

## **Political Culture of Balochistan during Military Regime of General Pervez Musharraf and Indian Interest in Balochistan**

**Javeria Jahangir**

*Lahore Leads University, Lahore, Pakistan.*

### **ABSTRACT**

The largest but poorest province of Pakistan has always been the most strategically significant area of great global and regional attraction due to its unique geographical location and natural resources. Since the creation of Pakistan, the political culture of Balochistan has been in the hands of Baloch nationalists, backed by its centuries old sardari culture and tribal political system. The overall political culture in Balochistan is based upon a very narrow minded and unsophisticated approach and attitude due to chronic tendency of illiteracy and fundamental traditions of sardari system especially in rural areas. The award of political, economic and cultural rights has always been the only demand of all the Baloch political leaders. But there were no political dialogue in this regard between Central Government and Baloch leaders in the past, instead, they have always been suppressed by the military. The interests of military in Balochistan are always strategic rather than political. General Musharraf totally ignored the political demands and problems of Baloch people; instead he laid the emphasis completely on economic development. Balochistan, which was already facing the socio-economic problems of high rate poverty, illiteracy and unemployment and they had to suffer a lot in the years of Musharraf regime. The military operations against Baloch insurgents, biased policies and poor control resulted in extreme decline of Balochistan and became the main cause of significant turndown in social and political development. The involvement of military in political decisions and economic projects, without the approval of Baloch nationalists, worsen the political development and led to a grand militant Baloch rebellion.

**Key Words:** Balochistan, Military regime, Political culture & issues, Tribal politics, Baloch nationalism, Armed revolts, Political & economic development.

### **Introduction**

Balochistan is the largest province of Pakistan but at the same time, it has the smallest amount of population that constitutes only 5% of total population of Pakistan. Balochistan's geographical area spreads over 347,190 sq. kilometers, which forms 43.6 per cent of the total area of Pakistan. This largest province is among the least literate and least developed areas. It became a part of Pakistan on August 14, 1947 and got the status of province in 1972.

The location of Balochistan connects Iranian Plateau with South East Asia, Central Asia to its long coast line of the Arabian Sea and makes this region geographically an important place. Balochistan is a mountainous desert area, which shares borders with Iran, Afghanistan and on its Southern Boundary is located the Arabian Sea with strategically important port of Gwadar on the Makran Coast, which is a direct approach to the Strait of Hormuz. Historically Balochistan's western region was the southern part of Sistan and Baluchestan province in Iran. In the east, was Pakistani Balochistan and in the northwest, the Helmand province of Afghanistan existed. The Gulf of Oman is located on its southern border. It shares borders with all the other three provinces of Pakistan, North West Frontier Province (NWFP now KP province) through Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA) in the north, Punjab in the extreme north east and Sindh in east.

### **Brief political history of Balochistan**

There were four princely states under the British Raj, three states Makran, Las Bela and Kharan were attached to Pakistan in 1947 after independence (Hasnat, 2011: 78). At that time one part of Balochistan was known as the British Balochistan consisted of Quetta, Pishin, Zhob, Loralai and Lasbela and the second part was known as native Balochistan constituting Kalat, Kharan and Makran. Makran was a small district of Balochistan, around Gwadar. Gwadar used to be a part of Oman until Pakistan purchased it in September 1958 ('Balochistan Problems and Solutions', 2011) and it became a part of Balochistan in 1977.

After Pakistan's creation in 1947, the new state had to face uprising from Baloch nationalists of Kalat who were trying to secede in 1948 and 1958. The movement gained energy by the time and created a regular political chaos; the government of Pakistan had to launch a military operation in 1973 against the insurgents and imposed heavy attacks on the Baloch separatists with the help of Iran. The movement was suppressed with the imposition of martial law in 1977. But the nationalist-separatist groups again became active with the invasion of Afghanistan in 2001 and the war in North-West Pakistan worsen the situation of conflict, and resulted in the killings of non-Baloch settlers in Balochistan by separatists since 2006.

Since Balochistan is the largest territory of Pakistan, it holds a huge amount of oil, gas and other mineral resources, and is an exclusive economic zone of Pakistan which spreads over 180,000 square kilometers potentially rich in oil, gas and minerals like gold, chromite, copper, iron and marble. There are two very important naval bases of Pakistan that are located at Gwadar and Omara. Gwadar, as an alternative to the Karachi port is of significant strategic importance to Pakistan, with Chinese involvement (Grare, 2006: 4-5). Balochistan provides 49% of Pakistan's energy requirements as well as Balochistan's natural gas production provide 36% of Pakistan's total gas production. (ICG, 2006: 16). Balochistan has always remained politically less important. The stronghold of Central Government

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and the unacquainted style of the decision-making process have alienated the people of Balochistan. There have been four insurgencies in Balochistan; in 1948, 1958, 1962 and 1973; and four military operations have been conducted against Baloch nationalists but they all resulted in a worse chaos and enhanced the sense of deprivation, disaffection and disappointment in the Baloch people.

The announcement of Gwadar mega project in 2001 and the assassination of Nawab Akbar Bugti by Pakistani military forces in 2006, ignited Baloch nationalism again and gave it the form of a separatist movement which soon turned into a fight for an independent Balochistan and the province is facing another rebellion by Balochi nationalists groups such as the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA), the Baloch Republican Army (BRA) and the Baloch Liberation Front (BLF). These militant groups have been fighting for their political and economic rights according to the 1973 Constitution.

During 2011-2014, many mega projects worth billions of rupees in collaboration with foreign countries were launched for economic development of Balochistan, construction of mega Gwadar Port is the most prominent and significant of all, but the plan to establish military cantonments at Khuzdar, Gwadar, Dera Bugti and Kohlu, and involvement of other countries, created an impression on Baloch Nationalists that the development was to be achieved by keeping Baloch people suppressed and under pressure and the influence of foreign communities in these projects may harm and damage the basic Baloch National Identity.

### **Baloch political attitude & approach**

The political culture and behavior is normally determined by the climatic conditions and geographical location of a region. The extreme geographical features of Balochistan such as mountains, plains, coastal areas and extreme weather conditions in different parts of this land have a major role in the formation of political attitude and character of people living in various areas. According to the variation in culture due to different climatic and geographic location, the Baloch people are divided into following six main cultural units (Khan, 1996:264).

- I. Southern coastal area of Makran
- II. Western areas of Chaghi and Kharan
- III. Eastern Chaghi, Kalat, Khuzdar and Bolan Pass
- IV. Kachchi, Sibi, Southern Naseerabad and Lasbela
- V. Northern Naseerabad and Marri-Bugti areas
- VI. Quetta city

The overall political culture in Balochistan is based upon a very narrow minded and unsophisticated approach and attitude due to chronic tendency of illiteracy and fundamental traditions of Sardari system especially in rural areas.

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However, the diversity in geographic location and culture is a key factor in the formation of various different political attitudes. Therefore, the political approach and attitude, varies from one cultural unit to the other. The population of Marri-Bugti areas and Naseerabad is fully under the control of their tribal chiefs and do not know much about their political and basic rights. In fact, they have no awareness about their individual and collective social rights. They have learnt to follow the instructions and orders from their tribal sardars, and are supposed to obey them just like puppets.

The political system in rural or tribal structure is heavily influenced by tribal elites who do not allow their people to deviate from the prevailing old traditions. The other cultural units comparatively have some awareness about their rights but they are still bound to remain within the limits of their social norms and traditions. Historically, the population of Balochistan is comprised of two major ethnic groups, the Baloch and the Pakhtuns. The Pakhtun community is distinct from Baloch in their political approach due to a different cultural background and traditions.

### **Political strains in Balochistan**

All the Baloch uprisings against Central Government, are nothing but a revolt against an unfamiliar culture and political and administrative structure; and a forceful movement for their cultural, social, political and economic rights. Unfortunately, people of Balochistan could never be accommodated in the policy making process, and always been under-represented. Although, the Senate of Pakistan provides representation for all provinces but it does not has the power of taking financial and political decisions. These duties are performed by the National Assembly where Balochistan has only 14 seats out of 342. There are 30 districts in Balochistan; but the divisions of constituency according to the population; confined the seats to only fourteen, therefore, the Baloch are not represented in majority.

### **Political issues**

The political issues revolve around the economic exploitation of strategic and natural resources especially when the local people do not benefit from their own resources. The best example in this regard is the discovery of Sui gas in 1952, which was discovered in the Bugti area by Burma Shell and under the India Mining Act 1935; Balochistan was entitled to get five percent of the revenue. But when Nawab Akbar Bugti, the then defense minister of Pakistan, demanded the due amount, he was told by legislation that all resources above and underground belong to God and the state. (The Daily Times, 2012, Oct. 10) Nawab Akbar protested against the injustice and resigned.

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Due to the agitation caused by Bugti tribesmen, Burma Shell signed a rent agreement with Bugti. The deal continued till 2005 and then Musharraf ordered Pakistan Petroleum Limited to stop the rent. That step created tensions between Bugti and Musharraf. (The Daily Times, 2012, Oct. 10) The matters related to sui gas such as revenues, compensation, employment, gas generating and distribution companies; remained the causes of tension between Bugti and the Federal Government for many years.

