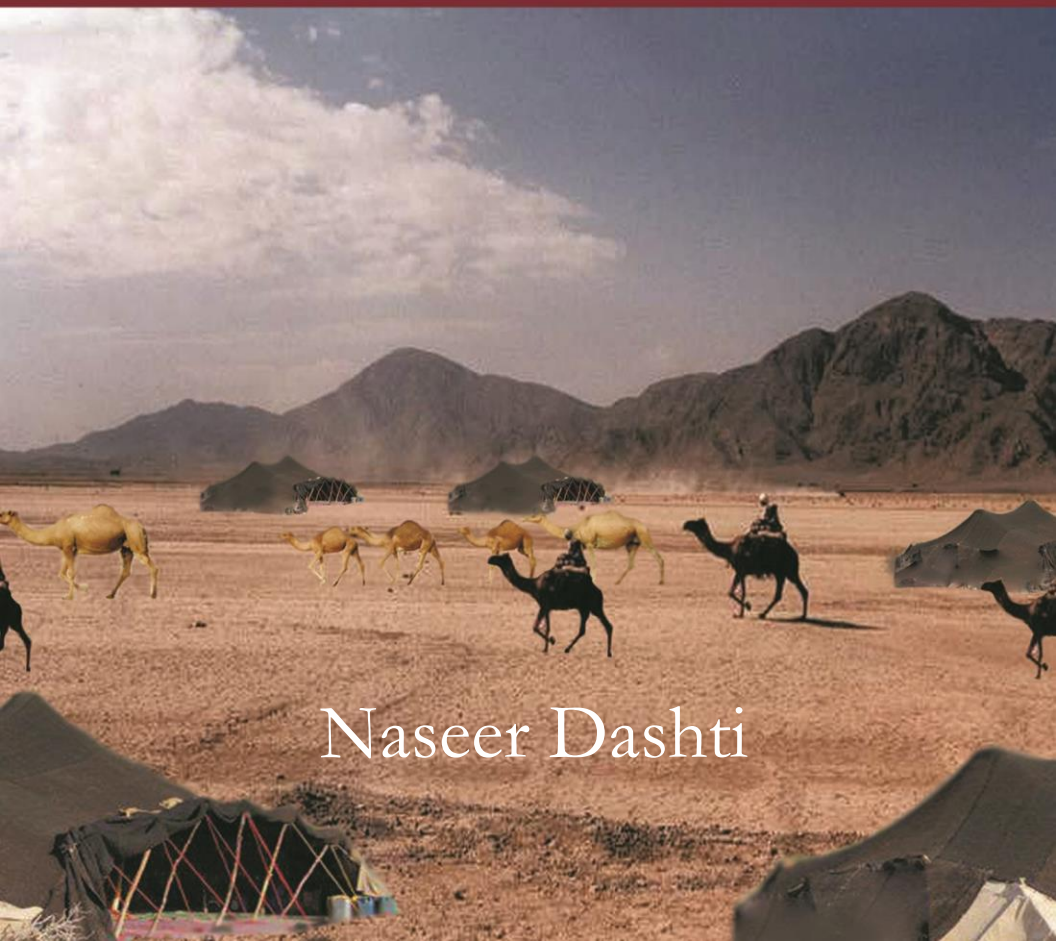


# The Baloch and Balochistan

A historical account from the Beginning  
to the fall of the Baloch State



Naseer Dashti





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**naseer DashTi**

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## **Dedication**

This book is dedicated to the memories of the Baloch who  
perished during the long and tortuous walk from  
Balashagan to Balochistan



## **acknowledgment**

I have been greatly helped in writing this book by a number of people in different ways.

I am ever grateful to Waja Samad Baloch for his support and encouragement during the course of my stay in the United Kingdom. Without his help, it would not have been possible for me to undertake such a venture.

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I have been fortunate to have the unconditional support of Dr. Charles Graves and Dr. Lakhmal Luhana for the completion and production of this book. I am tremendously indebted personally to them. This book owes a great deal to them for their all-out academic support.





## introduction

The book is an effort to present a thorough review of nearly all relevant aspects of the Baloch history from the beginning to the fall of the Baloch state in 1948. The review encompasses the ethnic origin, original homeland, migrations and deportations, persecutions in the Middle Ages, the history of the beginning of the Baloch national identity, and the history of the Baloch state of Kalat and its downfall. Attempts have been made to elaborate upon the related issues, making extensive use of all available data and materials, ancient and medieval, in particular, those never previously examined.

The work is to find answers to some of the pertinent questions regarding the Baloch history. First, where was the original location of the Baloch in the Iranian plateau? Second, what was the relationship between the Baloch and the ancient Iranian empires? Third, what happened to the Baloch after the Arab invasion of Iran in seventh century AD? Fourth, what are reasons of *en masse* migration of the Baloch into the regions of present-day Balochistan? In addition, what were the factors that influenced the establishment of the Baloch state and what caused its demise?

Research materials were obtained from the British Library, the London Library, library of the School of Oriental and African

Studies, and the library of the University College, London.  
Obviously, this

work on the history of a nation, about which the ancient accounts are rare, cannot be termed, altogether, satisfactory. The absence of skills in Armenian, Turkish, and Arabic languages was among the main problems in retrieving original data from the documents written in these languages. The relevant accounts mentioned in these documents are fundamental in locating the Baloch in the period when they were living in the northwestern Caspian region. Depending only on translations sometimes causes much misunderstanding and the explanations of certain terminologies become difficult.

Tracing the Baloch history from the seventh century onward was relatively easy as there was abundance of documentary materials on the history of that period. One can easily discern various aspects of the Baloch movements from Kerman and Sistan to Makuran and then Eastern Balochistan from the historical accounts of different ruling dynasties of the region in medieval times. Firdausi (translated in 1908), Maqaddesi (1906), Tabari (2007), Baladhuri (1924), Masudi (1841), Meskawiah (1915), and Istakhri (1961) dealt briefly on the ancient and medieval history of the Baloch, and these biased and mostly one-sided historical accounts must be read critically. In the same way, there is not much difficulty in obtaining the records on the history of the Baloch state of Kalat as it is well documented by various authors of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. On language and cultural aspects of the Baloch, works of MacKenzie (1961), Gershevitch (1962a, b), Jahani, Carina (1989), and Janmahmad (1982) are of fundamental importance. The works of Dames (1904) is among the original researches on the Baloch tribes and history of their migration into Punjab and Sindh. On sociopolitical history of the Baloch, the works of Mari (1974), Sardar Khan Baloch (1984), Naseer (1979), Janmahmad (1982), Bosworth (1977), Pottinger (1816), Gankovsky (1971), Hosseinbor (2000), and Spooner (1988) are valuable contributions. Literature on the history of Kalat State is abundance, and works of Gul Khan Naseer (1982), Pottinger, Swiddler (1969), Inayatullah Baloch (1987), Raedalli (2003), and Axmann (2009) dealt in detail on various aspects of Khanate of Kalat.

This work is a personal contribution to correlate various events in the Baloch history and to find logical answers to questions on different aspects of the Baloch journey into history. There are many gaps in the Baloch history during the period of their dispersal from their original abode in northwest of Caspian Sea to present-day Balochistan. I hope that researchers on the Baloch history will find the description and analysis of some aspects of the Baloch history as sources for drawing comparison and contrasts. As it will be established in the work that the Baloch are the ancient Balashchik and their ancient homeland was Balashagan or Balashakan, it will be helpful in determining the exact locations of the wandering Baloch tribes after their descent from Balashagan. It will also be helpful in the analysis of the extraordinary resilience of the Baloch in preserving their national and linguistic identity against tremendous odds. It will be fascinating to know how a wandering population, fleeing from persecution and struggling for their physical survival, managed to dominate a vast region politically, culturally, and linguistically within a time span of few centuries. It is also interesting to observe that because of political events in faraway Europe and due to various internal weaknesses and lack of robust leadership, the Baloch lost their sovereignty once in 1839 and again in 1948.

The book is divided into twenty-four chapters.

Chapter 1 of the book is a broad view of the coming discussion on various aspects of the Baloch history.

Chapter 2 describes the Baloch history from the arrival of the Aryan tribes from Central Asia into Iranian plateau. It discusses the relationship of the Baloch with powerful empires of Medes, Achaemenid, Parthian, and Sassanid. In the context of the Baloch history, Sakas, Hephthalites (White Huns), and the Rai Dynasty of Sindh also played important roles as they were among the main political and military powers before the arrival of the Arabs in regions where the Baloch were dwelling; the chapter discusses the events related to the Baloch and these powers.

Chapter 3 is a brief review of the linguistic and ethnic origin of the Baloch. On linguistic, cultural, and geographical grounds, it has been strongly established that the Baloch origin can be traced from a northwest Iranian group of tribes. It is believed that the original homeland of the Baloch must have been in the area where other speakers of northwestern Iranian languages were living. The chapter contains a discussion on the ethnic origin of the Baloch as Balashchik and their original homeland as Balashagan.

In the historical accounts of the decaying Sassanid Era, the description of Balashagan and Balashchik disappeared. It might have happened that Balashchik were forced to migrate *en masse* from Balashagan. Chapter 4 is the discussion of the Baloch wanderings once they migrated *en masse* from Balashagan.

At the time of Arab invasion of Iran, the Baloch were scattered around the southern and northeastern corners of the Sassanid Empire and suffered badly during and after the invasion. Chapter 5 mentions the relationship of the Baloch with the Arabs in seventh century after the Bedouin under the banner of Islam invaded and conquered Iran.

After the decline of Abbasid's power in Baghdad, Iran was practically ruled by different dynasties enjoying various forms of autonomy and the Caliphs virtually became puppets of powerful rulers of these dynasties. Chapter 6 describes the Baloch relationships with major dynasties of medieval Iran during which they faced the onslaught of Saffarids, Ghaznavids, Seljuqs, Mongols, Timurids, and the Guzz Turks. The worst of the treatment they got was from the Buyids.

Medieval times in the Baloch history are marked by painful migrations, struggle for survival, establishment of formal tribal structures, and formation of tribal unions and settling of a section of the Baloch in permanent settlements. Chapter 7 is a detailed account of Baloch migrations, restructuring of Baloch tribal organization, and formation of tribal confederacies in Turan, Makuran, Sistan, and Derajat.

Baloch society is governed by a specific constitution and system of laws. These conventions are to regulate marriage, inheritance, religious observance, dispute resolution, decision making, duties, and rights of individuals. Chapter 8 is the analysis of the development of the Baloch cultural values in medieval times. The chapter also includes a brief history of Baloch religious beliefs. The chapter also briefly discusses the phenomenon of the migration of a group of Baloch tribes from Barez Mountains of Kerman to Turan, which, later, became known as Brahui Baloch. The development of a Baloch national identity and the phenomenon of the Baloch cultural dominance of the region—which, later, became Balochistan—are also discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 9 is an overview of major geopolitical happenings during seventeenth century Balochistan and surrounding regions. In this period, the powerful empires of the Mughal in India and the Safavid in Persia were leading a path of disintegration. The European powers were increasingly encroaching on the region from their bases in Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf. With the loosening grip of the controlling powers on the Baloch territories, the situation was conducive for the Baloch to strive for carving out a nation-state. The Baloch confederacy of Brahui tribes, which had been gaining influence in Kalat and surrounding areas, converted into chiefdom under the leadership of Mir Ahmad, chief of Mirwadi tribe. The chapter is the analysis of the conversion of the Brahui Confederacy as the first Baloch state.

After the initial phase of consolidation of power, the territories of the Baloch state expanded in all directions. Exploiting the anarchic situation in the region and his alliance with the rising power of Nader Shah Afshar of Persia, the Khan of the Baloch, Mir Abdullah Khan, made successful attempts to incorporate whole Kachchi, Makuran, and Derajat regions into Khanate of Kalat. Besides discussing the consolidating efforts, Chapter 10 describes the expansion of the Baloch state and the subsequent civil war and anarchy after the death of Mir Abdullah Khan.

Chapter 11 is an overview of the golden era of the Baloch history. The second half of the eighteenth century was the period when Mir

Naseer Khan I, the ablest of the leaders in Baloch history, was running the Baloch state. His sustained endeavors internally and externally made the Khanate an example of a tribal state, converting into a powerful and organized state, which became equal in many respects to the existing states in the region.

After the death of Mir Naseer Khan I, there began a process of decline in the Baloch state, which was characterized by a neverending conflict between the Khan and tribal chiefs. Chapter 12 is an analysis of the period of civil war during the rules of incompetent Khans, which eroded the foundations of the Baloch state.

In Chapter 13, there is an analysis of the occupation of the Baloch state by the British forces in 1839. The British advent in Balochistan and the subsequent occupation of the Baloch state is analyzed, keeping in mind the regional and international polity of the period and the internal dynamics of the Baloch society during the reign of Mir Mehrab Khan II.

Chapter 14 describes the British measures taken to strengthen colonial grip over Balochistan. The Baloch recovered from the initial shock of the murder of their Khan and occupation of their country; then they regrouped and rallied under the leadership of Mir Naseer Khan II to oppose the British rule. The Baloch forces liberated Kalat and the British officials in order to bring a semblance of normality in their newly occupied territory and recognized Mir Naseer Khan II as the Khan of the Baloch. The chapter also reviews two treaties signed between Mir Naseer Khan II and the British that converted the Baloch state into a British protectorate.

Chapter 15 analyzes the events after the death of Mir Naseer Khan II. During this period, the British strengthened their grip on Balochistan; however, throughout Balochistan, a state of anarchy was prevailing because of unending disputes between the tribal chiefs and the Khan.

The chapter describes the rebellion of several Baloch tribes against the British rule and its protégé, the Khan.

Chapter 16 discusses the British decision to administer Balochistan directly. This period was marked with the British manipulation of different tribal chiefs, pitting them against each other and against the Khan and the direct British rule bringing drastic sociopolitical changes in the Baloch society.

The Baloch were never reconciled to the way the sovereignty of their land was violated by the British. Many tribal chiefs, who were against the British rule, from time to time, rose in armed insurgencies. Chapter 17 is an overview of the resistance by various Baloch tribes against colonial rule.

Chapter 18 describes the Persian incursions in Western Makuran and Sarhad (southern Sistan). During second half of the nineteenth century, while Eastern Balochistan was in the firm grip of the British forces, the Khan of the Baloch had become a protégé of the colonial power, the Baloch state was facing a perpetual civil war, and the Baloch areas in Western Balochistan were increasingly being encroached by a resurgent Persian State. With the Persian advance beginning from later part of the nineteenth century, there also began the British involvement in the affairs of Western Balochistan.

Under various boundary commissions, Balochistan was divided and many of its regions given to Persia and Afghanistan during the second half of the nineteenth century. Eastern regions of the Khanate—Arund, Dajal, and Derajat—had been taken away from the control of the Khan and were being administered directly by the British. Quetta, Chagai, Sibi, and Bolan Pass had been incorporated in British India on various pretexts. Chapter 19 is the description of various boundary commissions and analysis of the factors, which were responsible for the British decision of dividing Balochistan. Chapter 20 describes the situation that prevailed in Balochistan during the early decades of the twentieth century. The British and its ally, the Persians, had ruthlessly crushed the Baloch resistance



against foreign domination during this period. In an environment of extreme frustration and helplessness, a motivating phenomenon appeared in Baloch society. The chapter is the analysis of the formation of political organizations and political mobilization of the Baloch masses against the colonial rule from the beginning of the twentieth century.

The British authorities perceiving an immediate retreat from India inevitable began to look for their long-term strategic interests in the region. It became imperative for them to look toward their longstanding plan of dividing India on religious grounds and carving out states subservient to their dictates. Chapter 21 is an overview of the events leading to the creation of Pakistan.

Chapter 22 discusses the history of the short-lived independence of Balochistan and analyzes the events leading to the occupation of the Baloch state by Pakistan in 1948. In the wake of the British withdrawal from India, the Khan of the Baloch under pressure from the Baloch nationalists and anticipating the coming political scenario in the region began to formulate strategies for regaining the lost sovereignty of the Baloch state. However, Pakistan soon occupied Balochistan in 1948 after a short-lived independence of only eight months.

The final demise of the Khanate of Kalat in 1948 is considered to be the most tragic happenings in the history of the Baloch. During three hundred years of its existence, the Baloch state had fallen twice. Once in 1839, when the British occupied Kalat, and for the second time, the newly created state of Pakistan occupy it in 1948. Chapter 23 is a detailed discussion on the causative factors which brought down the fall of the Baloch state on two occasions.

Chapter 24 is an overview of major aspects of the Baloch history.

## **Foreword**

By Dr. Charles Graves

The origin of the Baloch as a group of nomadic pastoralist tribes and their subsequent evolution into a national entity has been puzzling for observers of events in Central Asia and Middle East. This wide-ranging research not only gives a logical opinion on the Baloch origin but also discusses in detail their history in premedieval, medieval, and modern times. It also explains the aspects of the Baloch relations with the Persians, the Afghans, the British, and the Pakistanis.

On the origin of the Baloch in the ancient times, the thread running through is the migrations of the Balashchik (later the Baloch). These people originated in Balashagan region and represented speakers of a branch of “Indo-Iranian” languages in northwest Iran near the Caspian Sea.

The author traces step by step the history of Balashchik people from premedieval times as they migrated across eastern Iranian deserts, eventually, changing from a nomadic-pastoral to an agricultural-sedentary society and incorporating many of the ethnic entities it encountered under its hegemony. It moved toward the south and east of Iranian plateau and settled in regions that constituted present Balochistan.

With the cultural and political supremacy of the Baloch, a Baloch tribal confederacy in Turan carved out the first Baloch state, the Khanate of Kalat, from disintegrating Mughal and Safavid empires of India and Persia. Dr. Dashti outlines the origin of the Khanate of Kalat and its variegated history of survival against powerful neighbors such as the Persians, the British, and, finally, the Pakistanis. The author holds British imperialism (especially policies developed during the “Great Game” era) mainly responsible for the present plight of the Baloch people.

