" policy towards Baluchistan called for a lower profile for the Army while simultaneously steadfastly rejecting any calls for their removal. Additionally, Zia refused to be baited into confrontation with Baluch leaders despite their inflammatory rhetoric towards his regime. As a result, the insurgency that came to an end in 1977 faded into history.

## **J. CONCLUSION**

The withdrawal of British from South Asia in 1947 left Pakistan's central government with the daunting task of creating not only a state, but a nation, from scratch. Unfortunately, their attempts to create a Pakistani national identity and to solidify the central government's authority—including such policies as "One Unit" and "Basic Democracies"—resulted in heightened discontent and feelings of alienation among many Baluch nationalists that culminated in the 1973 insurgency. The Baluch nationalist movement seemingly disappeared in the 1980s and 1990s as successive regimes

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<sup>82</sup> Specific increases in educational facilities between 1949 and 1978 included: primary schools, 186 to 2372; and secondary schools, 23 to 426. Additionally, by 1978 the central government had provided for the establishment of 19 junior colleges, 9 colleges, 5 technical colleges and Baluchistan University. Harrison, *In Afghanistan's Shadow: Baluch Nationalism and Soviet Temptations*, 167.

<sup>83</sup> Harrison, *In Afghanistan's Shadow: Baluch Nationalism and Soviet Temptations*, 162.

<sup>84</sup> In 1979, only 181 of 830 higher civil service posts in Baluchistan were held by Baluch, and 70% of the police force was made up of foreigners. Harrison, *In Afghanistan's Shadow: Baluch Nationalism and Soviet Temptations*, 169.

following General Zia's continued his policy of "non-provocative firmness" in which Baluch nationalists were placated, but not conceded to.<sup>85</sup> While this policy curbed violence, the failure to address the root grievances of the Baluch people, and the lingering memory of what was perceived as the "wanton use of firepower" by the Pakistani army during the 1973 revolt, politicized much of the Baluch populace and ingrained in it a bitter and enduring hatred for the ruling powers in Islamabad. There were few manifestations of this hatred during the two decades that followed the Zia regime—in part do to the continuation of the of "non-provocative firmness" policy—but the strategic relevance of Baluchistan has increased dramatically in the past several years. Most recently, this fact has compelled the regime of President General Pervez Musharraf to once again attempt to exert the authority of the central government in Pakistan's southwestern province. The result has been escalating violence that could push Pakistan to the brink of civil war.

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<sup>85</sup> Harrison, *In Afghanistan's Shadow: Baluch Nationalism and Soviet Temptations*, 154.

## IV. CRISIS IN BALUCHISTAN: APPROACHING THE PRECIPICE?

### A. INTRODUCTION

In January 2005, the alleged gang-rape of a 32 year-old female doctor in Pakistan's Baluchistan province set off a wave of attacks on the country's largest natural gas field that disrupted supplies to half the population.<sup>86</sup> While these attacks were viewed initially as a violent response to the rape—an event many Baluch tribesmen viewed as a breach of their tribal honor—the incident ignited a dormant but historically volatile Baluch nationalist movement that has remained hostile towards the central government since the creation of Pakistan. During 2005, attacks on Baluchistan's valuable natural gas infrastructure, as well as military installations throughout the province, numbered in the hundreds. After separate attacks on President Pervez Musharraf and the commander of the province's paramilitary force during visits to Baluchistan in December, the central government responded with overwhelming force. In spite of claims by the central government that the current "Baluchistan issue" is little more than a "law and order situation,"<sup>87</sup> the central government's response to the escalating violence—which has included the introduction of 36,000 government forces and the alleged use of attack aircraft<sup>88</sup>—indicates that the "situation" in Baluchistan could be approaching civil war.

On four separate occasions since the partition of British India, Baluch nationalists have launched armed insurrections against the central government (the most recent and most costly ended in 1977) yet the province has been relatively peaceful for the past three decades. Why after nearly thirty years of peaceful coexistence are Baluch nationalists once again clashing violently with the central government? Violence in Baluchistan historically has been a product of the same "bloody competition" over territory, ethnic group security, political power, and natural resources that has sparked internal conflicts

<sup>86</sup> "Pakistan Uprising Leads to Rape Arrests," *The Statesman*, 15 February 2005, accessed from Lexis Nexis Academic 4 April 2006.

<sup>87</sup> "Pakistan Chief Minister Denies Military Operation in Baluchistan," *Global News Wire – Asia Africa Intelligence Wire*, 20 December, 2005, accessed from LexisNexis Academic 4 April 2006.

<sup>88</sup> Carlotta Gall, "In Remote Pakistan Province, a Civil War Festers," *The New York Times*, 2 April 2006.

throughout the globe.<sup>89</sup> This chapter, however, argues that the current crisis in Baluchistan is also a product of more recent factors—the development of a deep-sea port in the Baluch city of Gwadar, the impact of the Global War on Terror, and the current regional dynamics in South Asia—that have increased the strategic importance of Baluchistan and changed the dynamic between the central government and its southeastern province. This changed dynamic has exacerbated tensions and ultimately led to the current violent clash between ethnic Baluch tribesmen and the Pakistani government.

Baluch nationalists and the central government view the current situation in Baluchistan very differently. Baluch nationalists argue that the current crisis in Baluchistan is a violent reaction to the neglect of the Baluch populace and the exploitation of their natural resources by Punjabi “colonialists” from Islamabad. The central government argues that the Baluch people are being “led by the nose” by a small number of tribal Sardars who are simply trying to maintain their iron-clad grip on power by derailing the central government’s effort to modernize and develop Baluchistan. Which argument is correct? The simple answer is both. A more nuanced answer is that the current conflict in Baluchistan is the product of several factors: the inherent strife created from the collision of modernity and a traditional tribal society; power politics of local and national elites; and the “radicalization” of several tribes based on notions of deprivation and exploitation (both real and perceived).

To provide evidence in support of this assertion, this chapter first examines the main issues that remain in dispute between the Baluch and the central government in order to determine their impact on the current crisis. Second, this chapter analyzes the ethnic dimension of the conflict in order to identify how and why Baluch tribesmen have been mobilized to take up arms against their central government. Finally, this chapter examines the various factors which have increased the strategic significance of Baluchistan—the Global War on Terror, the deep-sea port in Gwadar, and the regional dynamics of Southwest Asia—in order to highlight how these events have led to a change in policy and the exacerbation of existing tensions.

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<sup>89</sup> Timothy D. Sisk, “Peacemaking in Civil Wars” in *Managing and Settling Ethnic Conflicts* ed. Ulrich Schnekener and Stefan Wolff (New York: Palgrave McMillan, 2004), 250.

## **B. UNRESOLVED ISSUES**

Much like the Baluch revolts of the past, one of the central issues of dispute in today's crisis in Baluchistan is the allocation of natural resources. In the first Baluch insurrection in 1947 the natural resource in dispute was arable land, which many Baluch viewed as being parceled off to Punjabi bureaucrats and businessmen.<sup>90</sup> Today, the primary natural resource in dispute is natural gas—more specifically inequities in distribution and royalties—yet other perennial grievances include the historical lack of development in the province; the exclusion of provincial authorities and the local population from decisions affecting Baluchistan; and the domination of the civil service, police and military forces by ethnic Punjabis, and the persistent and growing presence of military cantonments throughout the province. The central theme of all of these grievances is the feeling among many Baluch that since the creation of Pakistan, Baluchistan has been increasingly “colonized” by the ethnically dominant Punjabis who control the central government. Yet these grievances have been exacerbated more recently by massive development projects within the province—which the central government argues are crucial to the country's economic success and security—such as the major deepwater port in the coastal city of Gwadar. Gwadar has surfaced as major point of contention between Baluch nationalist and the central government due to the Baluch belief that jobs, and ultimately royalties, created by these projects will be parceled out to Punjabis from Islamabad.

Frederic Grare argues that the restive situation in Baluchistan is fueled by three fundamental issues: expropriation, marginalization, and dispossession.<sup>91</sup> Expropriation speaks to the belief amongst Baluch that they continue to be exploited for their vast natural resources (19 trillion cubic feet of natural gas and 6 trillion barrels of oil reserves<sup>92</sup>) by the Punjabi dominated central government. This argument holds that while Baluchistan supplies the rest of Pakistan with 36 percent of its natural gas and 40 percent of its total primary energy (natural gas, coal and electricity), much of Baluchistan

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<sup>97</sup> Harrison, 27.