The governments of Benazir Bhutto, Nawaz Sharif and General Pervez Musharraf, all were of the view that Nawab Bugti was obtaining money from Central Government on behalf of the Bugti workers at gas plants but actually he was utilizing that amount to blast the gas pipelines whenever the central government was not ready to comply with his wishes (Laif and Hamza, 2009: 66).

However, the award of political, economic and cultural rights, has always been the only demand of all the Baloch political leaders. But there were no political dialogue in this regard between Central Government and Baloch leaders in the past instead they have always been suppressed by the military, and the demand for autonomy turned into the demand for the right to self-determination and total separation from Pakistan. The interests of military in Balochistan are always strategic rather than political for many reasons:

- The coastline of Balochistan has three naval bases and the Gwadar Port is the most significant route for all the oil exports from the Gulf pass.
- Balochistan shares borders with two strategically significant countries; Iran and Afghanistan.
- Balochistan is a second line of defense against India and the vast deserted lands of Balochistan and the strategic resources are very attractive to army. Because the uninhabited lands are ideal and safe places for testing nuclear and other conventional weapons. The Baloch Sardars were offended with nuclear test at Chaghi Hills without consulting the provincial government (Laif and Hamza, 2009: 63).

The Baloch nationalists always blame military for treating Balochistan like a colony. The military has a record to change all the democratic and political set up of administrative institutions in its favor, which creates problems for the democratic government. Military's intervention in the political process has always been criticized and condemned by democratic governments. The Baloch are of the view that the military is the real ruler of Balochistan even during democratic regime. Pakistan is a multi-national state, not an identical one. This factor has never been recognized by the Pakistani political administration, which has always been trying for the implementation of a unitary political, cultural and socio-economic structure for all. Baloch are of the view that they have a different cultural and political history, and they should be treated as a distinct ethnic

community and should be given their due cultural and socio-economic rights which have always been denied by central government of Pakistan (The Daily Times, 2012, Oct.10).

### **Influence of Baloch tribal sardars on politics**

The society of Balochistan is mainly based on tribal system. The sardars of Baloch tribes are considered the elites of their society. The majority of Baloch sardars take an active part in the political process of Balochistan. There are three big tribes in Balochistan which have always been very prominent and influential in the political history of Balochistan. These are Marri, Mengal and Bugti tribes. All the sardars of these tribes are active political leaders and heads of their own political parties. They always participate in national and provincial level elections to win more strength and to attain the position of powerful political figures. The politically influential sardars are categorized as:

**I.** Religious minded leaders

**II.** Nationalist leaders

The areas of Chaghi, Kalat and Turbat are influenced with religious minded leaders whereas the nationalist leaders do not include religion in their political manifesto (Khan, 1996:269). They are so powerful personalities that they even do not have to ask for votes to win national or provincial elections. They are the masters of the fate of their people and they are sure of their victory because of their full control over their areas of jurisdiction. Sometimes, there are various areas which are inhabited by many tribes and all the tribal sardars participate in elections. Under such circumstances, usually, the leader of a larger tribe always wins by seeking support of other smaller tribes. Traditionally, all the sardars are highly conscious of maintaining their control over their territories and they strongly oppose any kind of change or development which may enlighten the people and give them awareness about their rights. That is the main reason that Baloch sardars are always blamed for keeping the Baloch people backward in terms of education and progress. Education brings drastic change in the thoughts and lifestyle, provides better opportunities for good income and thus an educated and enlightened population may learn to demand for their basic rights and may protest against inhuman attitude of Baloch sardars. So, the development projects and education is the biggest danger to the rule of the Baloch sardars. Although, the majority of Baloch tribal sardars is highly educated, but they never let their people get educated just to keep them dependent and suppressed forever.

### **Political attitude of major Baloch tribes**

Three Baloch tribes, The Bugti, the Marri and the Mengal tribes are the most prominent in terms of their political involvement and activities.

## **Bugti tribe**

Bugti tribe was headed by Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti and consisted of about 130 Baloch tribes of almost 180,000 members. They are basically mountain dwelling tribes. The tribe is again divided into the sub-tribes named Rahija Bugti, Masori Bugti, Mondrani, Shambani, Mothani, Pirozani and Kalpar Bugti. (Ahmed,1998:392). All these tribes were greatly influenced by Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti, who was a prominent Baloch nationalist. Nawab Akbar Bugti became the tribal leader in 1939. Akbar Bugti belonged to an educated and renowned family. Bugti studied at Oxford University and served at various significant and positions in Balochistan as governor, Chief Minister of Balochistan's first provincial government in 1988 and Federal Interior Minister. (Ahmed,1998:392). He was the founder and leader of a political party Jamhuri Watan Party (JWP) which was established in 1990. He was assassinated in August, 2006 by Pakistani armed forces during General Pervez Musharraf regime. It was Nawab Bugti who raised the issue of royalties of gas field in Dera Bugti, which fulfilled the 39 percent of the country's total gas needs. The issue of revenues generated by gas field in Dera Bugti has been the main cause of fifth ongoing armed conflict between the Baloch tribes and the Government of Pakistan since 2005.

After Akbar Bugti's death, his two sons, Nawabzada Talal Akbar Bugti, and Jamil Akbar Bugti and a grandson, Shah Zain Bugti refused to lay down weapons and continued on fighting for their rights and complete autonomy over Balochistan and its natural resources. His grandson, Nawab Sardar Brahamdagh Khan Bugti, is also considered the leader of Baloch nationalists. After the death of Nawab Bugti, Brahamdagh Khan decided to work for the political and economic rights of the Baloch people independent of Jamhuri Watan Party and he established another political party named Baloch Republican Party (BRP) to promote nationalist feeling among young Baloch to fight for their freedom and full control over their motherland resources.

## **Marri tribe**

Marri tribe is located on the Dera Ghazi border of Balochistan, native from the Kohlo district. Their chief was Nawab Khair Bakhsh Marri and founder of a separatist movement called Baloch Liberation Army. Marri became a Marxist politician in 1958. In 1981, he organized a guerilla force for liberation movement (Weaver, 2002:104). Marri Tribe is divided into more sub-tribes:

- Gazni
- Bejarani
- Zarkon
- Lohrani

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The total population of Marri tribe is around 98,000 and their relations with the Central Government have always been aggressive (Tahir, 2008, April.4). The political philosophy and approach of the Marri tribe is closer to the communists. The tribal chief, Nawab Khair Bukhs Marri, took refuge in Kabul, Afghanistan when he was unable to resist the Pakistani military in 1979. Nawab Marri, along with his men, stayed in Kabul till Russian withdrawal from Afghanistan. Khair Bakhsh Marri prefers armed struggle for independence of Balochistan. He lost his son Balach Marri in his fight for independence, who also was a leader of Baloch Liberation Army (Balochistan Express, 2007, Nov. 22).

## **Mengal tribe**

Ataullah Khan Mengal is the leader of the Mengal tribe, and has a central role in the politics of Balochistan. Unlike the Marri and Bugti tribes, the Mengals are less involved in militant confrontation, although he never condemned and criticized the armed resistance against Central Government of Pakistan. He has been an active person in armed struggle during the rule of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. Mengal exiled himself in 1980 because the domination of Punjabi community was not acceptable for him (Harrison, 1981:66).

Attaullah Mengal started his political career with National Awami Party led by a Pakhtun nationalist Wali Khan. Atualla Mengal became the first chief minister of Balochistan in 1972 to 1973. He started his nationalistic political career when under the banner of NAP he held a meeting of Pakhtun and Baloch nationalists in London and declared the independence of the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP now KP) and Balochistan. After that meeting, he was arrested in 1973 and the military operations were started in Balochistan to defeat the Baloch nationalists (BBC Urdu, February 11, 2005). After got released from jail, Atualla Mengal went to London, and in the mid 1990s, he returned back and established the Balochistan National Party in 1996 and his son Akhtar Mingal became Chief Minister of Balochistan. Akhtar Mengal was sent to jail by Pervez Musharraf in 2006 on account of terrorism and involvement with the present Baloch insurgency (Tahir, 2008, April.4).

## **Contribution of Baloch political parties in political process**

Political parties in Balochistan can be divided into three categories:

- Mainstream political parties
- Baloch and Pakhtun nationalist parties
- Religious political parties

## **Mainstream political parties**

Mainstream political parties in Balochistan include:

- Pakistan People's Party



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- Pakistan Muslim League-N
- Pakistan Muslim League-Q
- Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazl
- Jamaat-e-Islami

These parties believe in parliamentary politics as the only way to find better solution to the conflict and crisis between Baloch nationalists and federal government. All mainstream political parties except the Jamaat-e-Islami are included in the ruling combination of Balochistan. Mainstream political parties are usually in favor of Baloch demands.