Anyone who studies Pakistan politics today comes across the politically restive Baloch, and within the last several years, the Baloch have been making themselves known at international human rights *fora*. Although their origins have remained obscure, one feature is outstanding—their claim to be independent of Pakistan and Iran. We learn also that Baloch people are tribal societies with their own special laws and customs.

Today, the Baloch leadership representing the wishes of overwhelming majority of the Baloch is endeavoring to regain the lost national sovereignty that they enjoyed under the Khanate of Kalat before its occupation by various powers in the region.

This coherent history of the Baloch people from its origins to the mid-twentieth century is very welcoming. It is a valuable contribution toward understanding various aspects of the Baloch history in a proper historical perspective.

Charles Graves      *Charles Graves*  
Geneva      *1 July 2012.*  
Date:

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## Chapter 1

# Tracing Baloch history

Nearly three thousand years ago, a multitude of tribes left their abodes in Central Asia and moved toward west, south, and southeast directions. These people were called Aryans and a section among them became known as Indo-Iranic tribes. Some of the Indo-Iranic tribes settled in northwestern Iranian region of Balashakan. Circumstances forced this pastoralist nomadic group of tribes known at that time as Balashchik to migrate *en masse* and abandon their original homeland. After many centuries of wandering and sufferings, these pastoralist nomads ultimately settled in the south and eastern fringes of Iranian plateau. Here they changed from being the Balashchik to become the Baloch, and the name of the region they finally settled became known as Balochistan “the country of the Baloch.” They imposed their language and culture upon the whole region and created a nation-state that lasted for nearly three hundred years in an independent or semi-independent status. The Baloch state witnessed many ups and downs throughout its existence and finally vanished from the map of the world when it was occupied by Pakistan in 1948.

It is not easy to trace the Baloch history. The mention of the Baloch in the ancient historical documents is rare. From ancient historical accounts, some aspects of the Baloch history can be reconstructed but only in a very tentative and abstract form. It appears that there has been a blackout of any description of the Baloch by the ancient historians. Most probably, it is due to the fact that the Baloch were a pastoralist nomadic group of tribes, having no direct or formidable contribution to the political upheavals of the period. Like many other pastoralist nomads of ancient Iran, who descended upon Iranian plateau from Central Asia, historical accounts are rare about

the Baloch; the difference, however, is that some of these ethnic groups vanished and ceased to exist as a separate entity, whereas the Baloch emerged as a distinct linguistic and cultural entity during the medieval era.

Due to scarcity of detailed accounts, the ethnic origin of the Baloch, the exact location of their original homeland in the Iranian plateau, is still a subject of guesswork. Actual circumstances of their migration or an expulsion from their original abode could not be found in any historical documents. There are only some passing references in some of the ancient accounts of Iranian history. Only on some of the rock inscriptions of Sassanid times can one find a place Balasagan or Balashakan or Balashagan and a description of an ethnic group Balashchik from some ancient Greek and Armenian historical accounts. On some occasions, the Baloch had been described as warriors in the armies of Median, Achaemenid, and Sassanid emperors, while on many other occasions, they were branded as brigands and unruly barbarians. There are also some brief accounts of encounters between some of these emperors with the Baloch and some claims of annihilating the Baloch by many other emperors of Persian dynasties.

There is historical evidence that the Baloch were part of military forces of Emperor Cyrus, Xerxes, and Cambyses of Achaemenid Dynasty. Firdausi in his “Book of Kings” (*Shahnama*) described the Baloch as part of the Army of Cambyses (Siahwash), son of Kai Kaous of the Achaemenid Dynasty. The second mention of the Baloch in the “Book of Kings” is during the rule of Chosroes I (Anosharvan) from AD 531 to AD 579 of Sassanid Dynasty. From the time of Kai Kaous to Anosharvan, nothing can be found in historical documents about the Baloch for a period that spans up to a thousand years. It is not clear what happened to this ethnic group during this period—a group whose inclusion in the armies of different Achaemenid emperors had been mentioned graphically by Iranian historians of medieval times.



The paucity of documented historical and anthropological data had given rise to innumerable speculations concerning the origin of the Baloch. Different opinions and theories about the origin of the Baloch have been put forward. Earlier researchers on the origin of the Baloch deliberated on various theories and tried to align the Baloch with different racial entities of the region. Speculations were mainly focused on the lines that whether Baloch belongs to Aryan, Semitic, or Turanian group of tribes—Pottinger (1976) believed that the Baloch had Turkmen ethnic origins, Rawlinson (1873) was in favor of a Chaldean (Semitic) origin of the Baloch, Bellew (1874) aligned them with the Indian Rajput tribes, and Dames (1904) considered them as from the Aryan groups of tribes.

During the latter part of the twentieth century, extensive and authentic researches on many languages of Iranian plateau disclosed definite links of the Baloch with other ethnicities of the region. From these research works on the roots of Balochi and other languages, it became clear that theories of the Baloch origin of being Chaldeans, Arabs, or the indigenous population of Balochistan had no logical or scientific credentials. The racial origin of the Baloch is now academically well established that of coming from the Iranian branch of the IndoIranic tribes. On linguistic and cultural grounds, it is now commonly believed that the Kurds and the Baloch come into the Median category of these tribes. Study upon the roots of Balochi language has been a very strong evidence for this opinion.

From the available evidences on linguistic and cultural aspects, it can be deduced that the Baloch migrated along with other migrating IndoIranic tribes from Central Asia toward the Caspian Sea region of the Iranian plateau, most probably around 1200 BC. This is believed to be part of the general historical phenomenon of Aryan migrations of that time. It has also been established that they first settled in northern Persia near the Caspian Sea and in and around the Elborz Mountain. Their area of abode had the name of Balashakan (Balashagan). The Baloch settled here along with tribes of other ethnic groups for a long time, forming alliances and making affiliations with various groups. From a linguistic and

cultural standpoint, it appears that the Baloch and Kurds were two large tribal groups of common origin living in the same area. Why the Baloch, as a whole, moved from their original abode of Balashakan to the present-day Balochistan, while the Kurds remained in their original place, is not known exactly. However, some of the Kurdish tribes or part of some Kurdish tribes decided to move along with the Baloch in their eastward journey, and they are now fully incorporated into the larger Baloch national identity.

History has been mostly written from the perspective of dominant or victorious powers, and the historical accounts of the Baloch may have been infected by the Persian-centric, and Islam-centric “viruses.” These writers were preoccupied with writing about the glorious deeds of their own ethnic or national entities and did not care much about their “barbarian” neighbors like the Baloch, whom they considered beyond the pale.

The Baloch were pastoralists, herding sheep and goats; like other nomadic pastoralists of the region, they were highly mobile, living in tribal communities rather in political entities. As there was a definite gulf between them and the settled communities, sometimes misgivings were inevitable where the nomadic Baloch were blamed for their harassment of settled entities. Relationship between nomadic, seminomadic, and sedentary peoples within different Persian empires has always been characterized by shifting hegemony, rivalry, wars, and alliances on various pretexts. These changing relationships played important roles in the sufferings of the Baloch tribes and frustrated attempts of subsequent identity formation as a distinct ethnic entity. As members of settled communities, who also happened to be from the victorious or dominant powers, had recorded the historical accounts; descriptions of the Baloch in these historical accounts display many discrepancies.

Persecution by strong and organized religions for the last two thousand years has shaped the secular attitude of the Baloch about religion in their social or community affairs. The Persians and Arab

writers of medieval times portray the Baloch as unruly, predatory, and highway robbers. They portrayed the Baloch as least enthusiastic about their religious obligations be it Zoroastrianism or Islam. Despite their oblique perspective, they offer on the history of the Baloch, their accounts are of enormous importance in the sense that we can read between the lines from their narratives. As the Baloch were facing the genocidal acts of Sassanid and the Arabs, one cannot expect neutral accounts of the events from the historians of these conquering nations, although they tell us about the encounter of a hostile “ethnic group”; nevertheless, these writers offer at least a macrohistorical versions of the events concerning the Baloch (the version of the triumphant and victorious side). The credibility of each of these narratives, thus, must be judged on its own merit.

The origin of the Brahui group of the Baloch tribes has been investigated in order to give them a very different identity separate from the Baloch ethnic identity. The notion of Brahui speaking tribes as ethnically different from the Balochi speaking tribes began with the advent of the British colonialism in Balochistan. This was obviously aimed at developing schism among the Baloch and was in line with the time-tested “divide and rule” policy of colonial powers. However, with the limited research of Dr. Gershevitch, the picture of the origin of the Brahui tribes became clear to a large extent. He traced the origin of Bashkardi dialects to the Bradazhui tribe of Central Persia during the Achaemenid Dynasty. From the investigations of Dr. Gershevitch (1962a, b), one can safely deduce that the Brahui were among the tribal confederacy of the Baloch tribes in Kerman. They were among the Baloch tribes residing in Barez Mountain. It is most probable that they got their present name of Brahui after first being called as Barezui as they descended from their mountain abodes and began their *en masse* migration toward east in medieval times. By the time they settled in their present abode in Jhalawan and Sarawan (Turan) regions of Balochistan, they became known as Brahui from being Barezui. Based on the works of Dr. Gershevitch, there is a need for further research on the Brahui language, which should not be constrained by the previous focus of research linking it with a Dravidian origin.

Beginning from the invasion of Iran by the Arab tribes in the seventh century, the history of the Baloch is a history of persecution, deportation, and migration, although some of the Baloch tribes initially sided with the Arabs; however, soon, the Arabs began to persecute the Baloch on various pretexts. After the weakening of Arab power, Iran was ruled by powerful local dynasties for many centuries. The Baloch also faced some of the worst treatments during this period. Saffarids, Buyids, Samanids, Ghaznavids, Seljuqs, and Mongols were among the major political powers and dynasties that have committed their share of atrocities on the Baloch. These atrocities included such genocidal acts that finally pushed the Baloch from Kerman and northern regions of Sistan toward further east into southern Sistan, Makuran, and Turan. With this huge influx of the Baloch tribes, the sociopolitical picture of the region changed drastically. During this period of intensive Baloch migrations, the area began to take on the character of the Baloch people. Language of the migrating Baloch tribes “Balochi” became the *lingua franca* of the region, and the whole region came to be known as Balochistan.

The landmass stretching from southeastern Iran to the east bank of River Sindh in Punjab, and from lower reaches of Helmand in Afghanistan to the Indian Ocean is called Balochistan. Spooner (1983) defined Balochistan as a semicircle of historically important cities and agricultural areas that stretches from Bandar Abbas on the Persian Gulf through Kerman, the Delta of the Helmand River in Sistan, Kandahar, and Sindh. It is a borderland between India and Iran and a bridge between the Iranian plateau and the Arabian Peninsula. Geographically, in the West, Dasht-e-Lut, Dasht-e-Kavir, and Kerman Mountains separate it from Persia Proper, and the Persian speaking regions of Kerman in the Southeast, Hub River, and Kirther range of Mountains separate it from Sindh. In the Northeast, the right bank of Indus separates it from Pashtunistan and Punjab. In the North, Balochistan is naturally separated from Afghanistan by the natural boundaries of Helmand and the mountain range north of Quetta. In the South, the Indian Ocean separates Balochistan from the Sultanate of Oman.

From the archeological excavations, it has been discovered that Balochistan had a bridging function between the cultures in Mesopotamia and the Iranian highland on the one hand and those in the Indus lowland on the other hand. There are archaeological evidences of overland connections between the early civilizations of the Indus valley and Mesopotamia through Balochistan. From the middle of the first millennium, the area was divided into many provinces of Achaemenid Empire such as Maka (Makuran) and Zaranka (Sistan). The Greeks during the campaigns of Alexander the Great named the southern regions of Balochistan as Gedrosia. During the Sassanid period, the regions which comprised present-day Balochistan were called Turan (Tugran, Turgestan), corresponding to present-day Sarhad, Sarawan and Jhalawan regions, Pradhan (probably modern-day Kharan and Chagai), Makuran, and Sakastan ( modern-day Sistan ).

Due to the huge influx of migrating Baloch tribes into Balochistan in medieval times, the demographic and political dynamics of the region changed in favor of the Baloch. There began an era of Baloch dominance in the region. Various tribal confederacies of the Baloch became powerful, and one of them established the first Baloch state known as the Khanate of Kalat in mid-seventeenth century. The Khanate was a loose union of the Baloch tribes and survived for nearly three hundred years in an independent or semi-independent status until it was occupied by Pakistan in 1948.

The history of the Baloch can be divided into different periods. The first period encompasses their migration along with other IndoIranic tribes into Iranian plateau and settlement into Balashakan or Balashagan. From the scanty evidence of their migration into northwestern Caspian region, their settlement in Balashakan and their persecutions by various dynastic powers of that time, it is hard to visualize a clear picture of the Baloch at that time. However, there is no doubt that they were pastoralists, herding sheep and goats, and that, like other pastoralists of Central Asia, they were highly mobile, if not entirely nomadic, and they were living in tribal communities. It was the period in which the Baloch distinguished themselves as a separate ethnic entity among other pastoralist nomadic tribes in the

northwestern region of Caspian Sea. During this period, they were called Balashchik and had a territory of Balashakan named after them. Probably, Balochi language began to shape its distinguishing features from other Iranian languages at that time. During this same period, they appeared to be parts of imperial armies of Median, Achaemenid, Parthian, and, perhaps, of Sassanid empires. However, it is this same period when the persecution of the Baloch began on different pretexts, and they migrated *en masse* or were deported to other parts of the Iranian plateau. At the end of this period, the Balashchik and Balashagan vanished from the historical accounts.

The second part of the Baloch history begins when the Balashchik of Balashagan made their presence noted in Kerman, Sistan, Makuran, and Turan as wandering pastoralist nomads having a new identity as the Baloch. In the historical accounts of Arabs and Persians of that time, they had been mentioned as Koch o Baloch. This period of the Baloch history almost entirely consists of the tales of persecutions, genocides, migrations, and wanderings. This period can easily be termed as the darkest times for the Baloch as an ethnic entity. During this period, the Baloch were in constant conflicts with various regional powers who were trying to exert their authority over Iran after the Arab authority of Caliphate in Baghdad eclipsed, beginning from the tenth century. This period is characterized by the mass movement of Koch o Baloch from Kerman and northern parts of Sistan. Perhaps, this was the period during which almost total evacuation of the Brahui (Barezui) group of Baloch tribes occurred from eastern Kerman and their settlement in Turan begun.

With their increased diffusion into Makuran, southern Sistan, Turan, and Kachchi during medieval period, the migrating Baloch tribes individually, or in tribal confederacies, began to exert their influence culturally, politically, and militarily in these areas. During this period, despite sufferings and wanderings, the Baloch culture began to dominate the region, Balochi became the *lingua franca* of the region, and different indigenous tribes began to merge into the identities of various Baloch tribes or they became allied to various

Baloch tribal confederacies. The whole area got the name of Balochistan in this period.

The Baloch in the course of their long and tortuous periods of migrations from different regions of Iranian plateau had been assimilating vast segments of other ethnic groups and cultural and linguistic influences. In this context, it appears that being a Baloch is in many ways a voluntary choice. A Baloch is one who calls himself Baloch, and no one who is not a Baloch will so call himself. It is not the origin of an individual but the adaptation of certain code of conducts that makes the person a Baloch in traditional Baloch perspective. Adherence to the fundamentals of the Baloch society makes a person an honorable Baloch, while negation of any one of these can proclaim the person a Baloch of lower status.

The Baloch perceives the third period of the Baloch history as their golden age. During this period, the Baloch were able to carve out a nation-state, taking the advantage of chaotic milieu of the seventeenth century where the Mughal Empire was collapsing in the east and the process of decay had begun for the Safavid Dynasty in the west. The Baloch state of Kalat was the first and the last symbol of Baloch political power in the region. Although Kalat State was a weak confederacy of different tribes and, on many occasions, was subservient to the wishes of other powers of the region, yet it developed the sense of nationhood among the Baloch. The golden age of the Baloch ended in AD 1839 when the British, who were consolidating their position in Central Asia against a resurgent Russian advance toward their precious Indian colonies, invaded and occupied the Baloch state.

The fourth period is the tortuous history of the Baloch resistance against the occupation and division of Balochistan. This period witnessed the gradual strangulation of Balochistan by emerging Persian dynasties and newly established buffer state of Afghanistan, and also due to various administrative measures taken by the government of the British India in the region. This period was characterized by individual, tribal, and national acts of heroism

against foreign dominations. This period can be marked as the second period of sufferings of the Baloch after their tragic debacles during the medieval times; however, the difference is that this time, they suffered as an occupied nation instead of a group of tribes.

The fifth period of the Baloch history begins with their short-lived independence and subsequent occupation by Pakistan in 1948.

Beginning with the migrations of Aryan tribes from Central Asia a millennium before Christ, various periods of the Baloch history had different elements. The Baloch got their ethnic name of Balashchik while settling in Balashakan; they were persecuted by the major powers in different times on various pretexts and faced genocide, forced exiles, or migrations. In medieval times, they marked their presence in a landmass of Iranian Plateau, which became known as Balochistan. They established various tribal confederacies, and one of the confederacies developed into first Baloch state in 1666, the Khanate of Kalat. They were unable to maintain the independence of their country and after nearly three hundred years of independent and semi-independent status, the Baloch state finally vanished from the map of earth on April 1, 1948.



## ChApter 2

# major Powers of ancient iran

**B**eginning from the Aryan influx into the Iranian Plateau, various tribes and ethnic groups had played important roles in the history of Iran and surrounding regions. The Aryan tribes after gaining control over the indigenous ethnic groups organized themselves into powerful empires under Medes and Achaemenid dynastic rulers. The Seleucids introduced Greek influences in Iran after the campaigns of Alexander the Great. After the Greeks, the Parthian and the Sassanid were powerful dynasties and remained at the helm of the Iranian affairs until the arrival of the Arabs. In the context of the Baloch history, Sakas, Hephthalites or White Huns, and the Rai Dynasty of Sindh also played important roles as they were among the main political and military powers before the Arab domination of the region.