<sup>91</sup> Grare, 5.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

lacks access to any energy source.<sup>93</sup> Additionally, the Baluch argue that the government of Pakistan pays lower price for gas produced in Baluchistan than it does for gas produced in Sind and Punjab. A unit of gas in Baluchistan costs twenty-seven rupees compared to 170 and 190 rupees respectively in Sind and Punjab.<sup>94</sup> This issue of resource allocation is central to the dispute. In the view of the central government, Baluchistan's vast resource reserves are "national property." Many Baluch, on the other hand, demand the province's resources should first and foremost—if not exclusively—benefit the Baluch people. To Punjabis, who make up fifty-eight percent of the population, the argument that a Baluch minority of less than four percent should seek proprietary claims over Baluchistan, which represents forty-two percent of the land area of the country, is simply infuriating.<sup>95</sup>

Grare's concept of marginalization references the widespread belief among Baluch that the "mega-development" projects underway in Baluchistan, such as the construction of the Gwadar port, are primarily being developed by, and for the benefit, of non-Baluch. As evidence, Grare cites the fact that only one in six laborers employed in the construction of Gwadar are Baluch, and that the only road built to open the port to the rest of the country is to Karachi, in Sind not Baluchistan province. Additionally, a fear exists among the Baluch surrounding Gwadar that the expected population explosion (to nearly 2 million) associated with the port will consist primarily of Punjabis and Sindhis—reducing the indigenous 70,000 Gwadar Baluch to an almost insignificant minority.

The central government, on the other hand, accuses Baluch tribal leaders who oppose such projects of fomenting discontent and keeping Baluchistan "backwards" in order to maintain the traditional sardari system from which they draw their vast power. The central government labels the violence in Baluchistan as the work of a small band of "miscreants" who do not represent the majority of the Baluch population and whose efforts to undermine the development of Baluchistan through violence are merely a "law

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<sup>93</sup> Grare, 5.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid, notes.

<sup>95</sup> Population and land mass statistics taken from the CIA World Fact Book at [www.cia.gov](http://www.cia.gov) accessed on 30 April 2006.

and order situation” that will not halt progress in the province.<sup>96</sup> President Musharraf has made it abundantly clear that he will not allow the burgeoning Baluch insurgency to derail his efforts to modernize Baluchistan and he has continually highlighted his regime’s efforts to foster national cohesion. According to Musharraf, the central government has allocated “unprecedented resources” to allay the “sense of deprivation” that pervades the historically depressed province.<sup>97</sup> Additionally, his government has implemented policies that mandate greater participation of ethnic Baluch in the military and civil service.<sup>98</sup>

Musharraf believes that the unrest in Baluchistan is the product of a handful of tribal chiefs who have created unrest and fueled discontent “while an overwhelming majority of the Baluch people are patriotic Pakistanis (who) want to see their province progress and prosper.”<sup>99</sup> Yet despite the central government’s efforts, the combination of the influx of “foreign” workers and an increase in military cantonments in three of the most sensitive areas of Baluchistan—Sui, with its gas-producing installations; Gwadar, with its port, and Kohlu, the home of most of the nationalist hard liners—have created a feeling among Baluch that they are gradually being dispossessed from their homeland, and that their unique ethnic identity is in danger of being eradicated. But how significant is this notion of ethnic eradication? Beyond the obvious fact that the Baluchistan crisis pits ethnic Baluch tribesmen against a central government (and military) composed predominantly of ethnic Punjabis, how salient is ethnicity in this conflict? While these questions are difficult to answer with any clarity, an analysis of several theories on ethnicity—as they apply to Baluchistan—helps in the formulation of a hypothesis.

### **C. ETHNICITY, POWER AND POLITICS**

Is the current violence in Baluchistan an ethnic conflict? According to Rajshree Jetly an ethnic conflict is one which involves a government, and “one or more politically

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<sup>96</sup> “Pakistan President Warns ‘Miscreants’ Will be Dealt with ‘Iron Hand,’” *Global News Wire – Asia Africa Intelligence Wire*, 14 December, 2005 from LexisNexis Academic, accessed 4 April 2006.

<sup>97</sup> “Pakistan's Musharraf Speaks to Nation on Baluchistan, Dams,” *Islamabad PTV World*, accessed from [www.fbis.gov](http://www.fbis.gov) on 17 January 2006.

<sup>98</sup> “Curbing terrorism crucial to national security - Pakistan president,” Associated Press of Pakistan, accessed from [www.fbis.gov](http://www.fbis.gov) on 2 March 2006.

<sup>99</sup> “Pakistan's Musharraf Speaks to Nation on Baluchistan, Dams,” *Islamabad PTV World*, accessed from [www.fbis.gov](http://www.fbis.gov) on 17 January 2006.

mobilized ethnic groups who challenge the sanctity of existing political structures in their bid for autonomy or secession.”<sup>100</sup> As has been detailed in the previous chapter, the target of Baluch nationalist’s discontent since 1947 has been the Punjabi dominated central government, and their central objective has been autonomy, if not outright independence from the state of Pakistan. This desire for Baluch autonomy and/or independence has been in large part based on the historic grievances discussed above, yet as Walker Connor has stated, “men don’t allow themselves to be killed for their interests; they allow themselves to be killed for their passions.”<sup>101</sup> The passions that have driven local tribesmen to violence in Baluchistan cannot be fully understood without an understanding of the primordial aspects of the Baluch conflict.

The theory of primordialism, as advocated by Clifford Geertz, holds that the “congruities of blood, speech, custom, and so on, are seen to have an ineffable, and at times overpowering, coerciveness” which bind one to his kinsmen not merely by “personal affection, practical necessity, common interest, or incurred obligation, but at least in great part by virtue of some unaccountable absolute import attributed to the very tie itself.”<sup>102</sup> Primordial ties, particularly in modernizing societies, are seen as the “preferred bases of demarcation of autonomous political units” from which “ancient hatreds” play out in violent clashes between ethnic groups.<sup>103</sup> While few Baluch leaders speak directly of ancient hatred between the Baluch and the Punjabis, leaders such as Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti, often highlight the fact that the current unrest in Baluchistan is centered on the “national” rights of the Baluch people.<sup>104</sup> He has warned that unless a concerted effort is made to safeguard Baluch interests and preserve their homeland, the Baluch people will remain at risk of becoming “subservient to the will of others,” and “slaves and third grade citizens” in their own land.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Jetly, 8.

<sup>101</sup> Walker Connor, “Beyond Reason: The Nature of the Ethnonational Bond” in *Ethnicity*, ed. John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 75.

<sup>102</sup> Clifford Geertz, “The Integrative Revolution: Primordial Sentiments and Civil Politics in the New States” in *Old Societies and New States* ed. by Clifford Geertz (New York: Free Press, 1963), 109.

<sup>103</sup> Geertz, 108.

<sup>104</sup> Gall.

<sup>105</sup> From interview posted on [www.balochvoice.com](http://www.balochvoice.com) accessed on 30 April 2006.

As was discussed above, many Baluch—as well as Sindhis, Punjabis and Pashtuns—view themselves as separate nations that are incompatible with the artificially created concept of a Pakistani nation. This sense of “nation” on the part of Baluch nationalists is based in large part on primordial ties—language, common ancestry, etc.—that bind them together as a people and make them distinct from Punjabis who run the central government apparatus. Many Baluch fighters view the clash with Pakistani forces as a matter of honor, and as a fight to preserve the Baluch identity from eradication at the hands of Punjabi colonizers. Because of this belief, any intrusion by the central government, regardless of motive or objective, is an event they will fight to prevent. As Brahamdagh Bugti, grandson of the Bugti chief has stated, Baluch tribesmen are fighting not only to demonstrate their displeasure, but to make it abundantly clear to the central government that they “should leave our homeland.”<sup>106</sup>

The conflict in Baluchistan is thus centered on ethnic rights and self rule—a deep seated belief among many Baluch that their ethnic identity and historical physical ties to the land warrant that they, and no one else, should control their destiny. But why has violence returned the province after nearly three decades of relative peace? The primordialist viewpoint fails to explain why violence has erupted at certain times over the past five decades—in 1948, 1960, 1962 and 1973—while the central government and Baluch tribesmen have lived in peaceful coexistence during other times. In other words, primordialism helps to explain the “tenacity of ethnic bonds” that have often resulted in political action and violence in Baluchistan, but fails to offer any “mechanism for the genesis of its phenomena.”<sup>107</sup>

Furthermore, while the Baluch undoubtedly view themselves as distinct from the other major ethnic groups in Pakistan, there is little evidence of what could be called “ancient hatred” between Baluch and Punjabis. Prior to the partition of British India, Baluch violence (as detailed in chapter one) was primarily directed at the British, not against other ethnic groups such as the Pashtuns, Punjabis or Sindhis—an indication that there is more to the current conflict than simply a clash of ethnic identities. That is not to say that there are not primordialist aspects to the current conflict in Baluchistan, but only

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<sup>106</sup> Gall.