### **Baloch nationalist political parties**

Baloch nationalist parties include:

- National Awami Party
- National Party
- Pakistan National Party
- National Party-Hai Group
- Baloch National Party (Mengal)
- Baloch National Party-Awami
- Jamhoori Watan Party-Aali
- Jamhori Watan Party-Talal
- Baloch National Movement

National Awami Party (NAP) was created in 1956 by Nauroz Khan which represents Baloch independence movement. Pakistan National Party (PNP) is a moderate Baloch group founded by Ghous Baksch Bizenjo in the 1970, Baloch National Movement (BNM) led by Ataullah Khan Mengal, Baloch National Party (BNP) was formed from the merging of the PNP and BNM in 1996 (Grare, 2006: 7-8). The BNP demands full provincial autonomy (Baluch, 2002:16).

Jamhori Watan Party was initially founded by Nawab Akbar Bugti. In 2003 Balochistan National Democratic Party (BNDP) decided to merge with the main faction of Balochistan National Movement (BNM) which was headed by Abdul Hayee Baloch. The merger of BNDP into BNM created a new party named National Party chaired by Dr. Abdul Hayee Baloch (Majeed, 2011:105). National Party is a strong opposition to the development projects in Balochistan like construction of Gwadar port, and it demands for Baloch rights to be the masters of their own political and economic affairs (ICG, 2006:10).

All these parties believe in Baloch nationalism and demand for political autonomy and full control of the natural resources of Balochistan. They also have a great sense of disliking for intrusion of central government in the provincial matters. This is an interesting fact that the Baloch nationalists have traditionally been part of parliamentary politics and have been associated with mainstream

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politics at the provincial and federal level. About a decade ago, Baloch leaders like Nawab Akbar Bugti, Nawab Khair Bux Marri and Sardar Ataullah Mengal were part of the parliamentary procedure. There are some conflicts and differences found between and among Baloch tribal leaders and their political nationalist parties. Mengal tribal chief Ataullah Mengal and Akhtar Mengal believe in parliamentary politics, they have a rejection against violent politics and try to remain within the structure of the federation. Khair Bukhs Marri believes in fighting for a separate homeland with the help of violent and armed reactions against government. Interestingly, Marri's son, Changez Marri is a member of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz. The grandson of Akbar Bugti, Brahamdagh Bugti demands an independent Balochistan through armed insurgency while Bugti's sons Talal and Aali, prefer parliamentary politics. Both Talal Bugti and Aali Bugti are heads of their own splinter groups of Jamhoori Watan Party. While Brahamdagh Bugti leads his own political party under the title of Baloch Republican Party (Majeed, 2011:104).

### **Pakhtun political parties**

There are two prominent Pakhtun political parties:

- Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party
- Awami National Party

Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party was created by Abdul Samad Khan Achakzai (Majeed, 2011:106) in 1987. The concern of Pakhtun political parties is rooted in Pakhtun nationalism. These parties are of the view that Baloch and Pakhtuns are two nations in Balochistan. Pakhtuns have their own unique and separate culture, language, identity and particular areas of intense inhabitants. The main cause behind the formation of PKMAP was a dispute between a Pakhtun leader Khan Abdul Samad Khan and Baloch leader Khair Bakhsh Marri on elevating Balochistan as an administrative province. PKMAP strongly advocates the belief that there should be a separate province for Pakhtuns or they may be merged with Pakhtun majority in NWFP (Shahid, 2002: 79-81). Pakhtun nationalists support Baloch ideology and struggle for provincial political and economic autonomy but reject the use of violent means.

### **Religious political parties**

The major parties include:

- Jammiat-e-Ulema-e Islam
- Jammiat-e-Ulema-Pakistan

Religious political parties do not oppose the struggle of the Baloch people based on the ideology of nationalism but mostly they do not support their militant

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actions. They promote the theory of nationalism which is based on Islam, not on ethnicity.

**Impact of Baloch militant organizations on political environment**

There are many insurgent groups in Balochistan:

- Baloch Republican Army (BRA)
- Baloch People's Liberation Front (BPLF)
- Popular Front for Armed Resistance (PFAR)
- Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA)
- Balochistan Liberation Front (BLF)
- Lashkar-e- Balochistan
- Jhalawan Baloch Tigers
- Baloch Musallah Difai Organization (BMDO)
- The Baloch Haq Talwar (BHT)
- Balochistan Students Organization (BSO)

BLA is the most famous nationalist group which strongly demands separation of Balochistan and along with other militant organizations like Balochistan Liberation Front (BLF), Balochistan Republican Army (BRA), Lashkar-e-Balochistan and Jhalawan Baloch Tigers have been resisting against the Central Government (Iqbal, 2008:2). These groups or parties are called responsible for attacks on gas pipelines, power transmission lines, security check posts, security forces, railway tracks, government offices, official residences and civilians ('Balochistan Problems and Solutions', 2011). In 2010, Baloch Liberation Army, Baloch Liberation Front, Baloch Republican Army, Lashkar-e-Balochistan and Baloch Musallah Difai Organization were banned by the Government (Sial and Basit, 2010:20).

The Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) is led by Marri chiefs and has objectives that are based on demands for an independent state or more authority over Balochistan. BLA considers government's projects such as Gwadar Port as an opportunity for the Punjabi community to overpower the Baloch nation. BLA is largely supported by Baloch people from Afghanistan and Iran. In 2006, General Pervez Musharraf put a ban on the BLA as a terror organization. (The Nation, 2006, April.10). The Baloch Haq Talwar (BHT) is also headed by the Khair Bux Marri to resist the military rule in Balochistan. The Government of Pakistan has accused his son, Balach Marri for the insurgency of 2005 (Andley, 2006:6).

The Baloch Republican Army is led by Brahumdagh Khan Bugti. Brahumdagh Khan Bugti is a prominent Baloch leader. He is the grandson of Nawab Akbar Bugti. After the split of Jamhoori Watan Party, Brahumdagh Khan Bugti formed his own faction; Baloch Republican Party. After the death of Akbar Bugti in 2006, he escaped to Afghanistan where he stayed for many years then he got asylum in Switzerland in 2011. Baloch Republican Party has been financing and heading terrorist activities in Balochistan (The Dawn, 2012, April.6). Baloch

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Liberation Front is led by Mengal tribes and has strong influence in Awaran, Makran and Quetta, Amir Nasir son of Mengal is the founder of the BLF. Lashkar-e-Balochistan, subjugated by a sub-tribe of Mengals, is activated in Lasbela, Makran, Khuzdar, Kalat and Quetta districts. Lashkar-e-Balochistan is following an anti-state plan, it was created to contradict the objectives of BLA and BLF and to enhance the authority of Mengals. Baloch Musallah Difai Organization (BMDO) is an anti-separatist organization which was founded by Naseer Mengal, the chief of a Mengal sub-tribe, to counter the influence of Attaullah Mengal (Sial and Basit, 2010:20). BMDO came in the view after the murder of Secretary-General of Balochistan National Party; Habib Jalib. It is active in Quetta and Khuzdar (Almeida, Dawn, July 25, 2010). Balochistan Students Organization is a political wing of Baloch youngsters. BSO was founded in 1967 and supports the cause of an independent Balochistan. Somehow the people associated with BSO are involved in aggressive activities. BSO does not take part in elections. Some of its branches are linked National Party and Balochistan National Party (PIPS, 2009: 109-110). In the beginning, BSO was under influence of Marxist-Leninist philosophy. Shah Muhammad Marri, a prominent Baloch leader, started a campaign for an amalgamation of Baloch nationalism and the Marxism. He introduced the guerilla fighting known as Pararis. These Pararis were greatly involved in violent activities during the years from 1969 to 1972 (Breseeg, 2004:340). The BSO is divided into three main wings:

- BSO-Azad (Independent)
- BSO-Pajar, or Bajar
- BSO- Mutahidda (United)

BSO-Pajar and BSO-United are the student wings of Balochistan National Party and National Party. BSO-Azad is an independent wing and is not aligned with any political organization. BSO-Azad ideologically supports armed struggle and activities of Baloch Liberation Army and Baloch Republican Army. BSO-Azad was formed in 2006 and is a result of an alliance of three wings of this organization, BSO-Mutahidda, headed by Dr. Imdad Baloch, BSO-Mengal, of Amanullah Baloch, and BSO-Hai group, of Asif Baloch. The BSO-Azad is active in those areas which are under the influence of nationalist political parties. Being a student organization, BSO has developed a very strong campaign for an independent Balochistan in colleges, universities and other institutions of higher education in Balochistan (Sial and Basit, 2010:28).