## The AryAns

Aryan is an academic terminology used to describe a group of tribes believed to be the original inhabitant of Central Asia. In waves of migration, these people left their original homeland, spread into Europe, India, and Iranian plateau before the Christian era, carrying their language and way of life with them. They brought drastic changes in the language, culture, and sociology in the regions of their final settlement. These migrating tribes were seminomadic pastoralist people and, according to their linguistic divisions and their migratory patterns, were also called as Indo-Europeans and Indo-Iranic people by scholars and researchers. Their languages were further subdivided into Indo-European and Indo-Iranic, which had evolved from common proto-language spoken millennia ago, by

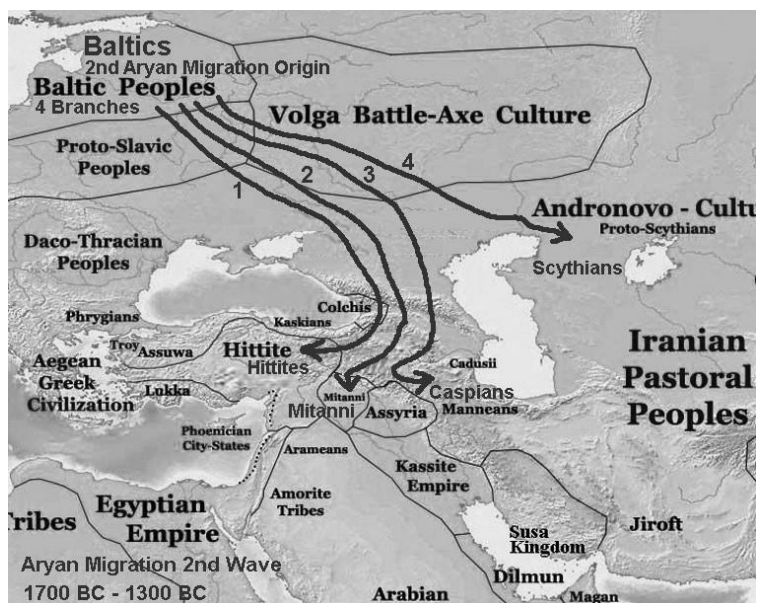
this distinct people. These linguistic groups later became the present nations and nationalities in Europe, Iran, and India (Morris, 1888).

Different writers put forward various theories regarding the original abode of the Aryan tribes. Researchers had advocated Southern Russia, Southeast Europe, and the lands adjacent to Caspian Sea as the original homeland for the Aryans (Childe, 1926; Frawley, 1994; Kochhar, 1999; Kuz'mina, 2007; Muller, 1888). Most plausible of the geographical locations of ancient Aryan land, as postulated by Morris (1888), before the *en masse* migration is believed to be the region between the Black and Caspian Seas, stretching northward up to Russian steppes and southwards up to Caucasian mountains. Many scholars of Old Persian and Avestan texts had identified *Airriianem Vaejah* as the “mythical homeland” of the Aryans and had placed it anywhere from Choresmia on the Aral Lake in Uzbekistan to the Azerbaijan, or to southern or northwestern Afghanistan. Recent researches correlate archaeological evidences with later linguistically identifiable groups sharing similar cultural traits, suggesting that the Proto-Indo-Iranians originated in the eastern European steppes in the third millennium BC (Kuz'mina, 2007). They moved eastward to the region of the southern Ural steppes and the Volga, then further onto Central Asia. At that stage, they appear to have already formed two groups: the Proto-Iranians in the north, and the Proto-Indo-Aryans in the south. After 2000 BC, the Indo-Aryans moved southeast via Afghanistan into the Indian subcontinent, as well as southwest via the Iranian plateau into northern Mesopotamia (Ghirshman, 1954).

Figure 1: **A model of Aryan Migration**

Source: <http://iranpoliticsclub.net/maps/maps01/index.htm>

## Major Powers of Ancient Iran



Indo-Iranic group of Aryans were supposed to be located in the southeastern Caucasian region. The migration of these tribes into the Iranian plateau took place through a succession of numerous groups of tribes, each tribe speaking its own variety of the Iranian language. The earliest groups contained the “Western” Iranians (Medes and Persians), whose migration is generally placed at the end of the second millennium BC. There are two possibilities of their exact route of migration as observed by Morris (1888):

1. They went north of the Caspian Sea, crossed the Caucasus and the Armenian Highlands, and then went southeast.
2. They came directly from the steppes in the north or northeast and crossed the Dasht-e-Kavir only to be brought to a halt by the Zagros Mountains.

Eastern Iranians were, apparently, the last to come. They settled in the region extending from Margiana and Bactria to Arachosia and Balochistan. Morris (1888) listed some of these migratory groups as Ossetes, Armenians, the Kurds, the people of ancient Media and

Persia, the Afghans, the Baloch, and Hindus of the Indus and Ganges.

According to Bongard-Levin (1980), the region of ancient Bactria was the point of common residence for these Indo-Iranic groups of tribes before dividing into Iranian and Indian groups prior to their final migration into Iran and India. Before migrating to India and Iran into two distinct groups of people, these tribes spoke a similar language and offered worship to the same gods—Mithra and Indra—and cherished similar myths and legends.

According to Matthew (1999), the Iranian immigration onto the plateau, probably, proceeded in several “waves” and along different routes, and Iranian tribes may have been established throughout the plateau by the beginning of the first millennium, except, perhaps, the southernmost parts. Several scenarios for the Iranian immigrations have been proposed along with corroborating archaeological evidence. The migrating Indo-Iranic group of tribes comprised the following culturally quite diverse groups:

- North Iranians who are called Scythians or Sakas
- West Iranians who included the ancient Medes and the modern Kurds, Baloch, and Persians
- East Iranians who were the speakers of Avestan and Bactrian languages

As observed by Ghirshman (1954), little is known about the nonIranian speakers whom the Iranian speakers encountered on their way into Iran. In the east in Balochistan and further east in the Gandhara (Kabul) region and Arachosia (Kandahar), the Iranians were most likely still in contact with speakers of Indo-Aryan as well as speakers of Dravidian languages during the second half of the second millennium BC. This assumption is based on the close resemblance of Indic names and customs, particularly in Rigveda with those in Old Iranian texts, which points to the Kandahar region

and Balochistan and is dated to the middle Rigvedic period between 1500 and 1350 BC (Ghirshman, 1954).

The exact reasons for the mass migrations of Aryan tribes from their original abode are still being argued. However, it is widely believed that scarcity of food and the pressure applied by the neighboring tribes from the north were among the main factors that forced the Aryans to move away in different directions. Whatever had been the causes, Aryan movements have been persistent instead of occasional, and their effects were permanent on the regions and peoples they came into contact instead of being transitory in nature.

## The Medes

Among the Aryan tribes, Medes emerged powerful enough to establish a strong empire in the Iranian plateau for a long time. In spite of the fact that the Medes managed to form a powerful kingdom stretching from northern Mesopotamia to Bactria, knowledge of them is scanty. Their name appeared first in an inscription of Shalmaneser III dated 835 BC, where the Medes were described as being under twenty-seven independent princes (Cuyler, 1967). According to Herodotus (1996), Phraortes united the Median tribes into a single kingdom with Ecbatana as its capital. His son Cyaxares later began to encroach on Assyrian territory. In 612 BC, in alliance with the Babylonians, he attacked and occupied the Assyrian capital, Nineveh (Herodotus, 1996). The Assyrian domain was divided between the Medes and the Babylonians, making the Medes neighbors to the Lydian kingdom in the north. Their last king was Astyages who was defeated and succeeded by the Persian, Cyrus the Great. It is generally believed that the religion of the Medes, like that of the other Iranian tribes, centered on the worship of god Ahura Mazda. According to Herodotus, they did not build temples and did not use divine images but worshiped in the open air and on hilltops. The religious functions were the prerogative of the Magi, who apparently formed a separate tribe or caste of the Medes (Cuyler, 1967). Whether the Medes were Zoroastrian or they

practiced a form of pre-Zoroastrian religion remains controversial. Medic—the language of the Medes—is a substrate of Old Persian. It is classified as a northwestern Iranian language. Including among the Medic languages are Azari, Zazaki, Gilaki, Mazandarani, Kurdish, and Balochi.

The capital of Median Empire was Ecbatana. Rawlinson (1873) observed that from Ecbatana Medes tribes spread out to the mountains of Paraetacena above Persia, and eastward, where they held the east—west road through Rhaga to the Caspian Gates and on to Parthia and the other eastern Iranian lands. A Median tribe, the Pratitae, is mentioned as bordering on Parthia. The Medes were successful in holding Parthia under submission, in spite of a bitter struggle in which the Parthians turned to the Sakas for help (Rawlinson, 1873). After a brief reign, the Medians became the subject of Achaemenid, Parthians, and Greeks.

Figure 2: **Map of the Median Empire**

Source: <http://www.pinebrookmaps.com>



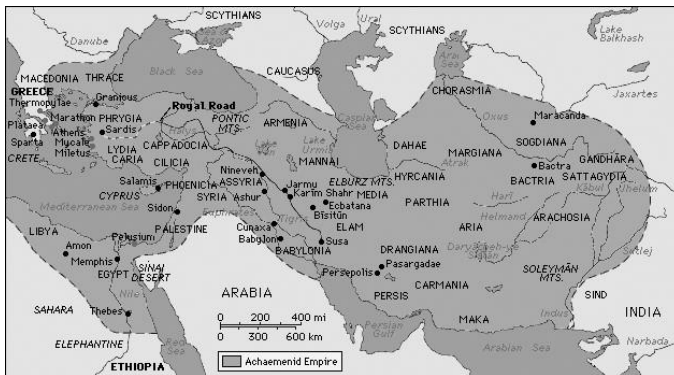
## The Persians

The term Persian relates to the people of Persis bounded on the west by Tigris and on the south by Persian Gulf; on the north, it is separated from Caspian Sea by the Elborz Mountains, and in the east, it is separated from Sistan by the great deserts of Dasht-e-Kavir and Dasht-e-Lut. The originally nomadic pastoral people were called Parsa, and their country was named after them as Parsua (Herodotus, 1996). Herodotus listed ten groups of Persian tribes, both settled and unsettled. Persians are part of the Indo-Iranians, and their language “Farsi” is a part of the greater Indo-European linguistic family. According to Rawlinson (1901), the first known written record of the term Persian is from Assyrian inscriptions of the ninth century BC, which mentioned both Parsuash and Parsua. Parsuash were first located to the south and west of Lake Uremia. Under the Assyrian king Tiglathpileser III, the Parsuash region was in the central Zagros, and under Sanherib (691 BC), they were located near the Bakhtiari Mountains (Bosworth, 1977).

The powerful empires of Achaemenid (550-330 BC) and Sassanid (AD 226-651) dynasties are supposed to be the Persian-dominated powers in Iranian history.

**Figure 3: Map of Achaemenid Empire**

Source: <http://www.google.co.uk/ancientmapsofiran>



Starting around 550 BC, the ancient Persians spread their language and culture to other parts of the Iranian plateau. Persians also interacted with other ancient civilizations in Europe and Africa. Darius and Xerxes proclaimed themselves “Iranian” and “of Iranian stock,” Ariya and Ariyachica, respectively. During the Sassanid period, the Iranian identity reached its height in every respect: political, religious, cultural, and even linguistic (Ruzicka, 1992). Old Persian was the language of the Achaemenid Empire while Middle Persian, which is the immediate ancestor of Modern Farsi and a variety of other Iranian dialects, became the official language of the Sassanid Persian Empire. Zoroastrianism was the religion of the rulers of the Achaemenid Empire; however, the presence of Mithraism and Anahita also remained strong (Herzfeld, 1968). During Sassanid period, Zoroastrianism was proclaimed as the official religion of the empire.

The Persian domination was stopped by the emergence of Alexander of Macedonia. He occupied a vast territory in Asia up to northern India.

## The seleucid eMpire

The Macedonian prince, who became famous in history as Alexander the Great, conquered Iran during the reign of Achaemenid Emperor Darius II. Alexander died young without an adult heir. This prompted Alexander’s generals to jostle for power over parts of his vast empire. His commander-in-chief, Seleucus, established himself in Babylon in 312 BC, and ruled not only over Babylonia, but the entire enormous eastern part of Alexander’s empire that included Mesopotamia, Armenia, Cappadocia, Persia, Parthia, Bactria, Arabia, Tapouria, Sogdia, Arachosia, Punjab (India), and Hyrcania (Bellinger, 1949). Seleucid Empire began in 312 BC and lasted until 247 BC, keeping a vast amalgam of nations from Phrygia to the Indus as subjects.

Figure 4: **Map of Seleucid Empire**

Source: <http://www.google.co.uk/ancientmapsofiran>



## Major Powers of Ancient Tiran



The fall of Seleucid Empire began during the third century BC with its loss of control over large territories both in the west and in the east. By the middle of the third century, Parthia, Bactria, and Sogdia had gained their independence. As observed by Bellinger (1949), the decline of Seleucid Empire accelerated after the death of Antiochus IV, with the loss of Commagene in Syria and of Judea in Palestine. By 141 BC, all lands east of the Euphrates were gone, and attempts at retrieval by Demetrius II and Antiochus VII could not halt the rapid disintegration of the empire.

Rawlinson (1901) believed that the gradual fall of the Seleucid Empire began when, in the West, Rome became too powerful to resist, and in the East, the Parni founded the Parthian Empire, which seized away the eastern provinces. In AD 64, the Roman general Pompey ended the Seleucid Kingdom in the West, followed by the Parthian rise to power over the Seleucid countries in the East.

As observed by Shipley (2000), the Seleucid kingdom was a major center of Hellenistic culture, which maintained the preeminence of Greek customs and manners over the indigenous cultures of the Middle East and part of Central Asia. In the Seleucid Empire, Greeks and Macedonians were in contact with numerous people across the continents of Asia and Europe, and the Greeks were

afflicted with cultural influences of Asia. Austin (2003) posited that despite the period being commonly known as the Hellenistic era, cultural exchange traveled in both directions during this time; Greek settlers not only influenced their non-Greek neighbors, culturally and otherwise, but also the Greek culture was forever changed as well by foreign influences.

The Greek rule was replaced in Iran and India by the Parthian who, under the leadership of Parni chiefs, established one of the powerful empires in the region that existed for nearly five hundred years.

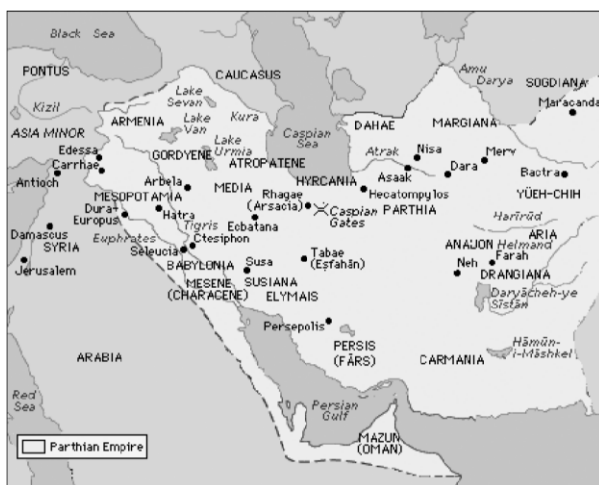
## The PARThiAns

Ancient Parthia roughly corresponded to the western half of Khurasan region in northeastern Iran. The Kopet Dag mountain range in the north and the Dasht-e-Kavir desert in the south formed its borders. It bordered Media on the west, Hyrcania on the northwest, Margiana on the northeast, and Aria on the southeast. Herodotus spoke of Parthian as a people subject to the Persian Achaemenid Empire during the reign of Darius and assigned them to the sixteenth satrapy, which also comprised the Arians, the Sogdians, and the Chorasmians. Rice (1957) posited that the Parthian sprang from the admixture of Scythians and Dahais and that their original home was the tract of steppe lying between the Caspian and the Sea of Aral. Classical historians Strabo, Justin, and Arrian were of the opinion that Parthian belong to Scythic Group of tribes assuming they were of Turanian stock. However, Rawlinson (1873) posited that such conclusions could not safely be drawn from the mere fact that the ancient writers assert the Scythic character of the Parthian in the strongest terms. He observed that the term “Scythic” is not, strictly speaking, ethnical. It designates a lifestyle rather than descent, customs rather than blood connections.

Figure 5: **Map of Parthian Empire**

Source: <http://www.google.co.uk/ancientmapsofiran>

## Major Powers of Ancient Iran



Parthians probably maintained their independence from the time of their settlement in the district called after their name until the sudden arrival in their country of the great Persian conqueror, Cyrus. However, Parthians once again tried to regain their independence after the death of Cyrus the Great. In 521 BC, during troubles that broke out upon the death of the Pseudo-Smerdis, Parthia revolted in conjunction with Hyrcania, and several Median tribes, espousing the cause of the Median pretender, who, declaring himself a descendant of the old Median monarchs, set himself up as a rival to Darius (Rawlinson, 1873). Hytaspes, the father of Darius, held at this time the Parthian satrapy. In two battles within the limits of his province, he defeated the rebels, and after their second defeat, the Parthians made their submission and once more acknowledged Darius for their sovereign.

After the disintegration of the Seleucid Empire in Iran, the Parthians rose to a supreme position in the Iranian political history. Parni, a tribe of Central-Asian origin, established the Arsacid (Ashkani) Dynasty (Bivar, 1983, 2007). Parthian ruled a vast area of Iranian plateau and went to war with Romans. A Parthian family established an Indo-Parthian Empire in the northwest of India. They ruled under a tribal confederacy where the king of kings was the supreme ruler while the vassal kings enjoyed autonomy.

Parthian (Pahlavanik) was the official court language spoken alongside Middle Persian, Aramaic, Greek, Babylonian, Sogdian, and other languages in the multilingual territories they would conquer (Curtis, 2007). According to Boyce (1983), the Parthian language was a northwest Iranian language, related to Median language. Sundermann (2004) believed that Middle Persian and Parthian were two languages so closely related that the speakers of one language would readily have understood what the other said. Parthian has been labeled the “prototype” of northwestern Iranian languages and Middle Persian as a representative of southwestern Iranian languages.