<sup>107</sup> For more discussion on the theories of ethnicity see Hutchinson, 4. Jetly, 8.

that, as Beverly Crawford has pointed out, “cultural identities lead to conflict only when they have become politically charged.”<sup>108</sup> But why have Baluch nationalists once again become politically charged?

In his work *Understanding Ethnic Violence*, Roger D. Petersen put forth an emotion-based approach to ethnic conflict that highlighted four “emotions,” or mechanisms that trigger action to satisfy a pressing concern: fear, hatred, resentment, and rage.<sup>109</sup> While each of these four have undoubtedly led to violence on particular occasions by certain individuals or groups, the emotion that most resonates throughout the Baluchistan conflict is that of resentment.

Resentment is the perception that ones’ group is “located in an unwarranted subordinate position on the status hierarchy.”<sup>110</sup> The central government of Pakistan historically has been dominated by ethnic Punjabis, as has many of the civil service positions within Baluchistan. While the Pakistani constitution guarantees the Baluch the same rights as any other ethnic group<sup>111</sup>, including Punjabis, the lack of participation by ethnic Baluch in the federal government, military and civil service, as well as the arbitrary dismissal of their elected provincial government on two separate occasions by the ruling regime in Islamabad, has created a sense of subordination that has spawned a powerful and collectively held desire for equalizing of the status of Baluch vis-à-vis Punjabis. Yet Petersen makes it a point to highlight that the “resentment argument” is about a political, not economic, sense of subordination. In the Baluch case, economics, specifically the control of resources as discussed above, is central to the ongoing conflict.

While the economic situation in Baluchistan is indeed poor, Baluch discontent is also as much a product of relative deprivation as it is actual economic deprivation. The phenomenon of relative deprivation occurs when there exists a “discrepancy between the

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<sup>108</sup> Beverly Crawford, “The Causes of Cultural Conflict: An Institutional approach,” in *The Myth of ‘Ethnic Conflict,’* ed. Beverly Crawford and Ronnie Lipschutz, International and Area Research Series, 98 (Berkeley, CA: University of California Berkeley, 1998), 11.

<sup>109</sup> Roger D. Petersen, *Understanding Ethnic Violence: Fear, hatred and Resentment in Twentieth-Century Eastern Europe* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 19.

<sup>110</sup> Petersen, 40.

<sup>111</sup> Constitution of Pakistan, Part II, Chapter 1, Fundamental Rights. Accessed from [www.pakistani.org/pakistan/constitution](http://www.pakistani.org/pakistan/constitution) on 25 May 2006.

value expectations and value capabilities of an ethnic group.”<sup>112</sup> When this perception is strong enough, it can become the prime factor underlying ethnic protest and conflict. In Baluchistan, this is exemplified by the situation in Gwadar where the influx of Punjabi workers to construct the port, and the purchase of local land by Punjabi investors, is seen by the Baluch population as further examples of Punjabis getting rich while the vast majority of Baluch remain in poverty.

A variant of the relative deprivation theory is internal colonialism. According to this theory, ethnic identity is explained in terms of the marginalization of peripheral groups in relation to a “core” group within a complex society.<sup>113</sup> This theory helps explain the sentiment of many Baluch who feel that the Punjabi dominated central government supplanted British colonial rule with an internal colonialism in which Baluch political concerns are unceremoniously subordinated to those of the state.

Another argument—the argument most often evoked by the central government—is that the violence plaguing Baluchistan is a direct result of manipulation by tribal sardars (leaders) who are exploiting ethnicity as a means of maintaining their grip on power over Baluch society. This is an argument grounded in instrumentalist theory. Instrumentalists generally treat ethnicity as “a social and political construction in a specific context in which elites manipulate cultural symbols of their ethnic groups to derive political and economic advantage in the quest for power and position.”<sup>114</sup> According to this logic ethnicity is malleable and becomes significant within a specific group only when “ethnic activists” or “political entrepreneurs” exploit it for their advantage.<sup>115</sup> In other words, ethnicity is salient only when its exploitation provides strategic efficacy for certain individuals or groups.

The central government of Pakistan maintains that the violence in Baluchistan is solely the work of tribal chiefs who are “anti-development and anti-democracy”<sup>116</sup> and

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<sup>112</sup> Jetly, 8.

<sup>113</sup> Jetly, 8.

<sup>114</sup> Jetly, 8.

<sup>115</sup> David A. Lake and Donald Rothchild, “Containing Fear: The Origins and Management of Ethnic Conflict,” *International Security*, 21, 2 (Autumn 1996): 41.

<sup>116</sup> “Curbing terrorism crucial to national security - Pakistan president,” *Associated Press of Pakistan*, accessed from [www.fbis.gov](http://www.fbis.gov) on 2 March 2006.

who seek only to maintain their power under the feudal tribal system. In a speech in January 2006, President Musharraf reflected this instrumentalist view of the Baluchistan issue:

The tribal chiefs have held this country hostage for the past 30 to 40 years for their interests. These tribal chiefs have no interest whatsoever in the well being and progress of the common man and subject their own sub-tribesmen to torture because of their pro-development thinking.”<sup>117</sup>

The central government’s argument that manipulation by Baluch tribal leaders is the underlying cause of the current violence has resonance. As has been discussed earlier, Baluchistan traditionally has been a tribal society centered on the leadership of the Sardar, or tribal chief, and these individuals undoubtedly stand to lose if the sardari system is abolished—an underlying goal of the “modernization” projects of the central government.<sup>118</sup> Yet the violent acts in Baluchistan are not carried out by these tribal chiefs, but their followers, and the instrumentalist approach fails to explain *why* so many Baluch tribesmen have taken up arms against the central government. Put another way, why does the message of the tribal chiefs resonate with much of the Baluch population—and motivate them to commit acts of violence—while the efforts of the central government are only looked upon with suspicion?

Michael E. Brown contends that two factors are particularly important in answering the “why do followers follow?” question: antagonistic group histories and mounting economic problems.<sup>119</sup> The current conflict in Baluchistan is a product of both “political memories” of past injustices—real or perceived—inflicted on the Baluch people by the central government, and the depressed economic situation which is part of the reality of Baluchistan. Past “betrayals” by the Pakistani government, as highlighted in previous chapters, include: the arrest and imprisonment of Baluch rebel leaders after

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<sup>117</sup> “Pakistan's Musharraf Speaks to Nation on Baluchistan, Dams,” *Islamabad PTV World*, accessed from [www.fbis.gov](http://www.fbis.gov) on 17 January 2006.

<sup>118</sup> In March 2004, President Musharraf revealed a plan aimed at ending the grip of the sardari system within the Baluch province. The plan called for the conversion of ninety five percent of 'B' areas in Baluchistan (tribal areas where the police don't operate and tribal writ runs supreme) into 'A' areas where the provincial police would have primary authority.

<sup>119</sup> Michael E. Brown, “Ethnic and Internal Conflicts: Causes and Implications” in *Turbulent Peace: The Challenges of Managing International Conflict* ed. Chester A Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson and Pamela Aall (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2001), 222.

the revolts of 1948 and 1960 despite guarantees of amnesty and safe passage; the arbitrary dismissal of the democratically elected provincial government in 1973 that led to the four year insurgency; and the continued exploitation of the province's natural gas and other natural resources. Additionally, the heavy handed response to the current unrest in Baluchistan by the Pakistani military has evoked memories of the 1970s revolt in which the use of Iranian helicopter gun-ships and bombings by fixed wing aircraft was viewed as a wanton use of force.