## **Religious sectarian groups and impact on political environment**

In Balochistan, many religious sectarian groups are present which are accused of being involved in militant and violent activities in the name of religion. These sectarian groups include Afghan and Pakistani Taliban known as Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), al-Qaeda, Lashkar-e-Janghvi (LeJ), Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan

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(SSP), Imamia Student Organization, (ISO) and Sipah-e-Muhammad are established in Balochistan (Rana, The News, July 29, 2012) another ethno-sectarian group Jundullah is also active in Balochistan (Sial and Basit, 2010:21). These religious organizations follow their own agenda based on religious ideologies that is somehow different than that of Baloch cause of struggle for independence. "Their presence is partly the result of Pakistani security agencies pushing them there from Punjab, partly a result of a vast network of Deobandi madrassas, and partly a consequence of the Islamization policies pursued by the federal state since the 1970s. At the same time, some analysts credit the Afghan refugee camps in the province as a key source of recruits for the Taliban." (Grare, 2013:17). The close proximity of Quetta to the Afghan border provides opportunity to Afghan refugees to Baloch region. The movement of Taliban between Pakistan and Afghanistan is very easy and unchecked. The areas of Nawankilli, Khurtabad, Pakhtunabad, Killi Khotik Chashma and Killi Raiti Bulledi in Quetta have large number of Afghans (The News, 2010, July. 27). The presence of Taliban is much distinct in Chaman, Khurtabad and Gulistan areas located on the border of Quetta. Afghans population constitutes almost thirty percent of total population (Sial and Bast, 2010:23).

Pakistani Taliban emerged in Balochistan in 2009. They do not admit their association with the banned organization of Pakistani Taliban, Tehrik e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). TTP claims to have an agenda to fight against only non-Muslims foreign forces that attack and occupy Islamic countries. The TTP rejects armed struggle against Pakistani security forces and law-enforcement agencies rather they show their enmity only against the enemies of Islam (The News, 2009, March .4). Jundullah is an anti-Shia militant squad which is based in the Iran bordering Chagi, Kharan, Panjgur, Kechand and Gwadar (The Daily Times, 2007, April.5). Jundullah identifies itself similar to anti-Shia groups in Balochistan such as Lashkar-e-Jhangvi and Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan to suppress the Shia Muslims of Balochistan. Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) and the Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP) are two major anti-shia groups and largely supported in Balochistan. LeJ was actually based in Afghanistan but after the destruction of their camps in Kabul and Kandhar by US forces in 2001, the moved to Balochistan and settled down in Quetta. SSP is a supporter of LeJ and provides support for sectarian insurgents of Lashkar-e-Janghvi. The Imamia Student Organization is popular among Shia youth and is playing its role in sectarian violence (The Friday Times, 2012, Aug. 3).

**Political environment in Balochistan during military regime of  
General Pervez Musharraf**

During Musharraf Regime, the politics of Pakistan has been in the hands of three different rulers. From 1999 to 2008, political system remained ceased during the

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rule of Pervez Musharraf. After the general elections of 2008, Pakistan Peoples' Party got a chance to form central government.

After the fourth Baloch insurgency of 1973-77 during Bhutto era, the situation of Balochistan remained slightly peaceful due to the strategic policies of reconciliation by Gen. Zia ul Haq. This peace lasted for about twenty five years; even the regime of democratic rule of PPP and PML (N) during the 80's and 90's, did not witness any uncontrollable violence in the province. The angry Baloch nationalist leaders started to take part in national and provincial politics, though they never backed out of their basic demands. Many prominent and offensive Baloch Sardars rendered their cooperation to the Central Government for the betterment of political situation in Balochistan. Two major political parties were established during the democratic era; Jamhuri Watan Party (JWP) by Nawab Akbar Bugti and Balochistan National Party (BNP) by Sardar Mengal.

But the period of democratic government could not remain stable due to challenging and difficult political circumstances. On 12 October, 1999, Military General Pervez Musharraf dismissed the democratically elected government of Nawaz Sharif and imposed martial law in the country. The political process was ceased once again and the Baloch nationalists completely rejected military rule. Pervez Musharraf imposed emergency and declared himself Chief Executive of Pakistan, he put ban on all the political activities and political parties of Pakistan and introduced the policy of devolution to centralize the powers (Ali, 2012:172). The Constitution of Pakistan was abandoned and suspended, National Assembly, Senate and all provincial assemblies were dissolved. In August, 2002, he introduced LFO (Legal Framework Order) to introduce more changes into the constitution of Pakistan to get strength as the President of Pakistan. Through LFO, he assigned the authority of dissolving national and provincial assemblies. In addition, he also got the power of appointing provincial governors and got control over Election Commission of Pakistan too (Askari, 2013:28). All these steps were taken to assure his victory in next general elections. Though, initially he did not show any intentions of holding new elections in ninety days as per policy. On October 17, 1999 he addressed the nation on television and presented his seven points as an agenda of his government (Ali, 2012:173). These points are as under:

- I.** Reshaping the nation's confidence and uplift of the moral of people
- II.** Disparity removal between the provinces to achieve the goal of national integration.
- III.** Rebuilding investing policies to accelerate the economic condition of Pakistan
- IV.** Preservation of law and order and provision of justice
- V.** Removal of political elements and activities from key institutions
- VI.** Decentralization of powers to the masses
- VII.** Introduction of a quick process of accountability for a corruption free society.

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Musharraf totally ignored the political demands and problems of Baloch people; instead he laid the emphasis completely on economic development. Balochistan, which was already facing the socio-economic problems of high rate poverty, illiteracy and unemployment, had to suffer a lot in the years of Musharraf regime. The military operations against Baloch insurgents, biased policies and poor control resulted in extreme decline of Balochistan and became the main cause of significant turn down in social and political development (The Dawn, 2008, Nov.2).

### **Triggers of tension between Musharraf and Baloch nationalists**

#### **Construction of Gwadar Port and mega development projects**

Musharraf started many mega development projects in Balochistan such as Gwadar port, Mirani dam, coastal highway, cantonments and the mining of copper and gold, but due to the defected and improper policies and management, these projects did not improve the economic as well as political stability of Balochistan as the development can only be achieved through political stability, trusted local participation, education, employment opportunities, increased income and peace. Musharraf believed in the forceful development instead of participatory development, and that manner was never acceptable for Baloch nationalists. Musharraf tried to bring development in the region by the establishment of military cantonments and check posts to suppress the politically susceptible Baloch people (The Dawn, 2008, Nov.2) which gave rise to chronic and historical grudge of Baloch nationalists against military and became the root cause of another Baloch revolt. The tension between the government and nationalist Baloch people provoked with the announcement of mega developmental projects especially the construction of Gwadar Port with Chinese involvement and assistance, because the commencement of this project opened the roads for political migration from other provinces and from China in Balochistan. The influx of Pakhtun, Punjabi and other foreigners in Balochistan was viewed as an intended effort to marginalize the Baloch in their own land (Bansal, 2006:50) so the Baloch Sardars strongly opposed and rejected the construction of Gwadar Port.

#### **Clash of economic interests with non-Baloch communities**

The issues such as the demand for provincial autonomy, larger share of revenue and development funds, payment of insufficient gas royalty, lack of economic development, proper political representation and control over the natural resources have always been major causes behind clash between Baloch people and all the democratic and military governments. The announcement of new mega infrastructures and proposed industrial zones, opened doors to qualified and skilled workers and labor from Punjab, Sindh and other areas of Pakistan, in addition,

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Musharraf government awarded major work orders to people from Punjab and Sindh provinces. Since Musharraf took hold of the government, the Baloch leaders have been feeling insecure due to the army cantonments and the mega projects, especially the Gwadar port. The Baloch nationalist leaders viewed it suspiciously as: "In the name of gigantic projects is a plan under way to settle the Punjabis in Balochistan," (Laif and Hamza, 2009: 63). The heavy influx of the Punjabis, Pakhtuns, Sindhis and Chinese work forces increased the level of apprehensions about the intentions of government. The already under stress Baloch people; developed a sense of rivalry regarding their economic interests with the Chinese and other Pakistanis. Moreover, many ex-servicemen were appointed in tribal areas and government inducted more Pakhtuns from NWFP to Quetta. Some Baloch Sardars were bribed and disinherited by wealthy Punjabis and army personnel. Musharraf failed to formulate an acceptable procedure for royalties. (Laif and Hamza, 2009: 63) All these steps were alarming to Baloch leaders as they could lose their hold over their own region.

### **Musharraf's support for US War on Terrorism**

The incident of 9/11 2001 totally changed the scenario of world politics. The US government confidently put all the blame on Afghan Taliban and decided to attack Afghanistan and announced to commence a war against terrorism. Pakistan was also forced to support and provide assistance to US as Pakistan was the neighboring country of Afghanistan and could provide the easiest access to Afghanistan. Moreover, Pakistan was among those few countries that had recognized the Taliban government in Kabul (Khan, 2011:94). Another phase of tension between Musharraf and Baloch nationalists started when Musharraf independently allowed US to use the areas of Pasni, Gwadar, Dalbandin and Jacobabad as their basis to fight against Afghan Taliban without consulting Baloch leaders.

### **Involvement of military in political decisions of Balochistan**

Moreover, Musharraf took another dictatorial decision to involve army for the safety and security of Chinese and other non-Baloch workers at the construction site for Gwadar Port. The Baloch nationalists flared up with that decision and their resistance got increased. The involvement of military in political decisions without the prior approval of Baloch nationalist worsen the tension and led to sporadic attacks on military installations, gas pipelines, foreigners, army check posts, and on civilians.