Bivar (1983), Brosius (2006), and Curtis (2007) observed that a typical Parthian outfit consisted of loose-fitting and many-folded trousers held by garters, and a diadem or band over his coiffed and bobbed hair, and the typical Parthian belted shirt (*qamis*). Generally, both hair and beard were carefully curled, but, sometimes, they depended on long straight locks. The religion of the Parthian seems to be a very relaxed form of Zoroastrianism (Perikanian, 1983; Lukonin, 1983). Unvala (1925) noted that the sun, moon, and Venus also enjoyed a special place in the mythological beliefs of the Parthian.

## The sAkAs

The Sakas were a Scythian tribe or group of tribes. Indo-Scythians is a term used to refer to Sakas, who migrated into Bactria, Sogdia, Arachosia, Gandhara, Kashmir, Punjab, Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Rajasthan, beginning from the middle of the second century BC to the fourth century CE.

Figure 6: **Map of Sakas-dominated areas (first century BC)**

Source: <http://www.google.co.uk/ancientmapsofiran>



After 178 BC, Yuezhi and Wusun people, who were displaced by the rising Xiongnu Empire, invaded the Sakas's homeland from the east. Some of the Sakas forced their way over the Pamir to the border area of present-day Afghanistan and Iran and to northwest India before 139 BC (Puri, 1994).

According to Colledge (1967), in Iran, Sakas became part of the army of Parthian king Farhad II who reigned from 127 to 138 BC. However, hostilities soon broke out between the Parthian and Sakas, in which Sakas went on rampage in Parthian Empire as far as Mesopotamia. Farhad II was killed in a bloody battle between the Sakas and the Parthians. However, during the reign of Farhad's son Ardavan I, the Sakas were restricted to Sakastan (present-day Sistan) under the Parthian suzerainty. They grabbed much of the Indus Basin from the Indo-Parthian and established a short-lived empire under King Mauves, which existed until about AD 45. As observed by Colledge (1967), they were probably still under Parthian sovereignty, since there are no written records which distinguish the Parthians and the Sakas. Yu (1998) posited that from AD 79, after the Kushans conquered the Indo-Parthian, the Sakas were once again ousted by the Kushans and forced to wander further into Central India.

## The Sassanid Empire

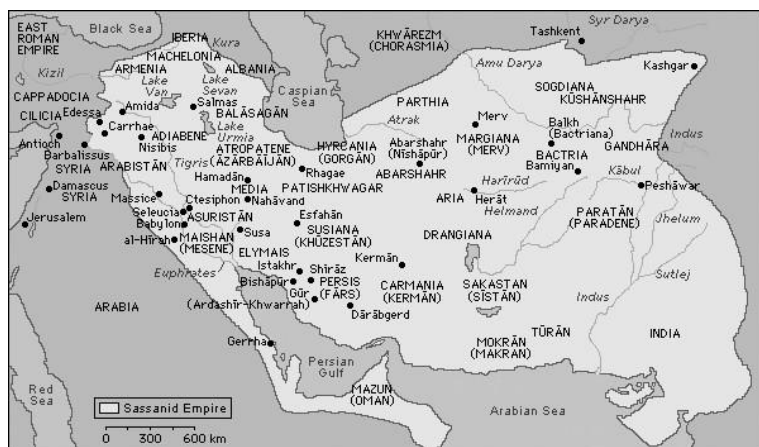
The Sassanid Dynasty that ruled Iran from AD 224 to 651 replaced the Parthian Empire. The first powerful Sassanid ruler Ardashir I, after dealing with many rebellions, consolidated his power and extended the empire to the limits of the Achaemenid times. The Sassanid Empire encompassed all of today's Iran, Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, the Caucasus (Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Dagestan), southwestern Central Asia, part of Turkey, certain coastal parts of the Arabian Peninsula, the Persian Gulf area, and areas of southwestern Pakistan, even stretching into India (Frye, 1983). The Sassanid Empire played a major role in developing a distinct Persian nationalism, which survived the Islamic conquest and mass conversion of Persians to Islam. The Sassanid Empire was a centralized government, and a majority of the local rulers and governors were among the members of the Sassanid family. The local kings and governors in the provinces reported directly to the royal court. The Sassanid saw themselves as successors of the Achaemenid after the Hellenistic and Parthian interlude and believed that it was their destiny to restore the greatness of Persia. Their national pride and imperial ambitions of their rulers brought Persia into numerous conflicts not only with the Roman Empire but also with various ethnic and religious entities within the Empire (Herzfeld, 1968).

The Sassanid emperors' religious zeal fueled upheavals and ethno-religious disputes in the empire and caused genocide and deportation of many tribes and ethnic groups. The bloody conflict with the Baloch although portrayed as an administrative issue by the Persian historians like Firdausi of *Shahnama*; however, religious or sectarian aspects of Sassanid-Baloch conflict, which culminated in the genocide of the Baloch, cannot be ruled out, taking into consideration the religious fanaticism of some of the Sassanid emperors like Shahpur and Khusrow I.

Figure 7: **Map of Sassanid Empire**

Source: <http://www.google.co.uk/ancientmapsofiran>

## Major Powers of Ancient Iran



The religion of the Sassanid Empire was Zoroastrianism. Sassanid religious policies contributed to the flourishing of numerous religious reform movements, the most important were Manichean and Mazdakian religious doctrines. Alongside Zoroastrianism, other religions, primarily Judaism, Christianity, and Buddhism, also existed in the Sassanid society (David, 1996). Middle Persian was the language of the Sassanid Empire.

The Sassanid Empire lasted until the Arabs defeated Yazdgerd III in the seventh century, and centuries of Persian supremacy on the Iranian plateau were replaced by the Arabs under the banner of the new religion of Islam.

## The Hephthalites

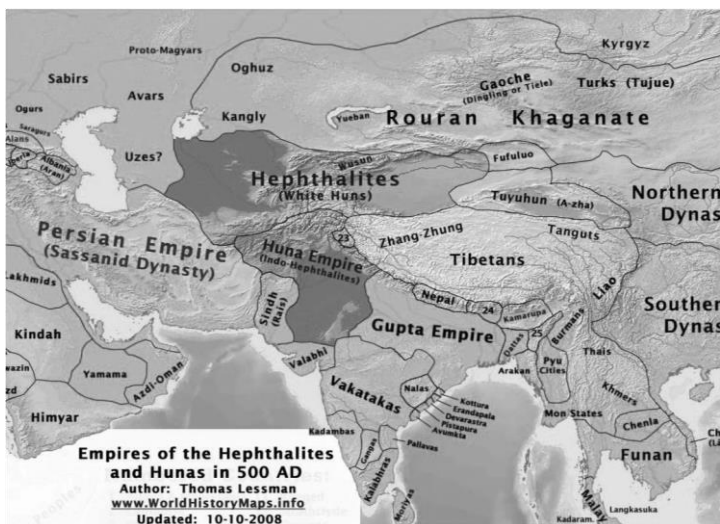
The group of Turkic tribes called Hephthalites appeared over the Iranian political horizons during the Sassanid period. These were Huns with fair complexions and received the name of White Huns. It is assumed that the Hephthalites constituted a second Hunnic wave who entered Bactria early in the fifth century CE and who seemed to have driven the earlier Huns (Kidārites) into India.

Figure 8: The Hephthalites Empire

Source: Thomas Lessman/[www.worldhistorymaps.info](http://www.worldhistorymaps.info)



## The Baloch and Balochistan



McGovern (1965) observed that Hephthalites or the White Huns were in constant conflict with Sassanid rulers. The Sassanid Emperor Peroz I (AD 457-484) launched three campaigns against them, all ending in disaster, and the Hephthalites exercised undisputed control over an extensive territory in Central Asia, Khurasan, and Afghanistan for a long time. Khusrow I (Anosharvan) between AD 558 and 561 finally was able to crush the Hephthalites in an epic battle near Bukhara, demarcating their territories along the line of the Oxus as mentioned by Firdausi in *Shahnama* (Firdausi, 1915). Although, the power of the Hephthalites was destroyed in Transoxania, Hephthalite kingdoms remained in Afghanistan, of which fragments survived for sometime even after the Arab invasion of Iran (McGovern, 1965).

Before their final eclipse by the Arabs, around AD 510, a Hephthalite ruler Toramana established his power over much of northern and western India. Succeeding rulers of the Hephthalite kingdom seem to have been based in Afghanistan, though it is uncertain whether it is in Kabul, Bamiyan, Gardez, or, most probably, Ghazni (Bivar, 2007). A large number of Hephthalites moved into present-day Sarawan and Jhalawan areas of Balochistan,

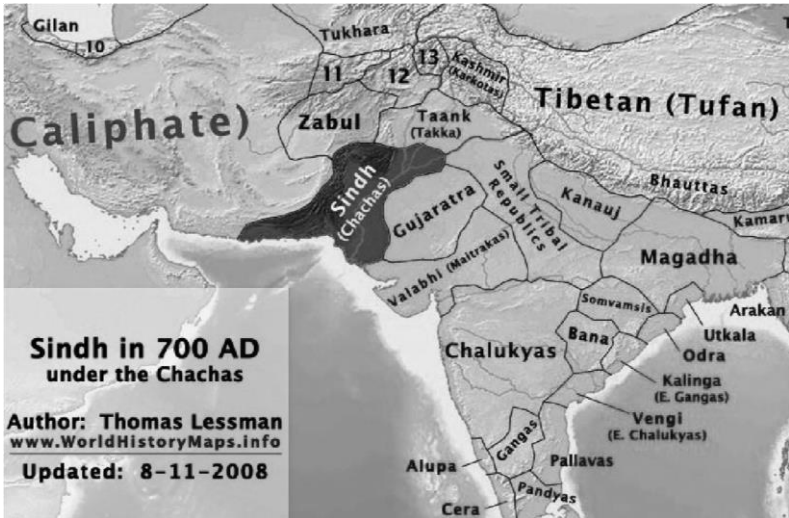


where they became absorbed into the Baloch tribes after the mass migration of the Baloch beginning from the ninth century and lasting up to the fourteenth century. At the time of Arab invasion of Balochistan in the seventh century, the areas, which now comprised Jhalawan and Sarawan of Balochistan, were under the control of the Hephthalites tribes. As the Arab writers were familiar with the term *Turan* as the region of Turkic people, they also named the area as Turan after these Turkish tribes.

## The eMpire of sindh

During the last century of the Sassanid Dynasty and before the Arab invasion of Iran, Sindh played a major role in the history of the Baloch. Major parts of present Balochistan were ruled by Rai Dynasty of Sindh during AD 489-632 (Masum, 1855). Rai Divaji was the greatest ruler of this dynasty. The Rais ruled an area extending to Kanauji in the east, Makuran in the west, and Surat port in the south. In the north, it extended to borders of Sistan and Suleiman ranges. Five kings of this dynasty are found to have been mentioned in the old historical accounts of India. They are Rai Devaji, Rai Sahras, Rai Sahasi, Rai Sahras II, and Rai Sahras V. Alor was the capital city of the dynasty, and Makuran and Turan were among the provinces of Rai Dynasty of Sindh.

Figure 9: **The Empire of Sindh**



Ancient empires that ruled an amalgam of people exerted powerful influences on various aspects of their lives. Many old languages and their speakers perished, and new ethnic entities and languages appeared from the intermingling of Medes, Persians, Greeks, Huns, and Sakas. The Greeks under Alexander the Great were able to destroy the mighty Achaemenid Empire established by Cyrus the Great. The Parthians introduced a new system of governance where they introduced the concept of “king of kings.” During the Sassanid period, a distinct Persian identity developed which, until now, is the core of Persian national consciousness. One important development during the Sassanid period was the adaptation of Zoroastrianism as official religion of the empire. With the weakening of Sassanid rule, the Hephthalites, the Sakas, and the Sindhis became able to occupy some parts of the empire. With the appearance of Bedouin Arabs on Iranian horizon, the ancient chapter of Iranian history came to an end.

The Baloch had been part of or had suffered during many of the historical happenings during the periods of the above-mentioned powers of ancient times. The history of the Baloch is undeniably linked with that of major ethnic or national entities of the ancient Central Asia.

# The historical Beginning of the Baloch

**L**anguage, cultural traditions, and geographical locations are the main factors in determining the ethnic origin of a people.

On linguistic, cultural, and geographical grounds, it has been strongly established by the works of eminent Iranologists that the Baloch origin can be traced within the northwest Iranian group of tribes. Based on the enquiries, it is believed that the original homeland of the Baloch must have been in the area where other speakers of northwestern Iranian languages were living. From the rock inscriptions of Emperor Darius and Shahpur, it was established that an ethnic group called Balashchik was living in a region called Balashagan which was somewhere between Caspian Sea and Lake Van. It appears that the Baloch is the transformation of Balashchik after their expulsion or migration from Balashagan.

## The Baloch origin

The footprints of ancient Baloch had been lost in the dust of history due to various reasons. It has not been an easy task for researchers to trace the Baloch history from the ancient times. This was mainly due to the unavailability of documented evidences, which could have been used to fit the Baloch in the larger schema of the Iranian national entities and languages. In this context, the only tools left for establishing the origin of such a people can be the linguistic and cultural connections. The logical solution to the problem of locating the origin of the Baloch is to find ethnic groups that are linguistically

and culturally closely affiliated with the Baloch in ancient times as their history is intertwined with the history of these ethnic groups in the Iranian plateau.

The reference to the Baloch in ancient historical accounts is very rare. Only some passing references can be found in classical Persian descriptions of ancient times. Accounts that are more detailed are available from the biased, and sometime confusing, remarks about the Baloch from the Arab writers. Baloch came into contact with the British when they occupied Punjab and Sindh in the nineteenth century. After declaring their aim of occupying the Baloch state of Kalat, they tasked some of their intelligence officers with information gathering on the Baloch. Some of the administrators of the regions that were in the proximity of the Baloch state produced valuable collections of Balochi ballads and historical accounts. Of these, the work of Dames (1904) appears to be comprehensive in the context of that time. Later research was fundamentally based on the basic research done by Dames. Dames and others traced the origin of the Baloch from Kerman. They based their assumption on the interpretation of some of the Baloch legends and from the writings of the Arab historians of medieval times.

Fortunately, after the works of famous researchers on Iranian languages in the twentieth century, a clear picture of the ancient Baloch has now emerged. Authentic works on Balochi language has established beyond doubt that it is a member of the northwestern group of Iranian languages, along with Zazaki Kurdish, Gilaki, Mazandarani, and Talyshi (Axenov, 2006; Jahani, 2003). Korn (2003) places Balochi among the transitional Western Iranian languages, categorizing it as a group in the sense of being a third member in-between north-and southwestern Iranian languages. Of ancient languages, Balochi bears affinities to both Middle Persian and Parthian. However, it has also been identified that Balochi has a marked individuality of its own and differs from both of these languages in important respects. Tedesco (1921) and MacKenzie (1961) developed the hypothesis which has not been contested by other researchers on Iran and Iranian languages that Persian,

Balochi, and Kurdish share common phonetic isoglosses. MacKenzie (1961) observed that the speakers of these three languages might once have been in closer contact geographically and ethnically.

MacKenzie believed that the people who later became Persians occupied the province of Fars in the southwest Iran, whereas the ancestors of the Baloch inhabited the central areas of western Iran, and the people who later became known as Kurds lived either in northwestern Luristan or in the province of Isfahan. Tedesco (1921) and Windfuhr (1975) saw various connections between Persian, Kurdish, and Balochi and in their works corroborated the close relationship between these languages.

On cultural grounds, the Baloch share most of the traditions of the Parthian and Medes tribes. Bosworth (1977) observed that it is clear that linguistic affinities of Balochi are with the Parthian language of northern Persia and that it occupies a central position between western and eastern Iranian languages. Some of the writers in the same vein pointed out that the Parthian history also confirms the settlement of a people speaking a similar language of Ashkani (Parthian) in the Elborz Mountains (Janmahmad, 1982). As observed by researchers like Dames (1904), some of the cultural aspects of the Parthian very much indicate close affinities of the Baloch with the Parthians. At the same time, many linguistic, cultural, and territorial indexes shift the balance of opinion toward the theory that the Baloch belong to or are closely related to Median groups of tribes among which the Kurds are the most probable ones. However, this assumption only indicates the relationship of the Baloch with other ethnic entities of the ancient period. As will be discussed in the following section, the Baloch was a well-established ethnic entity, having their own territorial region while living in alliance with other ethnic groups on regional or linguistic and cultural grounds and, most probably, sharing some of the cultural and linguistic features with their neighbors and allies.

## The Baloch

The meaning of the word Baloch has been defined variously, and diverse explanations have been mentioned regarding the origin of the term applied to a particular ethnic group. Herzfeld (1968) believed that it is derived from *Brza-vaciya*, which came from *Brza-vak*, a Median word meaning a loud cry, in contrast to *Namravak*, meaning quiet and polite way of talking. Rawlinson (1873) maintained that the Baloch owe their name to Babylonian king “Belus,” which is also the name of their God. It is also believed that the word is a nickname, meaning a cockscomb. Dames (1904) believed that as the word “Baloch” in Persian means a cockscomb or crest and the Baloch troops who fought for Astyages or Kai Khusrau (585-550 BC) were wearing helmets with cockscomb crest, they got the nickname of the Baloch. While listing the warriors of Kai Khusrau, Firdausi mentioned the Baloch under the command of General Ashkash as follows:

*“Next (after Gustaham) came shrewd Ashkash,  
endowed with prudent heart and ready brain. His  
troop was from the wanderers of the Koch and  
Baloch with exalted cockscomb crests and very  
rams to fight. No one had seen their backs in battle  
or one of their fingers bare of armor. Their banner  
was a Pard with claws projecting. Ashkash  
felicitated Kai*

*Khusrau at large upon the happy turn of fortune  
(Shahnama-e-Firdausi, 1908, pp. 33-34).”*

Among the Baloch, it is generally believed that the word “Baloch,” if applied in the sense of cultural implications, manifests something magnificent, magnanimous, and powerful. Perhaps this perception on the meaning of the “Baloch” led some writers to believe that etymologically, it is made of two Sanskrit words, “Bal” and “Och.” “Bal” means strength or power, and “Och” means high or magnificent. The word “Baloch,” therefore, means very powerful and magnificent (Janmahmad, 1982).