As a result of this “antagonistic group history,” any assurances by the central government that its development efforts in Baluchistan will bring prosperity to the historically underdeveloped province are met with great suspicion. To put it in the words of Lake and Rothchild, the current crisis in Baluchistan is in part due to a “problem of credible commitment” in which the central government is unable to reassure the Baluch people that it will not renege on its promises of economic and political development.<sup>120</sup> Tribal leaders have used this fear of exploitation as a means to mobilize support for the nationalist cause and ultimately to have acts of violence committed against the central government.

Each of the theories discussed above help explain the current conflict in Baluchistan. Ultimately, the conflict in Baluchistan has been spurred by a combination of mass-based grievances over economic exploitation, political marginalization and a fear of ethnic eradication, that have been manipulated by tribal Sardars as tools for mobilization. As is the case in many conflicts, the underlying causes of ethnic and/or internal violence is often a combination of factors—structural, political, economic, social, cultural, and perceptual.<sup>121</sup> Elements of each of these are present in today's conflict in Baluchistan, yet these factors alone do not account for the specific timing of the most current spate of violence. As Michael Brown has argued, what determines the specific timing of ethnic violence is the simultaneous presence of the above factors in a “combustible setting.”<sup>122</sup> While it could be argued that the setting in Baluchistan has

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<sup>120</sup> Lake, 44.

<sup>121</sup> Michael Brown, “Ethnic and Internal Conflicts: Causes and Implications,” in *Turbulent Peace: The Challenges of Managing Ethnic Conflict* (Washington, DC: USIP Press, 2001), 214.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, 222.

been “combustible” since 1947, it has undoubtedly been made more so in recent years because of its increased strategic significance.

#### **D. STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE**

Many of the same factors which have sparked violence in Baluchistan in the past, socio-economic underdevelopment; political frustration; and historical grievances based on feelings of betrayal and exploitation by the central government remain today. Yet the most significant factor contributing to the current conflict in Baluchistan is the province’s increased strategic significance. Baluchistan has always been important to Pakistan because of its geo-strategic location and its rich energy resources, but more recent events such as the development of a deep-sea port in Gwadar, Pakistani support for the U.S.-led Global War on Terror (GWOT), and the ongoing regional dynamics of South Asia have resulted in an effort by the central government to more strongly exert its authority within Pakistan’s southwestern province. This renewed interest in Baluchistan, which has included an influx of foreign workers and an increased military presence, has ignited the smoldering belief among Baluch nationalists that the central government seeks only to subjugate the Baluch people and exploit their resources for the benefit of the central government. The result has been an increased sense of “colonialization” on the part of the Baluch population that has spawned a violent backlash by Baluch militants.

Armed clashes between ethnically Baluch tribesmen and the Punjabi dominated Pakistani military have plagued Baluchistan since 1947. On four separate occasions—directly following the partition of British India in 1947; twice in response to the anti-ethnic policies of Field Marshal Ayub Khan in 1960 and 1962; and after the arbitrary dismissal of the Baluch provincial government by President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in 1973—Baluch militants took up arms in revolt against the central government. The most recent and most bloody clash was brought to an end shortly after General Zia ul-Haq ousted President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and took power in a bloodless coup in 1977. In an effort to consolidate his power and bring an end to the costly military endeavor in Baluchistan, Zia adopted a “velvet glove” policy in which he placated the Baluch tribal chief without ever conceding to their demands. This policy of “non-provocative firmness” was maintained throughout Zia’s reign from 1977 to 1989, as well as during the alternating regimes of the “decade of democracy” from 1989 to 1999. Yet shortly

after General Pervez Musharraf returned Pakistan to military rule in 1999, changes in the geopolitical landscape of the region prompted him to take a different tack with respect to Baluchistan. The most significant event effecting the change in policy was the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001.

### **1. The Global War on Terror**

In the wake of the 2001 attacks on New York City and Washington, D.C., Pakistan was presented with a choice by the United States government: “You are either 100 percent with us or a 100 per cent against us.”<sup>123</sup> In response to the ultimatum, President Pervez Musharraf reversed a decades old policy of support for the Taliban in Afghanistan and provided the United States with both logistics and intelligence in support of military operations to root out Al Qaeda and overthrow the Taliban regime. By late 2001, reports that Taliban and Al Qaeda fighters were slipping across the Durand Line into Pakistan forced Musharraf to deploy his army—in numbers unseen along the border since the colonial rule of the British—to the western borderlands in an attempt to seal the border from infiltrators.<sup>124</sup> While most of the infiltration in the early days of the war in Afghanistan was concentrated along the western border of the North West Frontier Province (NWFP), Al Qaeda and Taliban operatives were also reported operating along the Baluchistan border.<sup>125</sup> Pakistani forces continue to operate in the tribal area along its western border, but rising unrest in Baluchistan since early 2005, as well as the 2004 bombing in Gwadar that killed three Chinese engineers, have required an even more pronounced military presence within the heart of Baluchistan itself.

While this increase presence cannot be directly linked to the January 2005 rape of the female doctor, the violence that ensued in the event’s aftermath points to the fact that frustration with the military had been growing. The spike in violence that followed the doctor’s rape continued to escalate throughout the year. According to the federal government’s tally, in 2005 there were more than 275 rocket attacks on government

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<sup>123</sup> The choice was originally presented to General Mehmood, then director of Pakistani intelligence, by Under Secretary of State Richard Armitage.

<sup>124</sup> John F. Burns, “Taliban Troops Move Across Border into Pakistan,” *New York Times*, 15 November 2001, B4.

<sup>125</sup> Peter Baker, “For U.S. Forces, a Secret and Futile Hunt; Local Guides Describe Furtive Trip into Pakistan in Search of Fugitives,” *Washington Post*, 5 May 2002.

installations, seventeen bombings, and eight attacks on gas pipelines.<sup>126</sup> Another estimate, by the mainstream Dawn newspaper, tallied the totals for 2005 at 261 bomb blasts and 167 rocket attacks, while Baluch militants—prominently the Baluchistan Liberation Army—have made claims that there were five times that many attacks.

In December 2005, Baluch militants rocketed a meeting attended by President Musharraf in Kohlu, the capital of the Marri tribal area of Baluchistan. Days later, tribesmen fired rockets at a helicopter carrying the commander of the para-military unit the Frontier Corps-Baluchistan. By mid-December, press reports indicated that Pakistani military and para-military forces were engaged in “a full-scale military campaign” against militant Baluch tribesmen.<sup>127</sup> Operations by the Frontier Corps during January of this year have resulted in the destruction of eleven “fararri” camps, or insurgent training camps, throughout Baluchistan, but violence against vital infrastructure and military outposts has continued nearly unabated.

The increased violence in Baluchistan, particularly on its military installations, is of considerable concern to Pakistan but it should also concern the United States. In the wake of 9/11, President Musharraf provided several key installations from which U.S. forces could support Operation Enduring Freedom. Two of these installations, air fields in Pasni and Dalbadin, are located in the Baluchistan province and have been used extensively since 2001 to provide logistical support for special forces and intelligence operations. The U.S. presence in Baluchistan is primarily due to its value for operations in Afghanistan, but it has also been speculated that the United States remains there due to its value as a “jump-off point” for potential future military operations against Iran and its nuclear program. Investigative reporter Seymour Hersh has even gone so far as to write that U.S. special forces have already been inserted from secret bases in Baluchistan into Iran in order to prepare for a possible strike against the government in Tehran.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> Parthasary.

<sup>127</sup> Gall.

<sup>128</sup> Seymour M. Hersh, “The Iran Plans: Would President Bush go to war to stop Tehran from getting the bomb?,” *The New Yorker*, 17 April 2006.

Whether or not these reports are accurate, Baluchistan is still of considerable value to U.S. efforts in the region, and increased violence in the province could put these efforts in jeopardy.