### **Devolution of Power Plan (2002)**

In 2000, Musharraf initiated a policy to transfer administrative and financial power to local government. That policy was called political devolution. The policy was



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introduced to give strength to local control and accountability and to provide power to backward people by bringing them into mainstream, the policy of devolution weakened and destabilized the already established political parties on national and provincial levels. With the result, the provincial governments lost their power and control over the provinces (ICG, 2004:6). The devolution policy was less helpful in minimizing corruption and enhancing democracy, instead it made military rule much stronger and dominant. Subsequently, the risk of internal conflicts increased to a remarkable level.

Under the Devolution of Power Plan, the new local governments were to be elected through voting. District and sub-district governments were established in 101 districts to work under Provincial Local Government Ordinance 2001. Every district had a Nazim and Naib Nazim; equal to Mayor and Deputy Mayor, an elected council and administration. (ICG, 2004:i) In 2001 Pervez Musharraf announced the Local Government Ordinance, 2001, the new political set up was a step towards the establishment of a powerful representative local government, and initially the district Nazim was given full authorities over police, district administration and revenue. The post of Nazim was equivalent to chief minister of the districts. This new policy was a replica of the One Unit Policy implemented by General Ayub Khan in 1950s, and just like that, Musharraf's policy of devolution was also disliked and rejected by Baloch Sardars.

### **General Elections of 2002 and political scenario of Balochistan**

General Pervez Musharraf got his position of President of Pakistan verified through Supreme Court of Pakistan under the 'Law of Necessity' and gained above mentioned powers to amend the constitution for the security of his president ship in future. Being the president of Pakistan, he was asked by the Supreme Court of Pakistan to hold general elections within a period of three years (Khan, 2011:94). General Musharraf then introduced various controversial amendments to the constitution after the decision of the Supreme Court. The notification for general elections was issued in August, 2002 and the polling day was fixed on 10 October, 2002 (Rizvi, 2013:28). This witnessed drastic change in political scenario and attitude of political parties throughout Pakistan, especially in Balochistan. The US war on terrorism and support provided to US by Pervez Musharraf caused great frustration among the Pakhtun population of NWFP (now KP) and Balochistan. The Baloch and Pakhtuns; both from Balochistan and NWFP (now KP) have always been very close to Afghanistan due to Baloch and Pakhtun community in that neighboring country.

Therefore, to show the unity with Afghan brothers, and to oppose Musharraf's war against Taliban, thirty five political and religious parties and groups formed the Pak-Afghan Defense Council (PADC). The three major religio-political parties of PADC, Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam (F), Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam (S) and Jamaat-i-Islami, and their Pakhtun leaders were in the favor of Taliban regime in

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Afghanistan and had strong ideological and political affiliations with them (Khan, 2011:95). PADC strongly and jointly disapproved Musharraf's policy of war against Taliban. In response to their protest, Musharraf started a concentrated effort against the major religio-political parties and blamed them for being involved in terrorist activities along with Taliban. Maulana Samiul Haq of JUI (S) the Chairman of PADC insisted upon the military government to end the crackdown against religious parties (The News, 2002, Jan. 13). In January 2002, General Pervez Musharraf banned the six religious groups of different sects for their association with terrorists in and outside the country. These included:

- Sipah-i-Sahaba Pakistan,
- Tehrik-i-Jaferya Pakistan,
- Lashkar-i-Jhangvi,
- Jaish-i-Muhammad,
- Lashkar-i-Tayaba and
- Tehrik-i-Nifaz-i-Shariat-i-Muhammadi (The News, 2002, Jan.17).

These organizations were branches of the major religio-political parties so this ban was strongly criticized by PADC. In May 2002, Muttahidda Majlis-i-Amal (MMA) was formed by PADC as an electoral union to contest Elections of 2002 (Khan, 2011:95). MMA included six political parties including:

- Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam (Fazalur Rehman Group),
- Jamaat-i-Islami,
- Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam (Samiul Haq Group),
- Jamiat Ulema-i-Pakistan,
- Markazi Jamiat Ahle Hadith Pakistan and
- Islami Tehrik-i-Pakistan.

Maulana Shah Ahmad Noorani became the president of MMA. It was announced by the alliance that MMA was formed to introduce the concepts of freedom and unity in real manner; and a pure Islamic and democratic system will be formulated in Pakistan.

## **Participation of political parties**

- Before the elections, Musharraf established another faction of Pakistan Muslim League in his own favor and gave it the name of PML-Q. Q stood for Quaid-e-Azam and Musharraf promoted his party as the biggest leading political party of Pakistan. Perhaps he was inspired of a previous army ruler, General Ayub Khan (Gilani, 2013:61) but unlike Ayub Khan, he did not become the president of PML-Q, instead he chose a prominent and strong politician, Ch. Shujaat Hussain to hold the seat of president of PML-Q. This party was the biggest supporter for Musharraf in the elections 2002 and was often called "The King's Party".
- Pakistan Peoples' Party and Muslim League-N also participated in the absence of their leaders; Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif respectively.

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- Four other small parties united as National Alliance (NA), which included Millat Party, National People's Party, Sindh Democratic Alliance and Sindh National Front.
- The alliance of six major religio-political parties; MMA; has been described above.
- From Balochistan, Balochistan National Movement (BNM), Jamhuri Watan Party (JWP) and Balochistan National Party (BNP), Balochistan National Democratic Party (BNDP) and Balochistan National Congress (BNC) participated (<http://ecp.gov.pk/GE/2002/GE2002.aspx>).
- In the absence of their leadership, the PPP established a new party as Pakistan People's Party Parliamentarians, (PPPP) to participate in elections without any legal complications. PPPP was headed by Makhdoom Amin Fahim (Rizvi, 2013:29).

### **Influence of military on election process**

The campaign for 2002 Elections could not be justified as a fair process as Musharraf had been openly criticized for manipulating the whole procedure in favor of PML (Q) and National Alliance (NA) for his own victory. It is said that military regime of Musharraf pressurized the politicians to join PML (Q) to gain majority in king's party. The main stream political parties like PPPP and PML (N) were being disturbed by putting different blames through NAB to level the grounds in favor of the PML (Q). The national television was also projecting PML (Q). Election Commission of Pakistan itself was campaigning for the PML (Q) by showing its symbol in the sample polling advertisement in the national media (Khan, 2011:100). The Governors, Chief Ministers, Chief Secretaries, and some of the Nazims campaigned for the PML (Q). It is reported that the offices of the Governors of Punjab and Sindh were working as campaign Cells for Musharraf's party ("Election Observer Group Reports", 2006: 19-45). Different political parties blamed military government for harassing and arrest of their workers. It is widely believed that the elections were engineered by the military regime and had extraordinarily affected the electoral process for the October 2002 Elections. His aim was to form a parliament which would give all the powers and authority to the president-cum-army chief of Pakistan.

### **Election results and political atmosphere of Balochistan**

MMA successfully grabbed the attention of a large population including Pakhtuns, just because of its anti-US approach and promise of establishing a pure Islamic system in Pakistan. The MMA called the election as a referendum between the US agents (Musharraf Government) and Islamic forces and requested the people to vote for MMA to free the country from the US influence. MMA fielded 183 candidates for 272 seats of the National Assembly out of which 45 were returned.

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After computing the women's and minority seats, the total members of MMA were 59 in the house of 342. MMA got majority in provincial assemblies of NWFP (now KP) and Balochistan and emerged as the largest party of Balochistan with 13 seats. PML (Q) was the second largest party with 11 seats. The third largest group was of independents. The final party position of Balochistan Assembly showed that MMA got 18 seats adding the reserved seats and independents that joined MMA, as compared to 21 of PML (Q) in the house of 65 members. The Baloch ethnic parties like Balochistan National Party (BNP) and Jamhoori Wattan Party (JWP) could not be able to grab the attention of their voters and it was also an exceptional change in the political scenario of Balochistan. MMA exploited the Islamic sentiments of the Baloch and Pakhtun people, this was the biggest reason of MMA's success in Balochistan because MMA was the only party that was evidently opposing General Musharraf and his role in war on terror. Through MMA's success, people of Balochistan showed their mistrust upon General Musharraf and his policies regarding Afghanistan and US.