One aspect of the meaning of the word “Baloch” that could have been important in finding the origin of the Baloch had, strangely, been missed by all scholars and researchers. That is the mention of an ethnic group in the name of Balashchik (Balascik) living alongside many other ethnic entities in the ancient land of Balashagan (Balashakan) between the Caspian Sea and Lake Van in the presentday Turkey and Azerbaijan. The word Baloch is most probably a rather small modification of the term Balascik. There is not much difference in the pronunciation of Balascik, Balashchik, Baloachik, or Baloch. Even today, in different parts of Balochistan, many people call the Baloch as Balochuk and Balochi as Balochiki. It is most probable that the group of tribe who were living in Balashakan was named after the region, or the region itself was named after its inhabitants, the Balascik.

## BALASHAGAN:

### The original home of The Baloch

From the deciphering of rock inscriptions of ancient Persian rulers, it is now possible to locate the original homeland of the Baloch. Various rock inscriptions by different Achaemenid emperors mentioned a region called Balashagan or Balashakan under their rule. There is also mentioning of a people called Balascik living in that region. These emperors claimed on the rock inscriptions the subjugation of the people of Balashagan alongside the account of victories over many other peoples.

The Achaemenid Emperor Darius I (Xerxes I 550-486 BC) in the inscriptions proclaimed that they are “king of lands holding many or all peoples” (Von Voigtlander, 1978). For naming the lands, they used the word *Dahyus*, and Balashagan was one of the *Dahyus*. During the Sassanid era, according to *Encyclopedia Iranica* that quoted different ancient Greek sources, Balashagan or Balashakan, “the country of the Balas,” was a satrapy of the empire (<http://www.iranicaonline.org>).

Balashagan (Balashakan) was listed among the northwestern and Caucasian provinces of Sassanid Empire, among them Albania, Atropatene, Armenia, Iberia, Balashagan, and the gate of Alans were mentioned. The inscription of Sassanid Emperor Shahpur I (AD 240-270) at Naqsh-e-Rostam describes the satrapy of Balashagan as “extending to the Caucasus mountains and the Gate of Albania (Gate of the Alans).” It bordered with lower courses of the rivers Kura and the Aras (Araxes), and, on south, it was bordered by Atropatene and had the Caspian Sea on its east. Shahpur’s inscription indicates that it had its own political entity even though it was subject to Albania that was itself under the Persian rule. Strabo in Book II of his geography quoted by MacKenzie (1998) gave one of the earliest accounts of the region and mentioned the kingdom of Atropatene that incorporated Balashakan. Strabo mentioned that the monarch of Balashagan also gained the title of king under Sassanid Emperor Ardashir, which, most probably, would indicate him being a vassal of Sassanid emperor.

As recorded by Wiesehofer ((2006) and Schmitt (2000), Shahpur listed the provinces in the inscription of *Ka’be-ye Zardusht* as follows:

*“And I [Shahpur I] possess the lands [provinces: Greek ethne]: Fars [Persis], Pahlav [Parthia], Huzestan [Khuzistan], Meshan [Maishan, Mesene], Asorestan [Mesopotamia], Nod-Ardakhshiragan*

*[Adiabene], Arbayestan [Arabia], Adurbadagan [Atropatene], Armen [Armenia], Virozan [Iberia], Segan [Machelonia], Arran [Albania], Balasagan up to the Caucasus and to the ‘gate of the Alans’ and all of Padishkwar[gar] the entire Elburz chain = Tabaristan and Gelan, Mad [Media], Gurgan [Hyrcania], Marv [Margiana], Harey [Aria], and all of Abarshahr [all the upper (=eastern, Parthian) provinces], Kerman [Kerman], Sakastan, Turgistan, Makuran, Pardan*



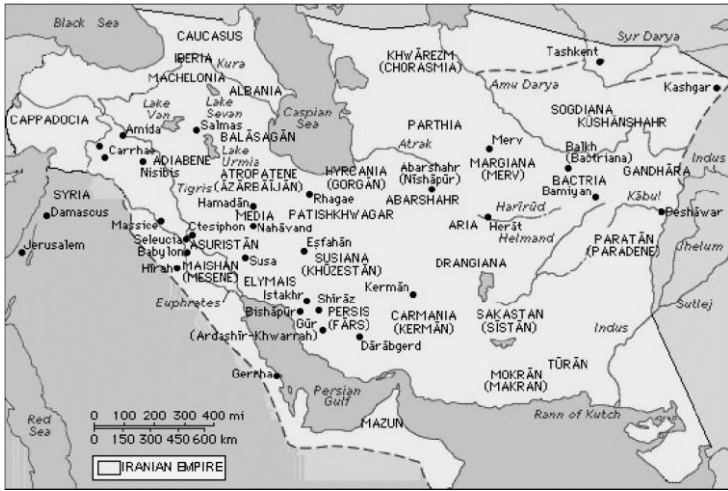
## The historical Beginning of The Baloch

*[Paradene], Hind [Sind] and Kushanshahr all the way to Pashkibur [Peshavar?] and to the borders of Kashgaria, Sogdia and Chach [Tashken] and of the sea-coast Mazonshahr [Oman] .”*

MacKenzie (1998) observed that Kerdir, the high priest of Emperor Shahpur I, at *Naqsh-e Rostam* added an edited list of the countries ruled by the king of kings. These editions by Kerdir are preserved in the Greek and Parthian versions among the trilingual inscriptions. This list comprised of Pars (Persis), Pahlav (Parthia), Xuzestan (Susiane), Mesan (Mesene), Assrestan (Assyria), Nodsiragan (Adiabene), Adurbayagan (Atropatene), Spahan (Isfahan), Ray (Rhages), Kerman (Karmania), Sagestan (Sakastane), Gurgan (Hyrkania), Marw (Margiane), Harew (Areia), Abarsahr (Khurasan), Turestan (Turene), Makuran (Makuran), and Kusansahr ta fraz o Paskabur (the Kushans country up to Peshawar), May (Media), Hind (India), and “on that side of the sea” Mazunsahr (Oman), and others, namely Arman (Armenia), Wiruzan Iberia (Georgia), Alan (Albania), and Balashagan ta fraz o Kaf kof ud Alanan dar (Balashagan up to the Caucasus and the Gate of the Alans).

Figure 10: **Map of Sassanid Empire showing the location of Balashagan:** At the time of Khusrow Anosharvan (AD 531-579)  
Source: <http://www.google.co.uk/ancientmapsofiran>

## The Baloch and Balochistan



According to Chaumont (2006), Balashagan corresponds to the part of the territory of the Caspiana that was situated south of Kor and Balashchik and which were among the seven listed people living in Eastern Caucasus.

Frye (1963) observed the fact that in this inscription, the country of Balashagan (Balashakan) is mentioned independently of Albania in the list of provinces of the Sassanid Empire, which could mean that at the time of its conquest by Emperor Shahpur I, it formed a sort of political entity, even if it was more or less subjected to the Kingdom of Albania. On the other hand, Adontz (1970), quoting the Arab historian Ebn Kordabeh, mentioned that the king of Balashagan (*Balashajan Shah*) among the dynasts received the title of king from Emperor Ardashir. This would indicate that the king of Balashagan had made an act of submission and allegiance to Emperor Ardashir (or to Emperor Shahpur), of whom he became, by the same act, a vassal. According to Shahpur's inscription, most of Transcaucasia was included in his empire, and in the inscription made by Kerdir at the same site, it is also proudly mentioned that—

*“the land of Armenia, Georgia, Albania and*

## THE HISTORICAL BEGINNING OF THE BALOCH

*Balashagan, up to the Gate of the Albanians,  
Shahpur, the king of kings, with his horses and men  
pillaged, burned and devastated” (Frye, 1963).*

The geographical boundaries of Balashagan have been mentioned by different historians differently such as the “land of the Caspians,” Caspiana, or part of the territory of Armenia situated south of the Kor. However, the heart of this country was the *Dasht-e-Balashakan* “Balashagan plain,” which is virtually identical with the Mogan steppe. According to Adontz (1970), quoting references of Ebn Kordabeh, this plain was located on the road from Barzand to Vartan (Vartanakert). In the Sassanid period, Balashagan extended as far as the Caucasus range and the Darband pass. During the Parthian supremacy of Iranian plateau beginning around 238 BC after their seizure of the Seleucid province of Parthia, Balashagan might also have become a dependency of the *Ashkani* (Arsacid) Dynasty, though there is no documentary evidence of that.

## BALASHCHIK OR THE BALOCH

During the Achaemenid and Sassanid periods, Balashchik has been mentioned as an ethnic group inhabiting the Achaemenid Satrapy of Balashakan or Balashagan. Strabo (2009) provided the names of some tribes that populated Caucasian Albania, including the regions of Artsakh and Utik. These were Utians, Mycians, Caspians, Gargarians, Sakasenians, Gelians, Sodians, Lupenians, Balash [ak] anians, Parsians, and Parrasians. Deliberating on these ethnic entities, Hewsén (2001) observed that these tribes were certainly not of Armenian origin, and although certain Iranian peoples must have settled here during the long period of Persian and Median rule, most of the natives were not even Indo-Europeans. There is also the mention of a kingdom of Sanesanan, whose king during the reign of Armenian king Khusrow II, according to Thomas de Marga (1893), also ruled over other peoples, among whom figured the Balashchik. Having invaded Armenia, the army of this king was cut to pieces by the Armenians, and the survivors fell back toward the country of the

Balashchik. It would seem then that toward AD 335-336, the Massagete King Sanesan occupied a part of Balashagan, where he recruited troops, all the while recognizing, at least nominally, the suzerainty of the king of kings of Iran. At the beginning of the following century, a Catholic missionary, Saint Mesrob, in the course of his evangelistic mission, preached in Balashagan, a country that then belonged to Albania. Movses (1961), deliberating on the subject, observed that this situation could be explained by a kind of dependence (vassalage) of Balashagan in relation to Albania.

Elise, a fifth-century author of the history of Vardan and the Armenian War, furnished a detailed account of the Armenian rebellion against Sassanid Emperor Yazdgerd II in AD 450. This rebellion was prompted by his persecution of people of Christian faith. Balashagan is also mentioned in connection with the revolt of the Armenians against the Persians (Thomson, 1982). Thus, in a battle that took place near the Lop'nas River, some Armenian lords attacked the king of Balashagan and his troops. The context leaves no doubt that the forces of Balashagan were, at that time, fighting on the side of the Persians. The king of the country, Heran, called Hun by Elise, soon rebelled against the Sassanid king of kings Yazdgerd II and, later, massacred a Persian Army in Albania. Due to this rebellion, the king of Balashagan was crushed and killed on the orders of Emperor Yazdgerd II.

Adontz (1970), quoting different ancient historians, observed that there were two attempts at conversion of Balashagan to Christianity: first, that of Gregory, which must have ended in his martyrdom, then that of Saint Mesrob. It is not certain whether the population was converted and to which extent; however, in the third quarter of the sixth century, a bishop of Balashagan by the name of Timothy was figured with the other bishops, among those named in a letter addressed by the catholicos John II of Armenia to the catholicos of Albania (Movses, 1961). Besides, a Sassanid seal is inscribed in Pahlavi in the name "of the great catholicos of Hlbîn and of Balashagan"; Hlbîn, in this context, could very well be the middle Persian name of the city called Alewan in Armenian, capital of the

district of the same name situated in Balashagan. From the description of the Sassanid and Roman frontiers, it is obvious that Balashakan was in the same mountainous region where Greeks and Roman writers had listed several predatory mountainous ethnic groups (as will be briefly described in the following sections).

It appears that after the collapse of the Sassanid Dynasty in the seventh century, the name Balashagan and the people mentioned as Balashchik began to disappear from historical accounts. However, a few mentionings of Balashagan can be found in Armenian and Arabic chronicles of that time. According to Thomas de Marga (1893), in the year AD 800, the bishop Eliya, appointed to preach the gospel in that country, which was no longer called Balashagan, found there a population given to the worship of a god by the name of Yazd who resided in an oak tree called “king of the forest”; the bushes that surrounded this tree were called “children of Yazd.” The local population claimed to have received this god from their ancestors. In Pahlavi, Yazd is the ordinary term denoting God. Thomas de Marga (1893) observed that the cult that Bishop Eliya had to combat was manifestly a borrowing from the beliefs of Mazdaism, a borrowing that must have been originated in the Sassanid period and amalgamated with a very different indigenous cult of the sacred trees.

According to Baladhuri (1924), in the period of early Arab conquests, Balashagan spanned the plain extending across the lower course of the Aras (Araxes) river, from Barda‘a through Baylaqan to Vartan, Bajarvan, and Barzand. It included the provinces of Arran and Mogan, though, as Minorsky (1958) noted, the name is common in Armenian sources but rare in Islamic ones. Baladhuri (1924) mentioned that in about AD 645, Caliph Othman sent Salman b. Rabi al Baheli to Arran, and after the surrender of Baylaqan, Bar‘a‘a, and so on, he summoned the Kurds of Balashagan to Islam and imposed the *jezya* (a tax that Muslim rulers exerted from their non-Muslim subjects) on some of them. Baladhuri further mentioned that when Hodayfa ibn Yaman made a peace treaty with the Marzban (governor) of Azerbaijan, one of the provisions was that

the Arabs should not expose the local people to the depredations of the Kurds of Balashagan and the Shabalan mountains.

From the ancient Persian accounts, the presence of the Baloch in the region, which was known as Balashagan, can be observed from the accounts of the protracted conflict between Kai Khusrau and Afrasiab. It has been established from the *Shahnama* that the Baloch were under the command of General Ashkash during this period; General Ashkash, according to various accounts from *Shahnama* and from other historical accounts of Iran at that time, was deputed to make war on the Turanian territory of Khwarezm. Khwarezm is adjacent to the region which was known, at that time, as Balashagan.

The mention of Kurds and absence of any reference to the presence of Balashchik in Balashagan by the Arab writers is noteworthy. If it is not simply an inadvertent omission on the part of the writer, then it may indicate that the Balashchik or the Baloch may have been removed from the area or they may have migrated *en-masse* from their original place from where they got their ethnic or national identity. As was discussed above, the region where Balashagan was part of the Achaemenid and Sassanid Empires but was sometimes claimed by the kings of Armenia, were themselves subject to Achaemenid authority. The inhabitants of the regions among whom the Balashchik included were not easily subjugated in an effective way, and it is most probable that either they formed some kind of a confederacy or established their own autonomous principalities.

It is to this period of history that the original development of the Balochi language can be assigned, which, according to linguists, is a northwestern Iranian language. This language became the most obvious symbol of the Baloch national identity in the coming centuries. Due to scanty evidence of their migrations to northwestern Caspian region, and their settlements in Balashakan, it is hard to visualize a clear picture of the Baloch sociocultural life at that time; however, keeping into account the general milieu of the era, it can be suggested that they were pastoralist nomads, herding sheep and goats and living in tribal communities.

## **The neighboring People of The Baloch in Balashagan**

Were the Baloch only inhabitants of the region known as Balashagan, or were there others? It is most probable that the Baloch were not the only people living in Balashagan, taking into account the continuous migration and alliance formations of different tribes in that period of history. According to historical accounts of the time, the Baloch had been living in Balashagan with other tribes like Cyrtii (Kurds), Cadusii, Caspians, and Mardis.

Descriptions of predatory tribes in the region can be found in the works of writers dealing with ancient history of Iran. Arrian (1958) mentioned many mountain-dwelling and predatory tribes living in the region in or around Balashagan. Strabo mentioned the Cossaei and the Paraetaceni, who bordered on Assyria and Media, respectively. The Cossaei were possibly the remains of the ancient Kassites, and the Paraetaceni occupied the mountains of northern Persia. Strabo (1895) mentioned the four predatory peoples who were not the subject of the Persian Empire and receiving “tributes” from the king, in consideration for road passage. This may tantamount to modern day “protection money.” These were semi-independent or “not subject” nations, meaning, they were not in direct control of the empires of the day. Arrian (1958) pointed out that the two sides, that is, the emperor and the tribes of that region, presumably, tried to maintain a standing agreement on this. They lived their independent life, provided they protect the trade routes running through Persia and Armenia or Greece. In return, they received a pledge of noninterference and some kind of subsidy from the emperor. Arrian explicitly mentioned that the Cossaei people received “gifts” from the emperor for the protection of Assyria—Ecbatana road in 317 BC. Accordingly, the Greek General Antigonos had been quoted regretting for not consenting to gift-giving to these tribes on his way from Susa to Ecbatana and suffered unwarranted difficulties while passing through their land.

The Cyrtii or Cyrtians, ancestors of the Kurds and Lurs, were also mentioned as the inhabitants of Balashagan or living around Balashagan. They may already have been well distributed in the Zagros range and spreading from Persia into Media, though not yet as far as Gordyene above the upper Tigris or Azerbaijan (Media Atropatene). Strabo (1958) mentioned Cyrtians as a tribe dwelling mainly in the mountains of Atropatenian Media together with the Cadusii, Amardi (Mardi), Tapyri, and others.

Strabo (1958) described Cadusii as an Iranian tribe settled between the Caspian Sea and the Black Sea on the southwestern shores of the Caspian Sea and south of the Araxes River (Aras) between the Albani in the north and the Mardi in the east, that is, in the mountainous northern part of Media around the Para choatras Range. It is mentioned, together with the Gelae, Amardi, Vitii, Anariacae, and others, that Strabo characterized Cardusii as a numerous, migratory, and predatory people. Strabo and Arrian both agree on Cardusii being excellent javelin throwers and foot soldiers, and most warlike.