## **2. Port of Gwadar**

One of the primary targets of violence in Baluchistan has been the deep-sea port facility under construction in the Baluch city of Gwadar. The development of the Gwadar port lies at the heart of President Musharraf's plan for economic prosperity in Pakistan. Only two hundred-fifty miles from Strait of Hormuz—through which 40 percent of world's oil supply flows—the Gwadar port will provide land locked Central Asia, Afghanistan and China's Xinjiang Province with commercial access to the Persian Gulf, and has the potential to provide a windfall of transit fees for Pakistan. Not only will the development of the deep-water port transform Pakistan into an economic hub of commercial activity among its energy rich neighbors, it will also provide "strategic depth" to the Pakistan Navy. Karachi, Pakistan's only other deep water port, is located 450 miles closer to the border with India than Gwadar. Karachi was blockaded during the war of 1971 by the Indian Navy and under threat of blockade during tensions with India in 1991—events Pakistan would not like to see repeated in the future.

The Gwadar project also provides an opportunity for Pakistan to improve relations with regional and emerging world power China. To date, China has provided a large sum of workers (450) and nearly eighty percent of the project's funding. For China, the Gwadar port will not only allow it to diversify its crude oil import routes and extend its presence in the Indian Ocean, but it would also allow the Chinese to more easily monitor U.S. naval activity in the region. China is obviously concerned with the impact of violence on their sizeable investment in Gwadar. In addition to having three Chinese workers killed and nine more wounded in an attack on the port in May 2004, China has put pressure on President Musharraf to guarantee their workers safety, and more importantly, to keep the port development on schedule. President Musharraf has responded by increasing the number of military personnel and installations in the region—a chief grievance of Baluch nationalists.

China is not the only regional power with an interest in the Gwadar port. Yet unlike China, India and Iran have a reason to see the project fail, or at least be

temporarily delayed. Iran is currently developing, with Indian support, its own deep water port in the city of Chabahar. Much like Pakistan's designs for Gwadar, Iran hopes that Chabahar will serve as Central Asia's conduit to warm water ports and they view the development of the Pakistani port as a threat to their economic interests. The common opposition to Gwadar by Iran, India, and the local Baluch creates much concern for Pakistan's ruling elite and fuels the never ending speculation that India is supporting the ongoing Baluch insurgency.<sup>129</sup> Yet President Musharraf has made it clear that the development of Gwadar is fundamental to the security and economic interests of Pakistan and its development will not be delayed by anyone or anything.

Musharraf argues that the port of Gwadar will provide opportunity and great benefit not only to greater Pakistan, but specifically to the Baluch people. Yet many Baluch remain skeptical and are concerned that they will be left on the sidelines as jobs and revenue go to outsiders—particularly Punjabis. Baluch nationalists point to skyrocketing real estate prices around Gwadar—due to the increased demand created by a growing non-Baluch population—as well as the increase in military cantonments, and the influx of foreign workers, both Chinese and Punjabis, as evidence that the central government is not only exploiting the province for their benefit, but attempting to dilute the Baluch culture by going ahead with these massive development projects without consulting, nor considering the concerns of the indigenous population.

An additional concern with respect to Gwadar that deeply troubles the central government is the potential interest of Al Qaeda. Some, such as Frederic Grare, have speculated that Gwadar may present Al Qaeda with an irresistible target. An attack on the port would not only “payback” Pakistan for its support of U.S. operations in Afghanistan, but also prevent Pakistan from capitalizing on the benefits of Gwadar—thereby becoming a stronger, more prosperous state—a prospect Al Qaeda firmly rejects.<sup>130</sup> The most dangerous threat to Gwadar, however is if fringe elements of the Baluch nationalist movement, who have already reeked significant havoc in Gwadar, find

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<sup>129</sup> Mariana Baabar, “How India is Fomenting Trouble in Pakistan via Afghanistan,” *News International*, 16 April 2006.

<sup>130</sup> Grare, 11.

common ground with Al Qaeda and are able to tap into the terrorist network's vast resources to conduct a major attack on the port facility.

While the mega-development project in Gwadar has had the most profound impact on the rising discontent among Baluch, it is only one of several major initiatives throughout Pakistan and Baluchistan that the central government is currently supporting. Other projects that effect Baluchistan include major water projects such as the Kalabagh Dam, major mining projects in Sandak, and a possible gas pipeline that links Iran and India. This last project—an attempt by India to satisfy its skyrocketing demand for energy resources—reflects the growing significance of Baluchistan in the volatile regional dynamics of southwest Asia.

### **3. Regional Dynamics**

Because of its geo-strategic location, events in Baluchistan have regional effects. These events are magnified in part because the two countries bordering the Baluchistan province, Iran and Afghanistan, both have sizeable Baluch populations of their own. Iran's concerns with respect to Baluchistan are focused on two things: a spillover of Baluch nationalism from Pakistan; and the subversive efforts of the U.S. that are referenced above. Iran has once before put down its own Baluch insurrection, and both Iran and Afghanistan view any movement towards the consolidation of a "Greater Baluchistan"—the geographic area covering the Pakistani province of Baluchistan as well as a large swath of southeastern Iran and southern Afghanistan—as a threat to their territorial sovereignty.

Afghanistan's concerns—which are in large part shared by the United States—are centered on Baluch support of Taliban fighters along the border area between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Afghanistan accuses Pakistan of allowing Taliban fighters to take refuge across the border in Baluchistan, and has even accused it of allowing Taliban recruiters to comb the madrasas of Lahore and Karachi for suicide bomber "recruits."<sup>131</sup>

Pakistan has made numerous vociferous counter-claims that Baluch terrorists are being armed inside Afghanistan and dispatched across the border to commit violence and create havoc. Accusations of Afghan support for Baluch rebels have been made during

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<sup>131</sup> Carlotta Gall, "Afghan Suicide Bombings, Tied To Taliban, Point To Pakistan," New York Times, February 15, 2006, 1.

each of the previous Baluch insurrections but the current accusations come at a time when the border area between the two countries, which has been historically disputed and a “grey area” where the tribal people who inhabit it fail to recognize its existence, has been a primary concern of the United States. Reports of the local population harboring Taliban and Al Qaeda members, to include Osama Bin Laden, have been unending since 2001 and the U.S. government has demonstrated growing frustration with the Musharraf regime for its lackluster efforts to control its rugged border area. There is currently no evidence of a serious network of Taliban camps within Baluchistan, and their efforts to date seem to be directed back towards Afghanistan, but the mere presence of the Taliban in the region elevates the possibility that the burgeoning insurgency in Baluchistan could become “Talibanized”—a dire prospect for both Pakistan and the United States.

Pakistan has countered vociferously claims that it is not doing all that it can militarily to ebb Al Qaeda and Taliban activity, but also claims that its efforts along the Afghan border are being subverted by the clandestine activities of its arch rival India. In January 2006, India made the following official statement:

The Indian government has been watching with concern the spiraling violence in Baluchistan and the heavy military actions, including helicopter gun ships and jet fighters by the government of Pakistan to quell it. We hope the government of Pakistan will exercise restraint and take recourse to peaceful discussions to address the grievance of the people of Baluchistan.<sup>132</sup>

India’s expressed concern was met with a swift Pakistani retort that asked India to “mind its business.”<sup>133</sup>

The seemingly never ending war-of-words between the two adversaries, which has been predominantly focused on the disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir, has now spilled over into Baluchistan. The crisis in Baluchistan has become an issue between the two states since claims began to emanate from New Delhi that the Pakistan army was committing human rights violations against Baluch civilians. Not only did Pakistan respond with a call for India to “douse the fire of insurgency in its own backyard” before making such accusations, but President Musharraf openly accused the

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<sup>132</sup> Parthasary.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

Indian government of supporting the Baluch insurgency. In February 2006, it was reported that Musharraf presented Afghan president Hamid Karzai with “proof” that India was using bases within Afghanistan to “foment trouble in Baluchistan.”<sup>134</sup>

Pakistan Senator Mushahid Hussain took those accusations one step further in an April 2006 interview with the Pakistani paper *The News* when he accused India’s Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) of establishing training camps near the Pakistan-Afghanistan border in order to train Baluch dissidents in the use of explosives and sophisticated weapons.<sup>135</sup> Hussain further claimed that India is using their five diplomatic missions within Afghanistan as “launching pads for undertaking covert operations” in both the NWFP and Baluchistan.<sup>136</sup> While India denies such accusations, the escalating war-of-words between the two foes over Baluchistan does not bode well for peace and stability in the region.