#### **National Assembly Seats from All Pakistan in Election 2002**

<b>Name of Party</b>	<b>Votes %</b>	<b>Seats Won</b>
PPPP	26	63
PML (Q)	26	78
PML (N)	12	15
MMA	11	45
MQM	3	13
Independent	9	28
All Others	13	30
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>272</b>

Source: Gilani, Ijaz Shafi, Interpretation, Part Two from "The First 10 General Elections of Pakistan; A Story of Pakistan's Transition From Democracy Above Rule of Law to Democracy Under Rule of Law 1970-2013". Islamabad: Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency. (PILDAT) p.62

#### **National Assembly Seats from Balochistan**

<b>Party</b>	<b>All Balochistan</b>		<b>Balochistan-1 Quetta Zone</b>		<b>Balochistan-2 Kalat and Makran Zone</b>	
	<b>Votes %</b>	<b>Seats</b>	<b>Votes %</b>	<b>Seats</b>		
<b>MMA</b>	22	6	38	4	11	2
<b>PML (Q)/ Others</b>	16	2	13	-	17	2
<b>JWP</b>	8	1	0	-	14	1
<b>PKMAP</b>	8	1	19	1	1	0
<b>BNP</b>	11	1	-	-	-	-
<b>Independent</b>	7	1	4	0	9	1

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<b>Regional/Others</b>	39	3	26	1	48	2
	<b>100</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>8</b>

Source: Gilani, Ijaz Shafi, Dr. (May 2013). (May 2013). Electoral Data: Its Deconstruction and Interpretation, Part Two from "The First 10 General Elections of Pakistan; A Story of Pakistan's Transition From Democracy Above Rule of Law to Democracy Under Rule of Law 1970-2013". Islamabad: Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency. (PILDAT) p-64

**Party Position in National Assembly 2002**

Sr. No.	Party		Seats Won
1	Pakistan Muslim League-Q	PML-Q	130
2	Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal	MMAP	59
3	Pakistan People's Party Parliamentary	PPPP	63
4	Pakistan Muslim League-N	PML-N	18
5	Muttahida Quomi Movement	MQM	18
6	Pakistan Peoples Party	PPP	19
7	National Alliance	NA	16
8	Balochistan National Party	BNP	1
9	Jamhuri Watan Party	JWP	1
10	Pakistan Awami Tehreek	PAT	1
11	Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf	PTI	1
12	Pakistan Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party	PPMAP	1
13	Independent Candidates	IND	<b>14</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>342</b>

Source: [http://www.geo.tv/election2008/statistics\\_links.html#2](http://www.geo.tv/election2008/statistics_links.html#2)

**Composition of Senate 2002**

Sr. No.	Province	General Seats	Women	Technocrats	Total
1	Islamabad	2	1	1	4
2	Punjab	14	4	4	22
3	Sindh	14	4	4	22
4	NWFP	14	4	4	22
5	Balochistan	14	4	4	22
6	FATA	8	0	0	8
<b>Total</b>		<b>68</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: <http://www.geo.tv/election2008/statistics.html>

**Formation of Government**

Pakistan Muslim League (Q) was the largest party in National Assembly with 118 seats. The second largest party was PPPP with 80 seats and third largest was the MMA with 59 seats. None of them was in a position to shape the government. MMA negotiated with PML (Q) to form combined government but they could not reach at any decision. The military regime tried to deal with MMA for the formation of central government but negotiations failed due to some major demands from MMA; firstly they demanded the post of prime minister and

secondly, they wanted a confirmation from General Musharraf that he would leave the seat of Chief of the Army Staff. The MMA also demanded the abolition of pro-US policies adopted by Musharraf and all those demands were not acceptable to General Musharraf for many reasons. Firstly, when Musharraf agreed to join hands with US in their war on terror, after 9/11, his alliance with a party having pure Islamic ideology and sense of hatred for US war against Afghanistan, would have create a negative impact on Pak-US relations, secondly MMA was demanding the post of Prime Minister for Maulana Fazalur Rehman which was never acceptable even on the national level. General Musharraf himself stated that the Maulana personally tried to convince him for the post of Prime Minister and assured a very friendly approach towards the US. Moreover he was also ready to lend a support against Al-Qaeda and all other extremists (Musharraf, 2006:175-176). General Musharraf wanted to make PML-Q the most powerful party as to form the supporting government. So efforts to win majority did not stop and PML-Q succeeded in gaining support from some independent members of National Assembly, some members from other different parties also agreed to co-operate with PML-Q. PML-Q also got the support of MQM, which had 17 National Assembly seats, in addition, the defectors from the mainstream party, PPPP were also approached to support PML-Q to form the central government and they succeeded in winning the support of 10 members of PPPP, from national assembly (Rizvi, 2013:30). PML-Q nominated Zafar ullah Jamali for the post of Prime Minister, the inauguration session of National Assembly was held on 16 November, 2002 and elected Mir Zafar ullah Jamali as the Prime Minister of Pakistan. The Balochistan Assembly was inaugurated on November 28 and Jam Mir Muhammad Yousaf, from PML-Q, took the oath as the head of an aliened government (Rizvi, 2013:31).

### **Detachment of Baloch tribal leaders from political process**

The three prominent Baloch Sardars; Ataullah Mengal, Nawab Khair Bukhsh Marri and Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti remained absent from political scenario during this period, their major emphasis was on their inter-tribal affairs or protest against military regime of Musharraf through other means instead of taking part in political process. Their absence and inactive role as political leaders created a vacuum in the political set up of Balochistan and provided golden opportunity to religious minded political parties to gain control over the political matters of Balochistan. Khair Bukhsh Marri, and Sardar Attaullah Mengal, had been in self exile, and Nawab Bugti had confined himself to Dera Bugti. During the absence of the former two leaders, Balochistan had been facing various tribal disputes and many tribal sardars were killed in clashes among various tribes (Baloch, 2002, Oct.18.The Dawn). When Marri and Mengal returned to Balochistan, they were expected to become more active political leaders, but those prevailing tribal disputes were more important to them so they devoted their time to the resolution of such clashes. Their absence from political scene caused many important

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developments. The religious parties had got a chance to establish themselves and they had also started influencing the areas of Baloch nationalists.

Nawab Bugti could very efficiently play a leading role in Baloch politics by uniting all groups of Baloch nationalists including Pakhtun nationalist community because he was equally honored by the Pakhtuns. But his political inactivity provided a chance to his opposite elements of creating problems for him by inciting inter tribal feuds. His appointments in tribal conflicts affected his political role and there was no other such influenced person who could re-unite the scattered nationalistic politics. Sardar Ataullah Mengal was disqualified from taking part in the 2002 election because he did not possess graduate degree, which was made mandatory by constitutional amendments to participate in elections. Nawab Marri did not pay much attention to politics when he returned from Afghanistan after fourteen years; he gave all his time to the rehabilitation of his companions. Moreover, he had to face a rebellion from a fraction of his own tribe; Bijarani Tribe; who had refused to accept Nawab Marri as their chief (The Dawn, 2002, Oct.18).

### **Akbar Bugti's 15 Point Agenda to Musharraf Government**

In 2004, the leader of Jamhoori Watan Party, and chief of Bugti tribe, Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti formulated a 15-point charter of demands on behalf of Baloch nationalists and forwarded it to National Security Council to resolve Balochistan all the issues. The 15-point demand included:

- i.** Provincial autonomy according to the will of the Baloch people.
- ii.** Baloch people should be considered as the real owners of their natural resources and their own affairs should not be interfered.
- iii.** Balochistan government should be given powers to deal with all the administrative, financial and planning matters and schemes related to mega projects including Gwadar and other infrastructure such as coastal-belt schemes.
- iv.** The revenue generated from mega projects should be totally at provincial government's disposal. Employment in the projects should be the right of the local population.
- v.** The establishment of army cantonments at resource rich areas should be abandoned and land acquired by force be returned to owners.
- vi.** Rectification of the revenue record.
- vii.** Senate should represent the four federating units and inclusion of Islamabad and FATA in the Upper House by canceling the amendments made during Zia ul Haq's regime.
- viii.** The levies force recruited by the ISI in the Marri area to suppress tribesmen should be disbanded.
- ix.** All armed forces from central Balochistan should be withdrawn.
- x.** The provincial government should control all civil armed forces.

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- xi.** The provincial assembly should be authorized to draw laws for Balochistan.
- xii.** In the federating units the federal law should not override the provincial laws.
- xiii.** Problems of gas companies should be resettled.
- xiv.** All prisoners kept under various political reasons allegations should be released. (The Dawn, 2004, Sep.22)

But General Musharraf, just like a military dictator, refused to negotiate over these points with Bugti and other Baloch Sardars, and preferred a forced implication of law and order through army actions and tried to resolve all the political issues by using power instead of peaceful talks.

### **Baloch armed revolt against Musharraf**

The harsh and non-cooperative attitude of Musharraf Government provided a strong cause of resistance to Baloch tribes, as a reaction, BLA launched a large scale militant movement and started attacks on government installations. The JWP leader Nawab Akbar Bugti considered army reaction as a matter of disrespect and an attack on their honor. So he fully supported the Baloch rebellions. The militant protest resulted in various attacks on military and Sui gas installations. In January 2005, the nationalists started to detain Sui gas field. The fight lasted for four days with heavy firing from both sides and Nawab Akbar Bugti supported banned groups. The situation got more tensed when Musharraf and Commander of the Paramilitary force were attacked by the insurgents during their visit to Kohlu, where a new army cantonment was to be established (Ahmad, Daily Times, 20 Dec. 2005). The military responded in a hostile way and Musharraf threatened Baloch Sardars, he said, "It is not the 70's and we will not climb mountains behind them, they will even not know what and from where something has come and hit them" (Zaidi, Herald, 2005). The Baloch Sardar, Mengal gave reply as: "It is not the 70's for us, it is also not the 70s for them. If there is any change, it will be for all. If we have to face severe consequences of change, then they will also not be in a comfortable position". (Hussain, News Line Magazine, 2005:23).