Caspians was an ancient people, dwelling along the southwestern shore of the Caspian Sea. The Caspian Sea, the Caspian Mountain, and the Caspian Gates were all named after this people. The Caspians have even been identified by some scholars with the Kassites (Herzfeld, 1968). Herodotus, Strabo, and other classical authors mentioned the Caspians and grouped them with other inhabitants of the southern shore of the Caspian Sea, like the Amardi, Anariacae, Cadusii, Albani, and Vitii, and their land is said to be a part of Albania. Whether they belonged to the Median Empire or not is unclear. According to Herodotus (Cook, 1983), they were included in the eleventh Satrapy of the Achaemenid Empire under Darius I. The Mardi nomads were another group of tribes named as among the four predatory mountain peoples of the region where the Balashchik were living.

Balashchik, as a group of Indo-Iranic tribes after their migration from Central Asia, settled in the northwestern Caspian region. The



region of their abode—Balashakan or Balashagan—later vanished from the geographical and historical accounts; however, the ethnic entity mentioned in the rock inscriptions of the Sassanid emperors as Balashchik survived. The Balashchik were not alone in Balashagan but were with other tribes in the area between the Caspian Sea and Lake Van and the Elborz Mountain. The Balashchik, like other peoples of that region, must have been influenced by the events occurring in the region. It is also probable that Balashchik also absorbed some of the cultural and linguistic influences from the surrounding people. As a member of northwestern Iranian languages, Balochi—the language of the Balashchik—included many elements of other northwestern Iranian languages. The Balashchik of Balashagan, although vanished from the historical accounts of ancient Iran, nevertheless, continued their journey into history as the Baloch of the contemporary world.

# **Dispersion of the Baloch from Balashagan**

**D**uring the late Sassanid period and early Islamic era, there was no mention of any presence of the Balashchik or the Baloch in Balashagan. While there is mention of some Kurdish tribes in that region by Arab historians, there is no mentioning of what was happening to the Baloch. However, during the decaying years of the Sassanid Empire and from the beginning of the Arab invasion of Iran, one can observe the presence of the Baloch in Kerman, Sistan, Makuran, and Turan. One can frame a schema of the Baloch wanderings from Balashagan to their present-day abode by correlating various historical happenings during the Achaemenid, Greek, Parthian, and Sassanid periods. Two phenomena could have been responsible for the mass migration of the Baloch: first would be a voluntary migration of the Baloch as typical phenomenon of nomadic tribes, and the second could be forced migrations and resettlements of the Baloch by superior powers of the day.

## **VolunTary MigrATions**

The Baloch were pastoralist nomads and dependent upon domesticated animal husbandry—their economy depended on the herds and their products. Like other pastoralist nomads, they had routine migrations along established routes between focal grazing areas. The voluntary migrations of nomadic Baloch in that sense would be influenced by maintaining equilibrium between the resources of the natural environment and the needs of the people. Snow-covered meadows and the grasslands of Zagros and Elborz would be unable to sustain a large number of grazing flocks in winter (Le Strange, 1905). Grazing would be restricted to a few months of

late spring, summer, and early fall during which the regions were ideal pastures and grazing grounds for sheep and goats. For the Baloch as a mobile nomadic group, however, it might be important to find a combination of summer mountain pastures and winter grazing grounds in order to make animal husbandry economically viable. The great desert, the vast unsettled lands of Sistan, the planes around Kuh-e Bazman and Kuh-e Taftan, the mountain ranges of Makuran and Kerman and the valleys of Turan might have provided formidable alternative pasturelands. These areas were mostly semiarid natural steppes with little agricultural but considerable pastoral potentials and would be ideal environments for winter pastures.

In search of new grazing lands, the Baloch might have gone as far as the boundaries of modern Balochistan, Sistan, and southern Khurasan. The Arab historian, Maqaddesi, quoted by Hansman (1961), noted the presence of the Balochi-speaking people in Punjgur a few decades after the conquest of Iran by the Arabs. He described Punjgur as the main town of Makuran, inhabited by Balochispeaking people only nominally Muslim. Frye (1961) pointed out the presence and migration of the Baloch through Dasht-e-Lut desert in different times. It is highly probable that during these migrations to greener pastures, some of the neighboring ethnic groups and, most probably, some of the Kurdish tribes accompanied the migrating

Baloch tribes. This is apparent from the presence of some of the Kurdish tribes in Balochistan, which have been totally merged with the greater Baloch identity. It is interesting to find the Baloch in Kerman, southern Makuran, and around the Bashkard region which are known as Cyrtici. They are, most probably, originated from the Cyrtii and migrated along with the Balashchik from Balashagan. Probably, this admixture of Kurdish and the Baloch tribes in these areas compelled some researchers to believe that Koch and Baloch were actually Kurds and Baloch, whose presence were mentioned at the end of the Sassanid era in Kerman, Sistan, and Makuran (Le Strange, 1905; Markwart, 1931).

The volunteer migration of some tribes among the Baloch or their neighboring and allied tribes toward the aforementioned areas might

not have been only due to changing political conditions in Balashagan but also due to economic conditions. Tribes or group of tribes on their routine migratory sojourns to remote areas far from their original abode may opt to settle permanently in these new areas. The presence of some of the Baloch tribes in Sistan, Kerman, Makuran, and Turan during Sassanid or pre-Sassanid times can be explained in this manner.

## dePortATions And reseTTleMenTs

Deportation—the expulsion of a person or a group of people from their residence—has been a practice of various Iranian empires. Accounts of deportations of whole population of Hatra and DuraEuropos had been well documented by ancient writers like Strabo, Arrian, and Herodotus. The Assyrian king Tiglathpileser III deported 65,000 Medes, replacing them on the plateau with Aramaeans. In ancient chronicles, there is graphic description of three deportations of Jews to Babylon in 597 BC, 587 BC, and in 582 BC. In Iran, during the Median, Parthian, and Sassanid era, deportation was a common practice implemented to neutralize unruly population. Cyrus the Great in 547 BC defeated the Lydians in the Battle of Sardis, and a part of the population appears to have been deported to Nippur in Babylonia. Although there were several mass deportations under the Achaemenids, reports of such events from the Parthian period are rare. However, during 176-171, Parthian king of kings Phraates I settled the Mards in Charax and, later, deported them to the northeastern borders of the Parthian Empire (Rawlinson, 1873). During the Sassanid period, the peoples of the provinces along the eastern frontiers of the Roman Empire had endured several deportations. Sassanid Emperor Shahpur I (in his rock inscriptions) boasted about the people from the Roman Empire whom he had carried off as booty and settled in the Empire of Eran, in Persis, in Parthia, in Kuzestan, in Asoristan, and in other provinces (Wiesehofer, 2006). The mention of pillaging and burning of a whole region, including Balashagan, by Sassanid Emperor Shahpur as mentioned in the revised inscription of Kerdir is noteworthy in the context of disappearance of the Balascik from that region.

It is difficult to learn from limited sources about the deportation of peoples within the Sassanid Empire; however, some accounts of persecutions of Christians and other religious sects by the Sassanid emperors have been presented by various authors. During AD 609, the Sassanid deported the whole population of conquered Edessa to Sistan and Khurasan (Frye, 1984). Theophanes (1997) reported the deportation of many thousands from Caesarea in Cappadocia. According to Theophanes (1997), after Armenia and Georgia came under Sassanid control in the reign of Emperor Shahpur II, the cities of Artashat, Valarshapat, Eruandashat, Zarehawan, Zarishat, Van, and Nakjavan were taken and their populations deported.

Resettlements of tribes and people within the Sassanid Empire during the reign of Khusrow I (AD 531-579) have been frequently mentioned in historical accounts (Pourshariati, 2008). The Arab historian writing on Persian history has been mentioning the resettlement of the people of the Barez Mountains in different parts of the Sassanid Empire. They recorded the resettlement of thousands of people belonging to Abkhaz, Banjar, Balanjar, and Alans in Azerbaijan and neighboring regions. The people identified by Baladhuri in *Fotuh al Baladan* as Siasijunn or Siasijiya were resettled in Emperor Khusrow's newly built cities of Saberan, Masqat, Darband, Dabil, and Nakjavan and the castles of Ways, Kelab, and Sahyunis.

Tribes and ethnic groups described by ancient writers, including Strabo, as nomads, migrants, and predatory brigands included Cyrtians, Cadusii, Mardis, Caspians, and others (among these "others," it is certain that the Balashchik were a main component). They seem to have had continual troubles with the Achaemenid, Greek, Parthians, and Sassanid central governments. It appears that as they were located on the important passes, the governments or powers of the time would give them "unofficial" authority of taking taxes from the caravans for their "safety." Conflicts and troubles are inevitable when two groups holding unequal power bases try to make standstill arrangements. Excesses from either side could ignite troubles, and taking into account the known historical independent behaviors of the people of Balashagan and the surrounding regions,

minor disagreements certainly could have caused violent battles with much bloodshed, most probably, ending up with deportations and forced migrations of the defeated populations.

According to Strabo, Arrian, and Herodotus, these predatory tribes mentioned above were living within the powerful empires of the period in a “love and hate” relationship (Herzfeld, 1968). When their relationship were normal, they fought with the Achaemenids, the Greeks, the Parthians, and the Sassanids while, during times of hostilities, they fought violent battles against them and, sometimes, faced the brunt of the powerful armies and often ended up with total rout and faced resulting genocide and deportations. The Achaemenids tried to pacify these predatory tribes with gift-giving as mentioned earlier; however, there is description of a revolt about 405 BC, around the end of Emperor Darius II’s reign (Cook, 1983). There is evidence of an expedition against the Cadusii by the Sassanid Emperor Ardasher II during the great revolts around 380 BC; this expedition was a complete fiasco, and only diplomatic negotiations by the Satrap Tiribazus made a retreat possible, with the king himself marching away on foot (Olmstead, 1948). Sassanid Emperor Darius III is said to have been made satrap of Armenia after having defeated a rebellious Cadusian in a one-on-one combat during an expedition against that tribe in the first years of Ardasher III’s reign. Alexander the Great refused to follow the Achaemenid *modus vivendi* with the mountain tribes, that is, he did not accept the notion of “not subject,” and by not giving “gifts” to these tribes, he chose to battle for their complete submission. One can easily imagine the disastrous consequences of a fight of these tribes with the mighty forces of the Macedonian conqueror.

The main reason of conflicts between the Baloch (and other ethnic groups mentioned above) with the powerful empires, according to ancient historians of Iran and Greek, was the disruption of the trade due to the predatory activities of these tribes. Schoff (1914) and Cook (1983) observed that one of the important routes for trade caravans was the Royal Road, which stretched for hundreds of miles from Sardis in Asia Minor through Mesopotamia and down the Tigris to

Susa. Other roads connected Babylon with Ecbatana, Bactria, and the borders of India. Persia was also linked with Indus valley by a road through Makuran (Cook, 1983). In the west, a road ran from the Gulf of Issus through Asia Minor to Sinope. Another important commercial route ran south from Sardis to the Mediterranean coast of Asia Minor and thence to Tarsus, where it was connected with a road through the Cilician Gates and north to the Black Sea. The northern shore of the Black Sea was connected by road with Siberia via the southern Russian steppes and the Urals (Rostovtzeff, 1963). As observed by Lukonin (1988), securing these roads from robbers and other disruptions was important for the finances of the Persian Empire and for stable relations with other powers in Asia and Europe.

Apart from the punitive nature of resettlements, allied tribes and peoples were also settled to frontier regions as for military purposes to secure the border regions. Resettlement of allied tribes in order to change the demographic balance of a particular region might also be a kind of punitive action against the hostile tribes threatening the trade routes or the stability of the empire. The military purposes behind the resettlements within the empire are clear. The resettlement of the Mards by the Parthians was intended to provide guards for the Caspian Gates. The settlement of Arab tribes in Bahrain and Kerman under Emperor Shahpur II were for the purpose of bringing hostile elements under control by dispersing them to remote areas.

It appears that the Baloch faced major deportations during the reigns of Sassanid emperors Shahpur II (AD 309-379) and Anosharvan (Khusrow I, AD 531-579). There is, however, no concrete documentary evidence, but circumstantial evidence suggests that deportation, migration, or movements of the Baloch from their original land began long before their persecutions by the Sassanid. From the accounts (by *Shahnama* and other medieval documents) of the Baloch encounters with powerful Sassanid emperors, it is easy to discern that the bulk of the Baloch population or migration *en masse* may have occurred during the Sassanid period. It is quite understandable that after the brutal campaigns by Anosharvan, one of the mightiest emperors of the Sassanid Dynasty, and his boasting of

the genocide of the Baloch, the situation for the surviving Baloch was untenable at their original abode. It would also be natural for the surviving Baloch to evacuate the region. They migrated *en masse* and scattered in different far-flung areas of the empire to survive and gain some breathing space.

As mentioned earlier, from the little documentary evidences mentioning the Baloch in ancient historical accounts, one can find that there was a “hate and love” relationship between the Baloch and various Iranian empires of the past. There is mention of the Baloch being part of armies of some of the reigning Achaemenid and Sassanid emperors. Firdausi dealt in detail with the relationship of the Baloch and the Persian dynasties in his famous book of kings (*Shahnama*) which itself was based on various ancient historical sources.

Firdausi (1915, pp. 241-243) narrated the campaign of Khusrow I (Anosharvan) against the Baloch in one of his narrations :

*The Shah marched thence to Hindustan and sojourned there.*

*At his commandment all folk came to him,*

*Came seeking to ingratiate themselves, And*

*for two miles beside the Indus-bank,*

*Where horses, elephants, brocades and coin.*

*The great men all with honesty of heart*

*And loyalty appeared before the Shah,*

*Who questioned them in accordance to their rank.*

*With jocund heart the Shah departed thence:*



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*Troops, steeds, and elephants fulfilled the world.*

*He went his way, and tidings came to him:—*

*‘The world is wasted by the Baluchis,*

*Till from exceeding slaughter, pillaging*

*And harrying, the earth is overwhelmed,*

*But greater ruin cometh from Gilan,*

*And curses banish blessings.’*

*Then the heart of Anosharvan, the Shah, was sorrowful,*

*And grief commingled with his joy. He said*

*To the Iranians: “The Alans and Hind Were, in the terror of our  
scimitars, like silk.*

*Now our own realm is turned against us:*

*Shall we hunt lions and forego the sheep?”*

*One said to him: “The garden hath no rose*

*Without a thorn, O King! So too these marches,*

*Are ever troublesome and treasure-wasting.*

*As for Baloch the glorious Ardashir*

*Tried it with all his veteran officers, But all his stratagems  
and artifices,*

*His feints, his labors, arms, and fighting failed.*

*And though the enterprise succeeded ill,*

*He cloaked the failure even to himself."*

*This story of the thane enraged the Shah,*

*Who went upon his way toward Baluch.*

*Now when he drew anear those lofty mountains, He went around them  
with his retinue,*

*And his entire host encircled them about,*

*And barred the passage e'en to wind and ant.*

*The troops, like ants and locusts, occupied*

*The mountain-outskirts to the sandy desert.*

*A herald went his rounds about the host,*

*Proclaiming from the mountains, caves, and plains:—*

*"Whenever the Baluchis are seeking food,*

*If they be warriors and carrying arms,*

*However many or however few,*

*Let not a single one of them escape."*

*The troops, aware of the anger of the Shah, Stopped every outlet with  
their horse and foot;*

*Few of the Baluchis or none survived.*

*No women, children, warriors were left.*

*All of them perished by the scimitar, And all their evil doings  
had an end,*

*The world had quiet from their ravaging:  
No Baluchi, seen or unseen, remained,*

*While on their mountains, so it came to pass,*

*The herds thenceforward strayed without a guard;*

*Alike on waste and lofty mountain-top,*

*The sheep required no shepherd. All the folk*

*Around thought nothing of past sufferings,*

*And looked on vale and mountain as their home.*

Anosharvan, obviously, did not follow the advice of one of his companions who forbade the king of kings not to undertake an action against the Baloch as earlier Emperor Ardashir tried it and failed. According to Firdausi, peace prevailed upon the world with the

annihilation of the Baloch. However, it appeared that some of the Baloch survived the genocide. It is most probable that the remaining uprooted Baloch scattered in various directions and settled in different regions of the empire out of sight and away from main administrative centers; or, perhaps, the remnants of the Baloch from Balashagan may have been resettled in the remotest corners of the empire as was the norm of the Sassanid Empire in dealing with hostile elements. On several other occasions, Khusrow I (Anosharvan) made several terrific marches against the tribes of the northern regions on religious and administrative reasons. Perhaps, due to continued disturbances, the Baloch, in order to avoid the turbulent situations, or to avoid being the direct target of later actions, might have abandoned their original homeland in the hilly regions and moved relentlessly toward central, southern, and eastern parts of the Iranian Empire.

Going through the detailed history of the Achaemenid Empire, it appears that an earlier deportation of the Baloch may have occurred during the reign of Emperor Darius I. It has been mentioned in Iranian historical accounts that Kurds, Parthians, and many other ethnic groups rose against Darius, immediately after he captured the throne, by killing the so-called usurper. As the Baloch were in the same region where the opposition was built up against Darius I, it is most probable that the Baloch were among the people who were deported after the failure of the rebellion.

It is very interesting to note that despite the initial hostility between the Baloch and the Achaemenid Dynasty, the Baloch, on later occasions, also fought for the Persian kings of that dynasty. During Alexander's campaigns against Iran, to counter the Macedonian advance, the Baloch were mentioned as being part of the doomed Achaemenid Army (Shustheri, 1925). Between 558 and 530 BC, the Baloch were a part of the army of King Kaous (Khai Khusrow). The Baloch were part of the General Ashkash army who was under the command of the king's son, Siahwash.

*... Then from his famous cavaliers, Kaous chose for him (Siahwash) twelve-thousand gallant warriors,*

disPerSion of The Baloch from MBalashagan

*while from the neighborhood of “Koch and Pars” he chose Baloch; and from the deserts of Saroch and warriors of Gilan, he chose for war twelve thousand infantry and buckler men (Firdausi, 1908, p. 226).*

On another occasion, when the king advanced to occupy Azerbaijan, Firdausi mentioned that the army of the king comprised of men of Gilan, Deilem, Baloch from the plains of Saroch, and the swordsmen of Koch.