#### **E. CONCLUSION**

Many of the historical Baluch grievances that have led to violence in the past remain today. Yet it is the increased strategic significance of Baluchistan—which caused the central government to alter its relationship with its southwestern province—that is the preeminent factor that led to the most recent unrest. For nearly three decades prior to the outbreak of violence in 2005, the policy of “non-provocative firmness” put into place by General Zia ul-Haq kept the peace in Baluchistan. Zia’s policy, established in the aftermath of the bloody 1973-1977 insurgency, did little to address the long list of Baluch grievances but it did limit the presence of the central government in the affairs of Baluchistan—which placated the ruling tribal leaders, and kept violence to a minimum. The decision to invest millions in a deep-water port in Gwadar; the events of 9/11 and the subsequent Global War on Terror; as well as the regional dynamics these events created, however, made a policy of “non-provocative firmness” towards Baluchistan no longer tenable.

The increased stakes in Baluchistan required that the central government be more assertive in its approach to the province. This approach included an increased military

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<sup>134</sup> Baabar.

<sup>135</sup> Baabar.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

presence—something the Baluch fiercely oppose—but also huge increases in the amount of money allocated for Baluchistan’s development. Regardless of the central government’s motive, these efforts have been met with suspicion and violence by the Baluch people due to enduring feelings of exploitation, political marginalization, and ethnic dispossession—feelings that Baluch tribal leadership have been able to exploit.

While the Musharraf regime seemingly understands that the Baluch problem cannot be solved by military measures alone, its efforts to convince the populace of Baluchistan that the government’s efforts are in their best interest have fallen on deaf ears. This is not solely the fault of the Musharraf government—it is also a product of nearly six decades of mismanagement—but unless the Pakistani president is able to build confidence in the minds of the average Baluch that the central government is working for the good of all Pakistanis, including the Baluch, and not just the ruling elite nor the ethnic Punjabis who dominate the government, violence in Baluchistan will only continue.

## V. CONCLUSION

### A. INTRODUCTION

Pakistan's Baluchistan province has been home to four violent uprisings against the central government since 1947. These revolts were the product of several factors: a fiercely independent Baluch people that eschew outside interference; the lasting legacy of the techniques and policies implemented by the British during their century long rule of British India; mismanagement by ruling Pakistani regimes; and real and perceived historical grievances that have allowed Baluch leaders to mobilize support for the nationalist cause. Yet the determining factor in the outbreak of violence in Baluchistan has been major policy decisions by the central government that changed the existing dynamic between the governing authority and the indigenous population. While the intent of these policies, which increased the central government's influence and physical presence in Baluchistan, was to centralize control and strengthen the Pakistani state, the ultimate result was violence, instability, and chaos. Much like the insurrections of the past, the current spate of violence that has plagued Baluchistan since January 2005 is the result of the combination of historical grievances *and* a dramatic change in government policy. This recent change in policy was brought about by the heightened strategic significance of Baluchistan that was created in large part by two significant events: the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, and the development of a massive deep-water port in the Baluch city of Gwadar.

The purpose of this thesis was to analyze Baluch nationalist violence throughout history in order to disaggregate the root causes of the current unrest in the province. Previous chapters have examined the history of the relationship between the Baluch people and their central government over three distinct periods: under British rule in the nineteenth century; during the first three decades of Pakistani independence; and from January 2005 to the present. This examination included analysis of the Baluch as a people; their historic grievances; and the techniques of control utilized by both British and Pakistani governments. The following highlights the main findings.

## **B. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

### **1. Impact of British Rule**

Violence in Baluchistan throughout the history of Pakistan has been a result of several factors, not the least of which are the policies of the central government. But the examination of the Baluch under British rule brings to light the fact that several policies utilized by the British in the nineteenth century laid the groundwork for subsequent Pakistani policies. After their defeat in the First Afghan War the British abandoned their “Frontier of Separation” policy, which allowed for the autonomous and semi-autonomous rule by local tribesmen along the western border of British India, and instituted the “Closed Border System” in which the British increased their presence (especially militarily) in areas under their direct control. The closed border system proved to be extremely costly for the British as they were continuously forced to battle elusive tribesmen who resisted direct foreign rule. Solutions to controlling the restive border area under the closed border system included “divide and conquer” practices pitting one tribe against another, as well as collective responsibility techniques in which entire tribes would be punished for the actions of individuals.

The closed border system ultimately failed and was abandoned for the much more successful “forward policy” instituted by Sir Robert Sandeman. This policy was centered on the tenets of economic development, a more limited role for the military, and increased tribal participation in local administration.<sup>137</sup> Unfortunately, three decades of the closed border system had sewn seeds of mistrust and anger towards foreign rule that would be exacerbated by the nascent policies of the Pakistani government after 1947.

### **2. Legacy of Betrayal**

Shortly after the partition of British India in 1947 the central government of Pakistan moved to assert its authority over its disparate population in order to consolidate the newly formed state. In 1948 the Khan of Kalat, who had ruled—under the British—over much of the territory of present day Baluchistan, refused to concede to demands that Kalat become part of the Pakistani state. His arrest and the subsequent invasion by the Pakistani army sparked the first of the four rebellions that have plagued modern Baluchistan. This revolt, led by the Khan’s brother Abdul Karim, was ultimately

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<sup>137</sup> Scholz, 95.

defeated, but the way in which the revolt was brought to an end left a lasting impression on the Baluch populace. In exchange for his surrender, the Pakistani government gave assurances that Abdul Karim and his fighters would be given amnesty from arrest. Yet shortly after the cease fire Karim and over one hundred of his men were arrested and imprisoned—an incident the Baluch view as the first “betrayal” by the Pakistani government.<sup>138</sup>

The implementation of the One Unit policy, which attempted to create a single provincial entity that subsumed all the administrative units of West Pakistan, sparked the second Baluch revolt in 1959. After nearly a year of fighting, the leader of the revolt Nauroz Kahn agreed to lay down his arms in return for the withdrawal of One Unit, and the guarantee of amnesty for his men. Understanding that his terms had been accepted, Nauroz Khan surrendered, only to be arrested and five of his men hanged in July 1960 on charges of treason. Nauroz Khan, who died in Kohlu prison in 1964, is recognized by Baluch as the first martyr of the Baluch nationalist movement, and as a lasting symbol of the deceit of the Pakistani government.

Subsequent betrayals by the central government were centered on elections. The 1962 elections, directed as part of the government’s the Basic Democracies program, brought several ardent Baluch nationalists to power: Sardars Khair Bakhsh Marri, Ataullah Mengal, and Ahmad Nawaz Bugti. The central government, viewing the election of these tribal leaders as a threat to Basic Democracies’ goal of minimizing the influence of the tribal system, promptly replaced them with appointees of Islamabad. This event resulted in the murder of the Islamabad appointed Sardars and sparked yet another revolt.

The Baluch revolt that raged from 1973 to 1977, like that of 1962, began with the dismissal of the Baluch provincial government. It had been the contention of Pakistani president Zulfikar Ali Bhutto that the Baluch leaders were conspiring with the Soviet Union and Iraq to dismember Pakistan and Iran. Whether this was true or not, the event was seen by the Baluch populace as another example of the arbitrary use of power and the subjugation of the Baluch people. It is this and previous betrayals that have

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<sup>138</sup> Harrison, *In Afghanistan’s Shadow: Baluch Nationalism and Soviet Temptations*, 27.

contributed to the inherent sense of distrust of the central government among Baluch that has allowed tribal leaders to mobilize tribesmen to subvert the central government's development efforts within the province. Ultimately, the current crisis in Baluchistan is in part a product of this legacy of betrayal.

### **3. Failed Policies**

The state of Pakistan was created in 1947 by combining five disparate ethnic populations: Sindhis, Punjabis, Pashtuns, Bengali, and Baluch. In an effort to create from scratch a Pakistani "nation," successive governments implemented policies aimed at bridging the ethnic divide between the various ethnic groups within the Pakistani state. Yet these attempts to solidify the state also attempted to abolish any semblance of regional identity. The policy known as One Unit was instituted in 1955 in part to counter the ethnic domination of the Bengalis in Eastern Pakistan. This policy, which ostensibly collapsed all four ethnic groups of Western Pakistan into one political entity, failed to take into account the potency of ethnicity among its minority groups and ultimately led to a bloody Baluch uprising.