The same year, In December, BLA fired rockets on a meeting between Musharraf and some tribal chiefs in Kohlu. In response, the security forces attacked the Marri tribes and not only hurt Marri tribesmen but also damaged some area of Dera Bugti (Shahid, Daily Dawn. 19 Dec. 2005). The Baloch militants were viewed as challenging force to the writ of the government. The whole Balochistan came under the influence of their attacks. They blamed Musharraf for using poisonous gases to smash the Baloch militants. It is reported that at least six army brigades and paramilitary forces were involved in the operation against Baloch people with heavy ammunition such as combat jets, gunship helicopters and artillery to hammer Baloch militant camps (ICG, 2006:9).

### **Baloch Militant Attacks on Government Installations 2001-2011**



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<b>Year</b>	<b>Target Killing</b>	<b>Bomb Blast</b>	<b>Rocket Attacks</b>	<b>Sabotage Acts</b>
<b>2001</b>	19	42	22	9
<b>2002</b>	25	40	25	25
<b>2003</b>	20	33	30	30
<b>2004</b>	20	40	20	30
<b>2005</b>	40	69	30	40
<b>2006</b>	95	210	150	90
<b>2007</b>	90	250	140	110
<b>2008</b>	80	290	112	80
<b>2009</b>	203	340	280	103
<b>2010</b>	353	329	275	120

Source: Saeed, Rehana Hashmi, (2013) *The Politics of Ethnicity: An Issue to National Integration to Pakistan*, PhD Thesis, Department of Political Science, Punjab University, Lahore, Chapter 3, Page no. not available, accessed from [www.eprints.hec.gov.pk/10860](http://www.eprints.hec.gov.pk/10860) on 30 June 2015

**Killed and Injured Persons during 2001-2011**

<b>Year</b>	<b>No. of Attacks</b>	<b>Killed People</b>	<b>Injured People</b>
<b>2011</b>	640	710	853
<b>2010</b>	737	600	1117
<b>2009</b>	792	386	1070
<b>2008</b>	692	296	807
<b>2007</b>	536	224	564
<b>2006</b>	403	277	676
<b>2005</b>	154	92	190
<b>2004</b>	130	70	160
<b>2003</b>	100	65	165
<b>2002</b>	90	50	140
<b>2001</b>	10	45	100

Source: Saeed, Rehana Hashmi, (2013) *The Politics of Ethnicity: An Issue to National Integration to Pakistan*, PhD Thesis, Department of Political Science, Punjab University, Lahore, Chapter 3, Page no. not available, accessed from [www.eprints.hec.gov.pk/10860](http://www.eprints.hec.gov.pk/10860)

**Musharraf's Policy to Appease Baloch Wrath: The Relief Package 2005**

A significant step was taken in 2002 with the announcement of the Senate Committee on Balochistan to resolve the issues between government and Baloch Sardars. The objective behind the formation of the committee was to discuss matters ranging from security issues especially the de-escalation of the confrontation between security forces and Bugti tribal militias, to the other issues such as the jobs for local Baloch, renewal of royalties, provincial monetary awards, legal check on non-local land ownership, and the purchase of land for military cantonments. The parliamentary committees proceeded with the hope that the solution to all these various issues could be determined within the federal

frame (Gazdar, 2006:4100). In 2004, the Prime Minister Ch. Shujaat Hussain ordered the establishment of this committee to pay attention to the political demands and respond to the grievances of Baloch people. The result was a report that recommended significant changes in the government's military, political, economic, and energy policies regarding Balochistan ('Parliamentary Committee on Balochistan', 2005:9). The committee was formed to inspect the circumstances in Balochistan and to give suggestion for improvement. However, the report included many reforms regarding revenues, Gwadar Port, jobs and check posts. ('Senate of Pakistan', 2005:95-101).

The Baloch nationalists gave a profound response to the committee's report and a significant drop in insurgent violence was noticed. Although the representatives of Balochistan National Party, National Party and Jamhoori Watan Party boycotted the parliamentary committee's meetings because there was no clause to address the demand of Provincial Autonomy which was the nucleus issue. He said; 'the committee had vindicated their apprehensions about its incompetence as it had reiterated the Mushahid's report which was already made public and which offered only 'cosmetic resolutions' of the problem'' (The Dawn, 2015, June.24). The recommendations of the report were declared public in June, 2005 after several discussions with Baloch leaders. The approved recommendation were named as The Relief Package for Balochistan and included:

- A development package for the province worth Rs. 10 billion.
- The package includes Rs. 1 billion for hospitals, Rs. 2 billion for Sui, Rs.3 billion for Gwadar and Rs.4 billion for the improvement of Quetta.
- 5.4 percent of job quota in the federal government for Baloch people.
- In the job quota the people of Gwadar would be given first priority, then from Makran and then from entire Balochistan. The Baloch apprehension being outsiders' dominance in new jobs that are to be created by the mega projects currently under way in the Gwadar area, it has been suggested that the first preference for such jobs should be local candidates, and the second preference should be given to people of Mekran and other parts of Balochistan.
- Fishermen disturbed due to the construction at Gwadar, would be given proper compensations.
- Gas and petroleum royalty should be rewarded to the areas from where they were extracted.
- The royalty arrears, the volume of which is to be determined by the relevant provincial and federal authorities, be paid soon.
- Baloch people would be represented on the Board of Directors of the Oil and Gas Development Company and the Sui Southern Gas Company.
- 5.7 percent of all posts lying vacant with the Federal government should be filled with candidates from Balochistan in line with an earlier constitutional commitment
- A one-time waiver on gas charges would be provided in local areas and Balochistan is likely to have a share of more than Rs.6 trillion as arrears

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of gas royalty which would ultimately help develop civic facilities of the so far neglected areas.

- The Chief Justice of the Balochistan High Court would investigate the irregularity in the land Sale at Gwadar.
- The Coast Guards and Frontier Constabulary would only check smuggling of drugs and other goods in the border areas and all other check posts would be eradicated.
- To manage the affects of droughts, construction of new dams would be initiated including waiver of government dues (The Dawn, 2015, Jun. 24).

But these parliamentary recommendations could not be helpful enough to control outrageous Baloch militants as there was no proper implementation seen in this regard. Moreover the constant attacks by Baloch militants and counter attacks by military, had reached at its peak after a rape incident of a lady doctor by FC personnel in the same year. The violence and anger of Baloch people went out of control with the assassination of Nawab Bugti on 26 August 2006 by the military forces of Musharraf. This great incident brought a new and more powerful wave of aggressive revolt in Balochistan and Bugti's death made Baloch tribes more united and determined about their cause. He became the hero and symbol of Baloch resistance for their identity and independence. Consequently, the violence broke out across Balochistan the Musharraf government was still insisting to establish "the writ of the government" by using all means (The Dawn, 2006, Feb.4). This time the insurgency got support not only from the other tribes but most of the Baloch living in other countries were involved ideologically in their struggle for identity.

### **Amnesty Offer by Musharraf to Baloch insurgents**

When all the tactics applied by military failed to subdue the Baloch militants and their damaging attacks, Musharraf adopted a new policy to control the widespread insurgency by Baloch militant groups by taking a step towards the process of reconciliation and announced amnesty for all Baloch insurgents and showed his interest in peaceful talks with a promise that government would not take any action against all those Baloch insurgents willing to surrender. He stated: "Our doors are open to everybody willing to negotiate for peace and development in Balochistan, I would not beg anybody to come to the dialogue table, If somebody wants to meet me, he should come forward... I am ready to meet him," (Shahid, The Dawn, 2006, Dec.9) he stated that he wanted the development of neglected Balochistan. "And for the purpose, I am ready to hold talks with anybody, I don't believe in finding temporary solutions. I want permanent solutions to all issues," he said (Shahid, The Dawn, 9 Dec.2006).