Despite the evidence of Baloch being part of the Sassanid armies on many occasions, due to high-handed policies of the Sassanid emperors, the Baloch never reconciled to the Persians. Disgust between the Persians and the Baloch is distinctly marked even to this day. The Baloch detest the Persians almost as strongly as they are detested by them. Perhaps, this inherent distrust between the Baloch and the Persians was one of the reasons for the Baloch defection to invading Arabs during the last days of the Sassanid Empire.

## **The Baloch dePortATions And wAnderings: An oVerView**

It is pertinent to summarize some of the turbulent events and situations during Achaemenid, Greek, Parthian, and Sassanid Empires as these events bear a direct relation with the disappearance of the Baloch from the Caspian region.

After the capture of Achaemenid throne by Emperor Darius I (Xerxes I, 550-486 BC), rebellions broke throughout the empire. There were anti-Darius revolts in Persis, Media, Armenia, Margiana, and Parthia. The struggle between different rebel groups and the army of Darius resulted in the murder of hundreds of thousands of people, imprisonment of many others, and deportations of many tribes and ethnic groups. The Baloch were among the rebellious Medes,

Parthians, and others who were supporting the cause of Bardya from whom Darius had snatched the throne.

During the wars between Alexander the Great (356-323 BC) and Emperor Darius III (336-330 BC), the Baloch were allied with the last Achaemenid emperor. According to Shustheri (1925), Darius III, after much hesitation, assembled an army at Arbela to counter the army of invading Greeks. His cousin Besius was the commander, leading the horsemen from Balkh. Berzanthis was the commander of the Baloch forces, Okeshthra was the commander of the forces from Khuzistan, Maseus was the commander of the Syrian and Egyptian contingent, Ozbed was the commander of the Medes, and Phirthaphirna was leading the Sakas and forces from Tabaristan, Gurgan, and Khurasan. Obviously, as part of a losing side, the Baloch certainly got their share of punishment from the victorious Macedonian forces.

During the Parthian period (AD 247-224), the Baloch were allied with the Parthians, and there was a protracted conflict in the region. The Baloch country of Balashagan was in the arena of the long drawn-out hostilities between Armenia and Parthia, and one can easily imagine the problems of a pastoralist nomadic group like the Baloch in a situation of continued warfare in order to sustain economically, culturally, and physically. In this context, vacating the turbulent region by some of the vulnerable Baloch tribes is a strong possibility.

During AD 72-75, the Alans (who were related to northern Iranian Sarmatian tribes) invaded Parthia through Caucasus. The conflict lasted for more than a decade, and the tribes or ethnic entities living in conflict zones were certainly affected seriously. Soon after the Alan debacle, conflict between Rome and Parthia gained momentum, engulfing the whole region in and around Armenia. This time also, the country of the Baloch was in the midst of the region where major battles were being fought.

The long tussle between Rome and Sassanid Iran, beginning from 92 BC and continuing up to the seventh century, brought much destruction to the region from the west of Caspian Sea to the western fringes of Armenia. These devastating and bloody wars caused much

economic difficulties and problems of physical survivals to weak and vulnerable tribal and ethnic groups in the region.

The Baloch migrations or deportations from Balashagan, most probably, took place in several waves and over several centuries. As there are no documentary evidences of the Baloch dispersion from Balashagan, it can only be a hypothesis, taking into account various historical events.

Settlements of some of the Baloch in Makuran can be ascertained from the accounts of Kai Khusrow when he attacked and occupied Makuran. The Baloch forces under Ashkash made the main part of the invading army, and Ashkash was made the governor of Makuran when the king marched away from Makuran. It is probable that some of the Baloch might have opted for settling permanently in the region.

From the ancient Persian accounts and especially from *Shahnama* of Firdausi, we might conclude that there is a strong possibility that after the revolt of the Medians and Parthians against Darius I (550-486 BC), the Baloch were among many rebel ethnic groups who were persecuted and deported from their homelands.

Although there is no mention of deportation by the conquering Greeks when they occupied Iran, the region remained in turmoil after the death of Alexander. During the ensuing civil war among the Greeks and in a general state of anarchy where there was not a central control, persecution and deportations of vulnerable cannot be ruled out.

The persecution of the Baloch in the reign of Khusrow I (Anosharvan, AD 531-579) is well documented. It was claimed by Firdausi in *Shahnama* that the Baloch have been totally annihilated by the orders of Khusrow I; however, after sometime, they were mentioned as part of many successive Sassanid armies. It indicates that the remaining Baloch somehow reconciled with the situation. But deportation of the remaining stubborn Baloch tribes is a strong possibility.

It is highly probable that Baloch might have been caught in sectarian conflicts during Sassanid period. The religious fanaticism of Shahpur II (AD 309-379) is a known fact of Iranian history. Ancient historians have graphically described his fight against the Christians of Armenia and Azerbaijan. The Persian accounts also proudly described the persecution of various religious sects among the worshippers of God Ahura Mazda. There is not much evidence, although, of the Baloch being the followers of the Manichean or Mazdakian sects of Zoroastrian religion; however, the fact cannot be denied that the persecution of the Baloch and many other ethnic groups by Emperors Shahpur II and Khusrow included strong religious and sectarian elements.

The genocide of the Baloch could not have been merely due to administrative realities as documented by the Persian writers, for acts of robbery by groups of bandits were a routine in that part of ancient Iran. However, it is too simplistic to believe that orders were given from the most powerful emperor of the world to annihilate a whole national entity for some acts of robbery. Most writers have totally ignored the sectarian conflicts of Persian history during the rule of Shahpur II and Khusrow I. The tussle between the Mazdakite advocating the rights of the underprivileged class in Sassanid Persia and the orthodox priesthood representing the *status quo* cannot be ignored. It would have been quite natural of the Baloch nomads to have been influenced by the Mazdakite doctrine of equality and equal distribution of wealth. It is quite possible that the Baloch were among the so-called heretics, whose annihilation was the prime objective of Emperor Khusrow I. The emperor was in line with the priesthood, who believed that Mazdakite were a serious threat for the political, social, economic, and religious hegemony of the Sassanid Dynasty over the Persian people.

From the evidences available, it is established that the Baloch were not among the main ethnic peoples inhabiting Sistan, Kerman, Makuran, and Turan during the last decades of the Sassanid Dynasty. Nevertheless, their presence in these regions at that time cannot be denied. Gankovsky (1971) observed that in the closing centuries



before the Christian era and the first half of the first millennium AD, the population of Balochistan belonged to three major ethnic groups: the Indo-Aryan in the southeastern part of the country, the Iranian in the eastern and northern areas, and the Dravidian, whose members seem to have inhabited mainly Central Balochistan. Among the Indo-Aryans and Iranians mentioned by Gankovsky, one can very well visualize the Baloch in latter history, the only people speaking an Aryan language who became visible in Balochistan.

As was discussed in the previous sections, during later Sassanid era, the mentioning of Balashakan and Balashchik or the Baloch vanished from historical accounts. According to Firdausi's account, the Baloch confronted the Sassanid Army or they were also part of some of the Sassanid armies. However, there is no mention of a precise location of the Baloch. Nevertheless, on one occasion, they were mentioned with the fighters of Gilan. Similarly, a section of the Baloch tribes was mentioned by the Arab historians under the command of General Sia Sawar (Sia Baloch). Here also, there was no mention as to which part of Iran these Baloch were located.

It can be safely assumed that the dispersion of the Baloch from Balashagan toward east ended with their arrival in Dasht-e-Lut, Sistan, Kerman, Makuran, and Turan in different proportions and in different times. Frye (1961) suggested the Baloch migration through the northern part of Central Desert, basing his assessment on the linguistic parallel between Balochi and the Bayabanic Persian dialects. It is obvious that many regions of Kerman, Sistan, Makuran, and Turan have been inundated with migrating Baloch tribes by the time of the Arab conquest of Iran. Various Arab historians somewhat describe this graphically.

Arab historians and geographers have stated that after the initial defeat of Persians in Iraq, the Arabs were engaged in battles with large numbers of Koch o Baloch in the mountains of Kerman and eastern Persia (Bosworth, 1977). It has been established by Masudi (1841), Istakhri (1961), and Maqaddesi (1906) that during the seventh and eighth centuries, the Baloch were residing in Kerman, Khurasan, Sistan, and Makuran with other tribal and pastoralist communities.

These authors described a separate Baloch district in Kerman, and two districts in Sistan, which probably were the present Kharan and Chagai regions of Balochistan. In an earliest period, Minorsky (1937) and Frye (1961) have established the presence of the Baloch in the Great Salt desert since they found strong traces of the Balochi language in the people living at the oases of the

Great Desert. Although the present central Balochistan in Pakistan during the Sassanid period was called Turan (Turgestan, Turkestan) (Wiesehofer, 2006), indicating the presence of Turkish tribes (White Huns), the presence of the Baloch tribes in the region can easily be discerned from the historical accounts of Masudi, Estakhri, and Maqaddesi.

It is hard to find out precisely why Balashchik disappeared from the written and preserved historical documents; nevertheless, from the discussion above, we can fairly discern that the Baloch dispersal from their original country of Balashagan had occurred in several waves in different times and may have caused by several factors:

- Some of the tribes or group of tribes migrated to Sistan, Kerman, Makuran, and Turan simply as a routine way of nomadic life. And some of them settled into these areas and never went back to their original abode.
- During the reign of the Medes and the Parthians when the relationships between the Baloch and the state were relatively cordial, it is possible that some of the Baloch tribes might have been transplanted peacefully to the border regions of Median and Parthian empires.
- Some of the tribes fled from the ethnic or religious prosecutions of different Persian rulers or the prevailing upheavals in the region of Caspian Sea and went toward east where there was already a presence of their kinsmen.

Some of the tribes were deported and resettled in different parts of the Persian Empire as was the norms of the time to deal with hostile elements.

# **The arab conquest of iran and the Baloch**

**I**n seventh century, the Bedouin Arabs under the banner of Islam invaded and conquered Iran. Within a short period of twenty years, the complete occupation of Iran by a little-known group of tribes was one of the fascinating events in world history. It affected not only the Iranian world but also the whole of Central Asia. The unexpected collapse of mighty Sassanid Empire, the eventual decline of the Zoroastrian religion and replacement of Almighty Ahura Mazda by Almighty Allah as the all-powerful god in Persia changed the dynamics of politics and religion in the whole region. Although the Iranians, in fact, fought long and hard against the invading Arabs, for many, it was already a losing battle as Persia at the time of the Arab invasion was a society in decline and decay. The allpowerful Sassanid Empire was on the verge of imploding due to its internal contradictions. At the time of Arab invasion, the Baloch were scattered around the southern and northeastern corners of the Sassanid Empire and suffered badly during the prolonged conflict for the control of Iran.

## **irAn AT The TiMe of ArAB inVAsion**

The last decades of the Sassanid Empire were characterized by the dominance and intrigue of various aristocratic families. Upon the whims of these very powerful warrior families, emperors were selected, deposed, and even murdered. Known as the seven noble families in historical accounts, they were instrumental in shaping the policies of various Persian empires from the days of Darius I. Eventually, this aristocracy gained full independence from the control of emperors, each carving a kind of state for them within the

empire. During the final decades of the Sassanid rule, the old animosity between the Parthians and the Persians flared up, further weakening the empire (Tabari, 2007). Economic conditions in the empire worsened with the conversions of cultivated areas into swamps due to neglect of agricultural infrastructure. According to Masudi (1989), a great plague killed nearly half of the population during the early decades of the seventh century. The situation was so chaotic and the condition of the people was so appalling that according to Baladhuri (1924), the Iranian populace openly spoke of the imminent downfall of their empire and saw its portents in natural calamities. Enemies lurking in the dark for a long time were now looking for the chance to settle their long-standing scores against the Sassanid. The Turks were marching through the eastern provinces, the Khazars were ravaging the northwest provinces, and the long-drawn campaigns against the Byzantine Empire were not successful and exhausted the Sassanid finances. Among the various ethnic entities, loyalty with the empire was eroded due to genocidal actions of Anosharvan (Khusrow I) against them on sectarian and administrative pretexts (Tabari, 2007).

The downtrodden and often-discriminated Bedouins from the Arabian Peninsula were inspired by a new faith and united by a call to arms under the banner of Islam. They were zealously looking for mundane riches and heavenly blessings. From their initial exploratory inroads into Mesopotamia, they became fully aware of the weaknesses and difficulties of the disintegrating Sassanid Empire. It was the context in which the Arabs succeeded in destroying the Persian Empire altogether by AD 650. They invaded Iran and became the master of a region, which was among the cradles of ancient civilizations of the world.

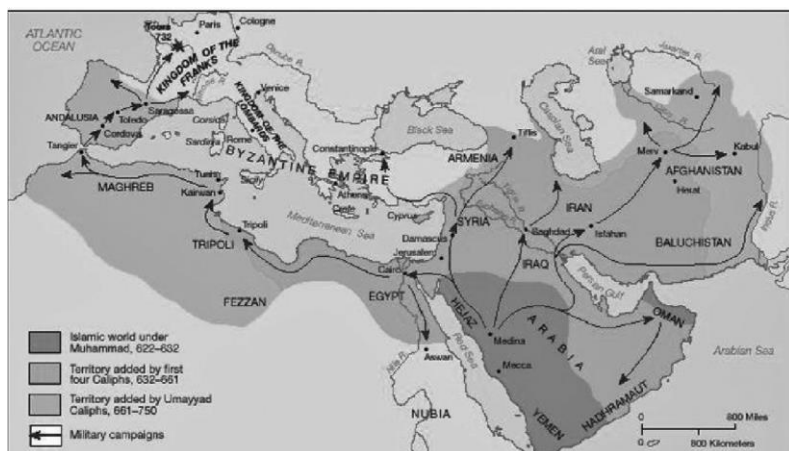
The conquest of the Persian Empire came in piecemeal, and the Arabs, after twenty years of warfare, were able to conquer nearly the whole of Iran. After the fall of Fars, Sistan fell a few years later. Lower regions of Sistan were conquered after the occupation of its northern part. Tabari (2007) noted that during AD 667, the Arab forces of Umayyad Dynasty occupied regions of Balochistan, which

## The Arab Conquest of Iran and The Baloch

is now Chagai. The conquest of Khurasan began with the capitulation of Merv after the death of Yazdgerd III in AD 656; the Arab armies completed the conquest of entire Khurasan (Tabari, 2007). The Arabs occupied the remaining areas of Sistan in AD 644 during the reign of Caliph Omar.

**Figure 11: Arab invasion of Iran from AD 632 to 750**

*Source: <http://iranpoliticsclub.net/maps>*



Under the Umayyad Dynasty, the Arabs expanded their empire further east and conquered Zabul, Bamiyan, and Sindh. At the time of Arab invasion, Makuran and Turan were part of the Rai Dynasty of Sindh. The Empire of Sindh was a formidable force, and the borders of Sindh were with Kerman in the west. According to Kufi (1979), during the period of Sassanid emperor Hormuzd, the ruler of Sindh, Rai Sahras advanced up to Kerman and marked the boundaries of Sindh and the Sassanid Empire by planting date palms near a river probably near the modern-day Pahrāj in the Iranian Balochistan. The Arab forces entered Makuran from Sistan. The governor of Makuran asked for help from the king of Sindh who sent an army to defend his dependent territory. At the border of Kerman where the limits of Sindh ended, the army of Sindh and Makuran

was defeated, and the governor of Makuran Rasil was killed in the battle (Raverty, 1888).

It appears that the Arabs faced sustained resistance from the people of Makuran and Turan for a long time. As observed by the Arab historian Tabari (2007), the affairs of Makuran and Turan remained anarchic during early days of the Arab conquest. Many of the Arab commanders were killed during various revolts in these regions. Tabari mentioned that during the reign of Caliph Ali, an expeditionary force sent into Balochistan reached as far as Khuzdar. Another force was sent to subdue Khuzdar and surrounding regions during the reign of Amir Muwavia. This force was defeated and a very few Arab soldiers were able to return via Makuran (Tabari, 2007). Tabari also informed about another force, which was sent to deal with the Medes revolts in Makuran during the same period (in which an expeditionary force was also dispatched to Turan). The Medes revolt was crushed in Makuran, but the force sent toward Turan was defeated and its leader killed. Another expeditionary force was defeated while taking the booty from Makuran to Sistan near Pahraj. According to the writer of *Chachnama* (see Kufi, 1979), another army, which was sent by Ebn e Ziad, the governor of Basra, was defeated near Khuzdar.

Various regions, which later formed parts of present-day Balochistan, became the center of a sectarian conflict after the struggle of power intensified between the Kharijites and the mainstream Islam during the rule of Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties. During the reign of Abbasid Caliph Harun, the Kharijite movement in Sistan, Makuran, and Turan paralyzed the central government administration in the region. The Kharijite leader Amir Hamza became the *de facto* ruler of this vast area. He became very popular and gained the support of local population of Sistan and the surrounding regions when he freed the people from the burden of heavy taxes by systematic murdering of central government tax collectors (Kenney, 2006; Muir, 1924). Support of the Baloch tribes for the Kharijite movement in Sistan, Makuran, and Turan can be found in some of the historical accounts recorded in Balochi ballads

of medieval times. Most probably, a Balochi ballad mentioning the Baloch being the sons of Hamza is indicative of close support of some of the Baloch tribes to the Kharijite leader Amir Hamza and “sons of Hamza” was probably used to describe them.

The Arab conquest of Iran in true sense did not last for more than two centuries. During this period, they brought social, cultural, and religious changes in their held territories, and several of the Arab tribes settled in many Iranian regions. These were brought initially as garrisons to ensure the payment of tribute to the conquerors and tended to concentrate on frontiers to protect the border regions (Kenney, 2006; Muir, 1924; Tabari, 2007). These incoming Arab tribes were gradually absorbed into different ethnic groups of Iran, and only a small number of these tribes retain some kind of Arab identity in later centuries. Administratively, Iran was ruled by Arab governors; however, as the Arab conquerors came from an uncivilized background, the customs, laws, and traditions of the Sassanids who had long administrative experience were, in large part, adopted in the Islamic Iran for the smooth running of the government. The Iranian social and political influence was at its peak during the Abbasid Dynasty (Muir, 1924). After the reign of early powerful Abbasid Caliphs, different dynasties of Iranian origin were *de facto* rulers in Baghdad, and the Caliphs were mere puppets of the powerful rulers of these dynasties.