Basic Democracies was a program instituted by Field Marshal Ayub Khan that instituted a five-tiered political structure from the local to the provincial level that was composed of both elected and appointed officials. Basic Democracies was billed as a way to not only democratize Pakistan, but also to wean the western provinces from the feudal tribal system that had been in place for centuries. It was a policy that for obvious reasons was opposed in Baluchistan by the tribal sardars who depended on the sardari system for their wealth and power. Baluch nationalists, including but not exclusively the tribal leadership, opposed Basic Democracies on the grounds that the Islamabad appointed representatives reflected the central government's encroachment on local politics and provincial autonomy. The view that Basic Democracies only represented an attempt to placate Baluch desires for democratic representation without actually providing it was vindicated shortly after the 1962 election when the elected Baluch leadership was replaced with individuals more attune to Islamabad by the central government. As discussed above, this event ultimately led to the third Baluch revolt.

State formation in Pakistan has been difficult and it could be argued that the process—nearly six decades after independence—is still far from complete. Yet as

thorny as the task of creating a nation-state out of five ethnically diverse populations has been, this undertaking was made even more difficult by the unwillingness—often combined with the inability—of the Punjabi dominated central government to accommodate the aspirations of its multiple ethnic groups.<sup>139</sup> In Baluchistan, this failure has led to four armed insurrections, and has undoubtedly contributed to the burgeoning violence today.

#### **4. Power and Ethnic Politics**

It is clear from the discussion in Chapter 2 that the Baluch are a distinct and proud ethnic people who view themselves as quite unique from the rest of Pakistan's diverse population. While there is little evidence that the current conflict in Baluchistan is a product of "ancient hatreds" between the Baluch people and the ethnic Punjabis who control the central government, nationalist leaders have been able to use ethnicity as a tool for mobilization. They have been able to do this because of the combination of an "antagonistic group history," reflected in the legacy of betrayal discussed above, as well as the continual lack of economic development, and a perceived sense of exploitation at the hands of the central government. These factors have allowed Baluch nationalist to play on feelings of resentment among the Baluch populace and ultimately motivate some to commit violence against the state.

This feeling of resentment among Baluch only became salient after specific events increased the strategic significance of Baluchistan. These events resulted in the heightened presence of the central government in Baluch affairs, as well as a heightened sense of intrusion among the Baluch populace. While legitimate "ancient hatred" between Baluch and Punjabis may be lacking, the rising sense among Baluch that the central government's underlying motive in Baluchistan is the eradication of the Baluch identity has the potential to create a present-day hatred that could lead to violence directed not just at military personnel but civilian Punjabis as well. This is a prospect that if realized would send an already volatile situation into utter chaos.

#### **5. Strategic Significance as a Catalyst**

The current crisis in Baluchistan, that began in January 2005 shortly after the alleged rape of a local doctor in Baluchistan by four military personnel, is at its base the

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<sup>139</sup> Jetly, 9.

product of many of the same factors which sparked violent Baluch revolts on four separate occasions since 1947. These factors include: socio-economic underdevelopment; political frustration; and historical grievances based on Baluch feelings of betrayal and exploitation by the central government. Yet the current spate of violence is also a direct result of Baluchistan's heightened strategic significance.

The development of the Gwadar deep-sea port, Pakistani support for the U.S.-led Global War on Terror (GWOT), and the ongoing regional dynamics of South Asia have demanded that the central government more strongly exert its authority in Baluchistan. In the aftermath of 9/11 President Musharraf agreed to not only offer intelligence and logistic support to U.S. operations in Afghanistan but also agreed to deploy large numbers of troops along Pakistan's western border—an area that the central government previously had little influence over. In Gwadar, the influx of foreign workers required for the port's construction also coincided with an increased military presence. The expanded presence of the military, and the flood of non-Baluch workers into the province, has exacerbated long-held feelings among Baluch nationalists that the central government's ultimate goal is to make Baluchistan a colony of Punjab, and the Baluch people second class citizens in their own land.

### **C. RECOMMENDATIONS**

In a speech in January 2006 President Musharraf correctly identified that the current crisis in Baluchistan is centered on two things: the problem of national unity/inter-provincial harmony, and the problem of poverty alleviation/economic development.<sup>140</sup> The Musharraf regime's approach to these problems seems to be two pronged. On one hand the government is pushing ahead with major development projects such as the Gwadar port and other projects that will bolster the economic strength of the Baluchistan, and Pakistan as a whole. On the other hand, the central government is simultaneously attempting to crush armed Baluch militants who President Musharraf views as "miscreants" and terrorists hell-bent on derailing Baluchistan from its path to modernization and prosperity. It is difficult to argue with Musharraf's ardent belief that the "writ of law" must rein supreme if Pakistan is to ever establish itself as a strong and

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<sup>140</sup> "Full text of Pakistan president's address to the nation," Associated Press of Pakistan, 17 January 2006, accessed from [www.fbis.gov](http://www.fbis.gov) on 17 January 2006.

stable state, and his government has taken significant steps to address many of the problems in Baluchistan, yet the failure of the current policies emanating from Islamabad to address *all* of the factors that have led to the recent surge in violence will allow those who are leading the current uprising to continue to mobilize support. In other words, if the central government is to be successful in bringing peace and stability to Baluchistan, it must take a more holistic approach to the crisis. To that end, the following recommendations are offered:

**1. Invest More in Human Capital**

The strategy to end violence in Baluchistan based primarily on major economic development projects has failed to demonstrate tangible results for the Baluch populace. This is in large part due to the fact that the efforts to develop Baluchistan have been far more focused on “things”—ports, roads, dams, etc.—than on people. Until this focus shifts and the Baluch people become more directly involved, development projects will continue to be viewed as tools of exploitation. This renewed emphasis on the human capital in Baluchistan will require a dramatic effort to educate and train Baluch workers so they can play a larger role in the province’s economic development. It will also require a more prominent role for local leadership in the decision making process as it applies to development projects in Baluchistan.

Additionally, mega-development projects focused on long term economic growth should also be accompanied by “micro-development” projects focused on the more immediate needs of the Baluch people—schools, medical clinics, and readily accessible water and electricity. Ultimately, a policy a kin to Sir Robert Sandeman’s “peaceful penetration” of the nineteenth century which emphasizes job creation, education, and a reduced military presence, will help diminish Baluch discontent with the central government, and ultimately dry up support for the more militant elements of the Baluch nationalist movement. While the Musharraf regime has taken several steps in this direction, more must be done.

**2. Seek out the Moderates**

The central government has made it clear that it views the tribal leadership behind the unrest in Baluchistan as terrorists and it has made little attempt to initiate a dialogue with them. If it is to maintain this policy, the central government must look beyond its

relationship with the tribal leaders and look at the broader political arena for a more moderate core of political leaders that it can negotiate with. These leaders must possess sufficient clout to have the support of the more militant groups, and possess the capacity to make concessions that will move the peace process forward. In the initial stages, this should include secret negotiations with Baluch leaders. By keeping negotiations secret, the two groups avert the risks of open negotiations: the perception that violence is being rewarded; “negotiation fatigue” by both leaders and masses due to lack of progress; and the possibility that those opposed to negotiations will commit further acts of violence to derail the process.

### **3. Develop a Roadmap**

As Timothy D. Sisk points out, “sustainable termination of a civil war requires an intricate step-by-step process of confidence building, disarmament and security, transitional justice, and a forum in which the political, economic, and social terms of the post-war order can be defined.”<sup>141</sup> While the crisis in Baluchistan has not yet reached the point of civil war, the central government would be well served to take preventive steps to avoid such a calamity that go beyond a military crackdown and major development projects. This will require that the central government address the underlying social structures which have contributed to Baluch discontent, and fueled past and present violence.