## **Baloch response to Amnesty Offer**

But the political leaders and tribal Sardars of Balochistan rejected his offer because of his typical rude attitude as he warned them to be ready for more destruction by army in case they would not accept his offer of amnesty. The Baloch leaders viewed that kind of threat as an insult to their honor and dignity. Weapons are always considered a part of Baloch personal luggage and a sign of their honor. No serious efforts have been made by any government to de-weaponize the province in the past and it has always been a tradition of Baloch tribes to take refuge in the hills of Balochistan while protesting against government. According to Baloch tribes, the army itself was responsible for their armed protest by launching a military operation against Nawab Bugti, which resulted in his assassination and caused an extensive resentment against the military. The conditional offer of amnesty by Musharraf was viewed with great sense of hatred by many Baloch leaders as quoted in the national newspapers. Nawabzada Baramdagh Bugti, the grandson of Akbar Bugti and the founder of a split wing of Jamhori Watan Party; Baloch Republican Party; went to self-exile after that assassination of Akbar Bugti; rejected the offer and said: “The Baloch resistance is not confined to just two tehsils (in Balochistan). Militants are forcefully resisting government forces in vast areas of Balochistan, the rulers are trying to find a way to pull their forces out of the area because of the severe resistance being offered by Baloch insurgents” (Shahid, *The Dawn*, May 19, 2007). Mir Hasil Khan Bizenjo of the National Party declared that the suggestion of surrender was very annoying to Baloch people as they were offended with the tone adopted by Musharraf. The Baloch were struggling for their rights and Musharraf should not have treated them as foreign invaders by ordering them to surrender with the threat of terrible penalty. “Such threats are hurled only when someone is fighting a foreign enemy or those who are against the state. This is not the case in Balochistan. People are struggling for their legitimate rights, after the killing of Nawab Bugti, General Musharraf should have apologized to the nation, and especially to the Baloch people.” (Shahid, *The Dawn*, May 19, 2007). Almost all the political leaders and insurgent groups unanimously rejected the offer and were totally against the attitude adopted by Musharraf. They all were of the opinion that it was military that forced Baloch people to take up arms for their constitutional and legal rights. In a tribal society, everyone hates the word “surrender”. “If they are really sincere about resolving the Balochistan issue, they should hold meaningful negotiations with Baloch and Pakhtun leaders and settle all issues, otherwise, the situation would worsen. They are taking whimsical decisions without any respect for people’s will, now, the situation is beyond amnesty and such offers would not bring about any change.” (Shahid, *The Dawn*, May 19, 2007)

## **Indian interest in Balochistan during Musharraf Regime**

The political tensions and Baloch armed resistance affected condition of law and order in Balochistan and became a matter of attention on national, regional and international levels. The political unrest and insurgency created various challenges for Musharraf government, the conflict significantly influenced India-Pakistan relations as Pakistan has accused India of supporting the Baloch separatists (Akbar, 2014, Mar.11). The Baloch movement for an independent Balochistan put strategic impacts on neighboring states, especially India. The Indian interest and involvement in Balochistan increased, because the separation of Balochistan from Pakistan would be in great favor of India to establish her political, strategic and economic hegemony in the South Asian region.

This situation would bring histrionic changes in the economic, political, and strategic landscape of South and Southwest Asia because Balochistan is a potential economic advantage to Pakistan and without political stability in this region; it was not possible to succeed at even one of these mega projects. Additionally, an internal separatist movement among the Baloch was a good tool to threaten the existence of the Pakistani state itself.

Balochistan, with plenty of energy resources and trade routes, its unique and valuable situation, provided golden opportunity to India to initiate her regional play. The objectives India were to become economically more powerful to get global hegemony by controlling the major portion of world's energy resources. Demand for energy supply of China, India, and other Asian countries is quickly increasing, so it is the biggest requirement of time to spread influence over energy resources, transit corridors and important land and naval trade links. For this purpose, Balochistan was the main focus of India for a geo-political manipulation.

During Musharraf regime, Indian involvement in Balochistan was noted and pointed out many times by the government and admitted by the prominent Baloch leaders. Indian involvement in Balochistan was blamed for supporting Baloch insurgents in order to deal not only with the Chinese influence in Balochistan but to destroy Pakistan politically and economically.

Development of Gwadar Port was the bone of contention, not only between Baloch Leaders and Musharraf Government but an alarming situation for India too, a threatening factor to Indian trade through Indian Ocean. Gwadar would harm the money-making interest of India by enabling Pakistan to implement vast control over entire energy routes. Gwadar would also enable China to observe and examine Indian naval movement in the Persian Gulf and Arabian Sea and any nautical cooperation between India and other states would be easily monitored by China (Asia Times, 2005, April.29). India played a strategy in Balochistan by encouraging Baloch insurgents, similar to the efforts in 1971 Indo-Pak war to help East Pakistan form a new State. India exploited the enmity between Musharraf Government and the rebellious Baloch Sardars. The aims of India were to keep away Pakistan from the energy resources to turn Pakistan into an economically and

politically weak state. This kind of economic and political instability would damage the strength of Pakistan to survive as an independent state.

Musharraf had a strong belief that India was involved in the Baloch insurgency. The Baloch insurgents owned highly advanced weaponry and modern military training which was indicating towards foreign support and intervention (The News, February 2, 2005).

The Baloch leaders had also clearly admitted Indian support. Grandson of Akbar Bugti, Brahamdagh Bugti, accepted assistance from India and Afghanistan. "We love our Indian friends and want them to help and rescue us from tyranny and oppression. In fact, India is the only country which has shown concern over the Baloch plight. We want India to take Balochistan's issue to every international forum, the same way Pakistan has done to raise the so-called Kashmiri issue. We want India to openly support our just cause and provide us with all moral, financial, military and diplomatic support." (The Dawn, March 28, 2010)

## **Conclusion**

The political issues of Balochistan revolve around the economic exploitation of strategic and natural resources. Balochistan has always remained politically less important. The stronghold of Central Government and the ignorant style of the decision-making process have isolated the people of Balochistan. Since the creation of Pakistan, four major military operations have been conducted against Baloch nationalists but they all resulted in a worse chaos and enhanced the sense of deprivation, disaffection and disappointment in the Baloch People. The nationalist's movements took a serious form of armed rebellion and the assassination of Nawab Akbar Bugti by Pakistani military forces in 2006, turned that armed protest into a separatist movement during the military rule of General Pervez Musharraf, the killing of Baloch nationalists in response by Pakistan Army damaged the overall political culture of Balochistan.

Musharraf tried to bring economic stability, development and prosperity in the province by the announcement of many mega projects worth billions of rupees in collaboration with foreign countries, construction of mega Gwadar Port is the most prominent and significant of all, but the plan to establish military cantonments in Balochistan, and involvement of other countries, created an impression on Baloch nationalists that the development was to be achieved by keeping Baloch people suppressed and under-pressure and the influence of foreign communities in these projects may harm and damage the basic Baloch National Identity.

The chances of development required more influence of Central Government into Balochistan along with an increased presence of military for security reasons. The Baloch people have a historical grudge for army so they strongly and aggressively opposed the development although Balochistan was given a huge increase in the amount of money allocated for Balochistan's development.

In fact, the steps taken by Musharraf were not against Baloch people and the objective was political and economic development of not only Balochistan but of

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entire Pakistan. The motive behind his aim may not be wrong, intentions may not be bad but the policies adopted by him in this regard were viewed with great doubt and mistrust by Baloch nationalists. Consequently, there emerged the feelings of exploitation, political marginalization, and ethnic dispossession among Baloch nationalist tribal sardars again and like always, they revolted in their own historical violent manner and started armed struggle against Pakistan's Government and Army.

The political issues should have never been addressed through militant protest, General Pervez Musharraf was definitely aware of the fact that the solution to the problems of Baloch nationalists could not be provided through military actions. He tried a lot to convince the Baloch leaders that the government's efforts for economic and Political development were in their best interest but he failed. The insurgency in Balochistan started in 2005 cannot be called only the fault of the Musharraf government. The revolt by Baloch nationalists is an outcome of about sixty years of political mismanagement.

No Pakistani government has been able to understand Baloch problem and that's why no ruler could win the trust of Baloch people to make them realize that they are a part of Pakistan and every step taken towards their development is good for them.

Political grievances of Baloch nationalists revolve around political and economic deprivation, cultural identity, provincial autonomy, control over natural resources, more representation in central government, more and justified share from gas revenues, abolition of military camps in Baloch region and limiting army's presence, abuse of human rights, lack of trust in the government, destruction of Baloch identity through heavy invasion of non-Baloch outsiders.

Instead of the peaceful political negotiations and talks with Baloch leaders, the implication of forceful strategies by Musharraf was the major cause of disturbing the overall political scenario in Balochistan and played a great role in turning them into a militant force rather than a political unit. The policies adopted by the Musharraf towards Baloch problems have always been a crucial factor in formation of Baloch nationalist movements. In all the political conflicts, the Baloch nationalists have blamed; most importantly; the arrogant policies of center towards Balochistan.

Baloch nationalist leaders were also never prone to build their confidence on Pakistan Army and Central Government. They were not inclined towards accepting the concept of one Pakistani nation. They always insisted upon their unique and distinct ethnic identity. They considered themselves only Baloch, not Pakistani. Until and unless, the government of Pakistan makes them realize that they are as important as other Pakistani ethnic groups, and they owe equal political rights over Pakistan, the Baloch nationalists would rise again and again for their political rights and to counter the dominance of other ethnic groups and to prove

their strength as a distinct nation and to become a significant part of mainstream politics in Pakistan.

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### **Biographical Note**

**Dr. Javeria Jahangir** is an Assistant Professor and Head of the Department, Department of Politics & IR, Lahore Leads University, Lahore, Pakistan.

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