Attempts to crush the nationalist movement through military means alone will only temporarily delay violence, not stop it. Additionally, if military action is viewed as wanton, as it was in 1977, it will ultimately breed the type of contempt for the central government, and more generally for ethnic Punjabis who are associated with it, that may result in more violence. To be comprehensive, the central governments approach to Baluchistan must include intermediate steps that build confidence among both political elites as well as the masses. This will require an expansion of the development programs in Baluchistan to include more locally focused projects. Additionally, the central government must prove to the Baluch people that it respects the political rights of the provinces and won’t arbitrarily revoke those rights when it suits their needs. While building confidence among the Baluch will be difficult based on the history of the

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<sup>141</sup> Sisk, 259.

interaction between the province and the central government, it is an imperative step towards a peaceful resolution to the crisis.

#### **4. Address the Larger Issues**

Violent conflict tends to breed further violence.<sup>142</sup> Unfortunately, because Baluchistan has a long history of violence, bringing an end to it is a very difficult task. Yet the longer this current crisis lingers, the more intractable it will become. Because this conflict is in essence over identity—what it means to be a Baluch, or for that matter, Sindhi, Pashtun, or Punjabi in Pakistan—positions at the negotiation table are not easily divisible or reconcilable.<sup>143</sup> Yet this issue of identity in Pakistan must be addressed if peace and stability are to return to Baluchistan, and remain in place throughout greater Pakistan. The central government has long been fearful that granting autonomy to its provinces will ultimately result in the dismemberment of Pakistani state. Because of this, it has maintained its intolerance for nationalist movements and moved quickly in the past to crush them militarily. Yet far from solving the nationalism problem, addressing the ethnic aspirations of its disparate population with military force alone has not resolved the identity issue, only postponed further violence.

Wrapped up in the issue of identity is the struggle between modernity and the tribal society entrenched in Baluchistan. The tribal leaders have a vested interest in keeping their tribes beholden to them. The central government has sought to break this link by exposing the Baluch people to the benefits of modernization. Because of the over emphasis on large scale projects, and the intransigence of the tribal leaders, the benefits of modernization have yet to touch the Baluch populace. But modernization alone will not break the feudal ties inherent to Baluchistan. This will only be accomplished if the central government is able to replace ethnic-nationalism—in Baluchistan, or in any other province—with a civic-nationalism buttressed by strong political institutions. The first step toward this development is to directly address the issues of ethnic identity and

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<sup>142</sup> Virginia Page Fortna, “Inside and Out: Peacekeeping and the Duration of Peace after Civil and Interstate Wars,” in *International Studies Review* 5, 4 (2003), 102.

<sup>143</sup> Sisk, 254.

autonomy in Pakistan. Failure to do so now will only prolong Pakistan's problems, entrench grievances with the central government, and prevent Pakistan from emerging as a strong and stable state.

## **5. Role of the United States**

The current crisis in Baluchistan is worthy of increased U.S. attention because of its value as an indicator of the growing trend of political violence throughout the region. As discussed above, the recent spate of violence in Baluchistan is a product of various variables—both long-standing and more recent. A variable discussed only briefly here but worthy of future study is the impact in Baluchistan of the seemingly growing contagion within Pakistan, and the region more broadly, that is vehemently anti-United States, and as a result, exceedingly opposed to any government that is viewed as supporting U.S. objectives. The presence of Taliban and Al Qaeda in Pakistan's western border area is of immense concern to both the United States and Pakistan. While it is unclear to what extent these vehemently anti-U.S., anti-Musharraf elements have influenced events in Baluchistan—their efforts to date have been primarily focused on Afghanistan—the growing presence of the Taliban and Al Qaeda within Baluchistan is indeed troubling. The danger these elements present is in the possibility that they will coalesce with the more nationalistic, and less religious Baluch tribesmen who have taken up arms against the central government. More broadly this is a concern because Baluchistan has the potential to become yet another battle front where radical Islamists, such as Al Qaeda and the Taliban, wage war on freedom and democracy. If indeed this occurs, it could thrust the entire Muslim world into utter chaos.

U.S. analysts and policy makers should be cognizant of potential indicators that demonstrate that the Baluch nationalist movement is morphing into part of the “global jihad” that is being led by Osama bin Laden and others. These indicators include the influx of weapons, technology, foreign fighters, as well as the tactics and techniques—such as the use of improvised explosive devices, suicide bombers, etc.—that have become prevalent in places such as Iraq and, more recently Afghanistan. If the Baluch crisis develops into yet another front of this global jihad, the consequences for the United States and the entire international community are dire indeed.

The current crisis in Baluchistan should also concern the United States because of its impact on stability in Pakistan. A stable Pakistan is in the best interest of the United States for a whole host of reasons. Not only is Pakistani cooperation in the Global War on Terror crucial to the efforts of the United States, but a stable Pakistani state lessens the possibility that the standoff between Pakistan and India will end in nuclear conflict. While the crisis in Baluchistan is an internal matter, its importance to the regional dynamics in South Asia require that the United States strongly encourage the Musharraf government to not just quell the violence, but resolve the crisis. Resolution to the crisis, however, will be unattainable without addressing the fundamental issues that are at its roots.

The United States must encourage Pakistan to expand on its two pronged approach to the present Baluchistan crisis and include more concrete steps to not only improve education and job training, but most importantly, to institute democratic reforms and to address the issue of provincial sovereignty within Pakistan. These reforms must guarantee the participation of provincial authorities in the state and local decision making process; strengthen political institutions; and, in doing so, legitimize the efforts of the central government in the eyes of the Baluch people.

Ultimately, it is in the best interest of both the United States and Pakistan that the crisis in Baluchistan be resolved sooner rather than later. The longer the conflict lingers, the more entrenched Baluch militants will become; the more tenuous Musharraf's grip on power will become; and the window of opportunity for foreign jihadis to intervene will only widen.

#### **D. CONCLUSION**

The Baluch have fiercely resisted outside rule throughout their history and the fact that they continue today to resist the central government's efforts to establish the writ of law in Baluchistan is of little surprise. The intent of this thesis has been to ascertain the critical factors contributing to violence in Baluchistan throughout history in order to disaggregate the root causes of the present crisis. The argument that has been supported here is that the current spate of violence in Baluchistan has been a product of preexisting factors—the independent nature of the Baluch people; the legacy of British and Pakistani policy; and historical grievances that have allowed Baluch leaders to mobilize Baluch

tribesmen to take up arms against the central government—that have been exacerbated by a major change in the relationship between the central government and the Baluch people.

Throughout history, this changed relationship has been brought about by the specific techniques used by the ruling authority—both British and Pakistani—to exert control over Baluchistan. These techniques, which have varied greatly over time and have had varying degrees of success, have included attempts at direct domination, co-optation, and appeasement. Government policies aimed at co-opting and/or appeasing Baluch leaders, such as the Forward Policy and Zia’s “non-provocative firmness,” have led to more peaceful relations between the central government and the Baluch people, yet these policies also failed to directly confront the underlying causes of Baluch discontent. As a result, when geo-strategic circumstances drove the governing authority to move towards a policy of more direct control, as was the case with the British after the First Afghan War and is the case presently, underlying grievances were exacerbated and violence flared. Past governments have curbed violence in Baluchistan only when they abandoned their efforts at direct control and shifted back to policies of appeasement and/or co-optation. The current crisis in Baluchistan, however, cannot be solved with a reversion to this type of policy. The strategic significance of Baluchistan is such that the Pakistani government cannot simply withdraw. Even if U.S. pressure on Pakistan to secure its western border area subsides in future years, the central government is far too dependent on the port of Gwadar for future economic success and strategic security to simply cede control back to the tribal sardars in Baluchistan.

It is imperative then that the central government work towards a legitimate solution to the conflict. The pattern of violence throughout the history of Baluchistan leads to the conclusion that the present situation in Baluchistan cannot be resolved without addressing the historical causes of violence in the province. The Musharraf regime has gone to great lengths to demonstrate that it is dedicated to addressing the long standing grievance of the Baluch people concerning the lack of economic development of Baluchistan. Other positive steps by the central government have included the integration of more Baluch into the armed forces and civil service, and increased investment in education and job training. These efforts do represent a concerted effort by

the central government to address issues that are fundamental to quelling Baluch resentment toward the central government, but they need to be greatly expanded. Ultimately though, the crisis in Baluchistan is reflective of the greater struggle within Pakistan to determine, nearly sixty years after its creation, what its true identity is. Until this issue is more adequately addressed, peace and stability in Baluchistan, and throughout Pakistan, will remain elusive.

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