The entry of Arabs with their new religion marked a major turning point in the history of Iran. The advent of Islam made decisive changes in Iranian society, affecting the culture, language, and religious beliefs of all ethnic and national entities of Iran. The conversion of majority of Iranians to Islam was brought about with consequent profound changes in their cultural life. The Arabs tried to create a new Muslim identity by forcing the population to adopt Arabic theological and cultural concepts, language, and script. In many cases, even the names of the tribes and individuals were changed into Arabic names. Arabic began to infiltrate the vernacular, and gradually, a large number of Arabic words entered the languages of Iranian origins. The Iranians also influenced the Arabs in many fields, especially in diplomacy and administration. Having no experience of state administration, the conquering Arabs

relied on the existing Sassanid administrative structures for the running of their newly acquired state.

## **The Baloch defecTion To The ArABs**

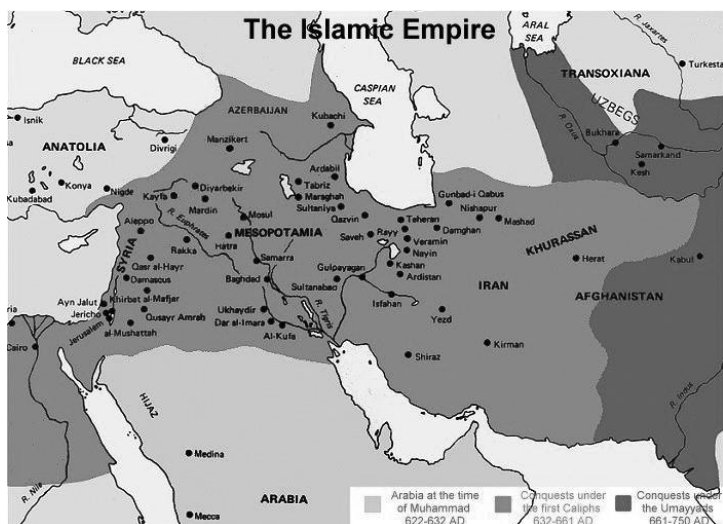
As has been mentioned in the previous section, beginning from the sixth century, the Balascik or Balashchik disappeared from historical accounts; however, they reappeared in the historical documents as with a new identity of Koch o Baloch. The Baloch were among many nationalities and ethnic groups who not only suffered politically but also socially and economically during and after the Arab control of Iran. The Baloch, like the other nationalities in Iran, resisted the new rulers with their available resources. However, at least ten of the Baloch tribes under the command of General Sia Sawar defected to the Arab side. This defection, later, proved to be futile as soon this group of the Baloch faced persecutions and deportation to Syria by Umayyad administrator of Iraq, Hajjaj ibn Yousuf. The Baloch also came into head-on collision with the Arab forces in Sistan, Kerman, Makuran, and Turan during the reign of early Caliphs and during Umayyad period. In the initial stages of the invasion of Iran, the majority of the Baloch fought on the Persian side against the invaders. At least, one of the Baloch chieftains belonging to Sia Pad (which is mentioned by the Arab writers as Sia Baj) tribe was the commander of an Iranian force sent to counter the Arab advance in lower Iraq, according to various historical accounts from the Arab and the Iranian writers. However, this very General Siah Sawar Baloch, during the final disastrous Persian campaigns against the Arabs, not only fought half-heartedly but also, eventually, defected to the Arabs. The Arab historians had described in detail the agreement of General Siah Sawar, which they mentioned as Siaal-Sawar, commander of the royal guard of Emperor Yazdgerd III. The Baloch tribes under Siah Sawar and their allies, the Jats, joined hands with the invading Arabs under an agreement approved by Caliph Omar. Rest of the Baloch tribes, nevertheless, were part of the resistance offered by various



nationalities against the invading Arabs as observed by various historians.

Figure 12: Map of the Islamic Empire

Source: <http://www.google.co.uk/ancientmapsofiran>



Baladhuri (1924) narrated in detail (quoting Tabari), the Baloch defection to the Arabs and the subsequent deportation into Syria. According to Baladhuri, after the Muslim army defeated the Iranians and conquered Jalula; the last Sassanid king of Iran Yazdgerd III summoned a council of war and designed a plan of resistance against the invading forces. While in Isfahan, he dispatched seventy of the highest dignitaries of the country to go with General Siah Sawar, who was the commander of royal guard, with powers to recruit soldiers from different ethnic groups for the purpose of raising an army. Siah Sawar was followed by Yazdgerd himself to Isthakhar. Later, he sent him to Ahwaz, but he encamped at Kalbaniyah and waited for the Arab Army under Abu Musa. Instead of engaging the Arab Army in battle, he sent General Sheroya, along with a delegation comprising ten elders of his people (the Arab historians Tabari called them people of Asawarah, probably naming them after Sia Sawar, according to Arab tradition of naming the tribes after

their chiefs) to the Muslim commander, expressing their willingness for joining them. They told Abu Musa that:

*“We are desirous of entering into your religion, on the condition that we help you fight your foreign enemies, but that if there arise a difference amongst you, we are not to fight with some of you against others of you; and that if we have war with the [heathen] Arabs, you will grant us help and defense against them; and that we be permitted to settle in whatever part of the country we please, and live among whichever of your tribes we choose; and that we receive the maximum stipend; and that a covenant to this effect be given us by the commander who sent you, that is, the Arabian King.”*

Abu Musa agreed to grant them equal status as Muslims enjoyed; however, the Baloch replied that they wanted their own conditions to be accepted for joining the Arabs. According to Baladhuri, the Arab commander Abu Musa wrote to Caliph Omar, seeking his consent. The Caliph promptly replied, asking them to give them all that they asked.

Accordingly, an agreement with the stipulated conditions was drawn and signed by the parties as a consequent of which Siah Sawar and ten tribes of the Baloch under his leadership accepted Islam as their faith and joined Abu Musa in his siege of Shustar. After their alliance or conditional surrender, the Baloch forces were attached to various tribal detachments in the Arab Army. According to Baladhuri's version, the Baloch fighters finally agreed to be part of the army of Banu Tamim, and in Basra, they were given separate quarters with them. They settled down and dug their own canal, which is the one known as the Nahr al-Assawarah. Here they were joined by the remaining Sia Pad tribe, and according to Baladhuri, they were joined with some of the Zatt (Jats) tribes of Sindhi origin. As observed by Baloch (1965) and Mari (1974), Siah Sawar or Siah Baloch, as was described by the Iranian court poet Bahar, belonged

to Sia Pad tribe among the Baloch. Sia Pad can be found in different areas of Balochistan today either as a separate tribal entity or part of some bigger tribes.

The Baloch and Arab affair appeared to be a marriage of convenience. Soon disagreement arose between the Baloch and the Arabs as Baladhuri stated that the Baloch were with Abu-Musa at the siege of Shustar but they did not strike a single blow, and Abu Musa said to Siah Sawar, “*You and your friends are not what we thought you to be.*” To this, he replied,

*“I told thee that our way of thinking was not like yours, seeing that we have no harems (wives) among you for which to fear and to fight. We entered into this religion from the very beginning only as a refuge, and in the hope that [your] Allah was one who provides abundant sustenance.”*

To this, Abu Musa assigned to them the maximum stipend and allotted some land near Basra where they reportedly brought a canal to irrigate their allotted lands. From this, it became apparent that their joining hands with the Arabs was not for the love of their religion but, obviously, it was a political move in the context of the prevailing situation in the region.

The stay of these Baloch tribes under the leadership of Siah Sawar in Basra was not smooth. It appeared that Siah Sawar developed serious differences with his colleagues and left to join the army of another Arab tribe Banu Hanthalah. According to Baladhuri, Sia Sawar did not take part in the civil war between Banu Hashem under the leadership of Ali and Banu Ummaya under the leadership of Muwavia. Instead, he went on the expedition of Ibn Amir to Khurasan and so did not take part in the Battle of the Camel between Banu Hashem and Banu Ummaya, who fought under the leadership of Prophet Muhammad’s son-in-law Ali and his wife Aisha, respectively, nor at the battle of Siffin between Ali and Muwavia. This explains the initial indifference of General Siah Sawar about

the internal differences of the Arabs and indicative of the Baloch remaining neutral and not siding with the Umayyad forces which Baladhuri described as “Moslem forces.” However, we found in later historical accounts of Arab historians, including Baladhuri, that the defecting Baloch tribes under Sia Sawar and their allied Jats became involved in the long-drawn civil war between two warring factions of the Arabs led by Banu Hashem and Banu Ummaya soon after the total conquest of Iran. The Baloch sided with Ibn al Ashaath and invited the rage of Umayyad commander Hajjaj bin Yusuf. For this, Hajjaj ibn Yousuf, on the excuse of breaking the covenant by siding in the civil war between the Arabs, raised their houses, annulling their grant and forcing some of them to emigrate. By the order of Muwavia, many of the Sia Pad and Jats were “transported” to the coast of Sham (Syria) and Antakya by “kindly methods,” according to Baladhuri.

The description of the Baloch deportation by Baladhuri is important in the explanation of a perception about the origin of some Baloch tribes. How much were the methods “kindly” in the deportation of the Baloch tribes and their allied Jats to Syria might not be significant, but one thing is clear that some of the Baloch tribes and their allied Jats were deported to Syria. This could explain easily the context of the verses from one of the famous ballad, stating that once Aleppo was the abode of the Rind tribe of the Baloch. From these accounts, it appears that the main tribe, which was deported to Syria, was Sia Pad, and the Rinds might have been a junior partner or part of the tribal union under the leadership of Siah Sawar, who were the first to side with the Arabs.

Why some of the Baloch tribes under the command of Siah Sawar defected to the invading Arabs in the long drawn-out struggle for the supremacy of Iran (between the Arabs and the remnants of the Sassanid force) is quite understandable. This decision might have been prompted by various factors, which were fundamental in any decision making at that time. First, the undeniable fact was that at the time of Arab invasion, the Persian Empire was in total disarray and irreparably damaged, and the Persian cause was a lost one.

Second, despite the Baloch being part of different Sassanid armies, the fact of an inherent distrust between the Baloch and the Persians after a long history of persecution cannot be ignored. These may be the reasons why the Baloch felt little interest in the struggle of preserving the Persian Empire. Although circumstances caused them to send their contingents to various battlefronts at the call of the Emperor Yazdgerd III, nevertheless, when the Persian cause was evidently lost, they felt it needless to make further sacrifices for the Sassanid Empire under which they had suffered some of the worst possible humiliations and massacres on many occasions. Later events, however, proved that the Baloch decision of siding with the Arabs did not bear fruits for them, since very soon the Baloch were targeted by the Arabs after the consolidation of their power in Iran. The Baloch tribes under the leadership of Siah Sawar, who sided with the Arabs, were humiliated and deported to Syria, and, a few years later, the Arabs unleashed exceptional force in Kerman to subjugate the Baloch tribes residing in the Mountains of Kofs and Barez.

## **The Baloch And Arab relations After The collapse of Sassanid Empire**

The Baloch-Arab relations during their advance and subsequent control of Iran were not smooth. The Baloch tribes in Kerman fought against the Arabs along with other ethnic groups. They also offered refuge to many of the fleeing Sassanid administrators and Zoroastrian priests. Bosworth (1968), quoting Baladhuri and Tabari, mentioned that pushing eastwards into Kerman, Arab forces under Suhail ibn Adi and Abdullah ibn Abdallah ibn Itban killed the Sassanid Marzban of the province and, after fierce fighting, occupied main towns, including Sirjan, Bam, Jiruft, and Bardsir in AD 644. Many of the inhabitants of Kerman preferred to emigrate rather than to pass under the Arab domination. Between Kerman and Sistan lay an extremely inhospitable and almost unpopulated tract—the southern part of the great desert, the Dasht-e-Lut. This wasteland merges into the arid mountains of present-day western Balochistan; they were the haunts of predatory Koch or Baloch mountaineers who aided the people of Kerman against the incoming Arabs. Abdullah,

in AD 651, turned southward toward Hormuz and came to the Koch o Baloch country to disperse the fugitive Persians taking refuge with the Baloch (Baladhuri, 1924; Tabari, 2007). Nevertheless, despite the Arab attempts, Kerman and Makuran, for a long time, continued to serve as a refuge for the followers of Prophet Zoroaster, who had been displaced from Persia or fled from the Arab persecutions.

The historical accounts relating to the Baloch at the time of Arab invasion of Iran are from Arabic and Persian sources. It is not difficult to find one-sided accounts of events from these historical accounts since the Baloch were in conflict with both of these powers. It is interesting to note how Arab writers described the Baloch in venomous tones. Their account of Arab-Baloch conflict shows how the Arabs justified their own brutal actions against the Baloch and the actions of their subservient rulers in their newly created empire in Iran. One can easily observe such biased description when the Arab historians mentioned the barbarism of the Koch o Baloch, who, according to them, were terrorizing the caravan routes across the great central deserts of the Lut and the Kavir. Maqaddesi (1906) stated that the whole of the Great Desert is a fearful place, namely because of a people called the Koch who inhabited some mountains in Kerman adjoining the region of Jiruft. From these mountains, they sweep down to the desert just like locusts.

It is also interesting to note how Arab historians described the Baloch social behavior. According to Maqaddesi (1906), the Koch o Baloch profess Islam but are more savage against the Muslims than the Byzantines or Turks. He described the Baloch as a race with no propensity whatsoever toward goodness; they have only savage faces, stony hearts, fierceness, and hardness. They never spare anyone and are not satisfied with merely taking money nor do they put to death with their weapons anyone they get hold of. On the contrary, they pound their heads with a stone, just as one kills snakes; you see them hold a man's head down on a flat stone and pound it with a stone until it is split open. When they were asked why they did this, their response was quoted by Maqaddesi as, "*In*

*this way, we don't damage our sword blades!"* Only rarely does anyone manage to escape from them. They possess places of concealment and impregnable mountains, and whenever they are cornered in one administrative region, they merely flee to another. They fight with bows and arrows and carry swords. When they take a man captive, they make him run with them 20 Farsakhs or so, with bare feet and no food.

Maqaddesi, in order to validate his description of the Baloch of being ignorant of the Arabic religious tenets, mentioned a Koranic scholar who had once fallen into the Baloch hands. The scholar was asked to read the Koranic document that he was holding. When he had read the document, he was summoned to the presence of the chief of Baloch. According to Maqaddesi, when the Koranic scholar warned the chief that his actions bring down inexorably upon himself the hatred of Allah and a painful punishment in the next world, the chief gave a choking gurgle and fell down to the ground with a chalky-white face before letting him free, together with a group of other captives.

The Arabs invaded Kerman under the command of Suhail and Abdullah. The people of Kerman, in anticipation, had recruited a large force among whom the Koch o Baloch were also summoned in order to prevent the Arab advance. Consequently, fierce fighting took place in the proximity of Kerman, which resulted in the defeat of the Persians and the death of the Sassanid governor of the province. Afterward, the Arabs occupied the main towns, including Sirjan, Kerman, Bam, Jiruft, and as far as Hormuz.

During AD 651-652, disturbances arose in Kerman, which was dealt with by Abdullah ibn Amir ibn Kuraiz, the governor of Iraq. The Arab forces searched the province thoroughly and turned southward to the Koch o Baloch country and Hormuz. A large number of Persian refugees from the towns of Kerman fled and scattered in all directions; some went along the coast of Makuran, some took to the sea, and while others wandered into Sistan. Consequently, the lands

and houses of those who escaped were occupied by the Arabs, who settled there, populated the land, and dug wells and channels.

The Arab invasion of Makuran and Sindh came from two directions— by land and sea—and the earliest attempts to occupy the region were made during the reign of the second caliph, Omar ibn Khattab, between the years AD 636 and 640 (Tabari, 2007). The Arab forces under Hakam ibn Amr al Taghlibi marched toward Makuran, and it seems that they swept over it rapidly and successfully as neither Tabari nor other historians have reported any obstacles that they might have encountered. The Arab forces might have reached Sindh without facing any formidable resistance, since Tabari mentioned that they reached as far as the tract lying just before the river, which the people of Makuran had fled to. This river must have been River Purali or Hub, according to the descriptions offered by the Arab writers of the period. The Arab forces then retreated back to their headquarters in Makuran as they faced tough resistance from the detachment sent by the king of Sindh, which met the invading Arab horde somewhere near river Purali. Makuran seems to have been made a base for future raids eastward and on Sindh; however, which city of Makuran was the headquarters of the Arab Government is not known.

Despite the unrest that followed the killing of Caliph Othman with ensued civil war between two powerful contenders for power, efforts were made to expand the Arab control from Makuran eastward. These efforts continued throughout the reign of Ali ibn Talib, the fourth caliph. In AD 656, the Arabs, under the command of Hirith ibn Murrah, invaded Kikan (Kikan is supposed to be modern Kalat) in Turan (Tabari, 2007). The Arabs seized large quantities of booty, but the Kikani caught the Arab forces in a particular place where they were dealt with a serious blow and majority of them were wounded by the Kikani arrows. Two years later, Hirith led an expeditionary force from Pahraj to raid Kikan, and he succeeded to such an extent that he collected so many spoils and slaves as to be able to distribute a thousand head in one day.



However, the Arabs withdrew from Kikan in a hurry as they heard the news of the Caliph Ali's assassination (Tabari, 2007).

It was during the last four decades of the Umayyad power that Makuran and Turan were annexed to the authority of the caliph's representative. Under the Caliphate of Mu'awiyah in AD 662, the Arabs invaded Las Bela (Kufi, 1979). A year later, Muhallab ibn Abu Sufra is reported to have invaded Kikan and marched toward Kachchi (Qandabil). According to *Chachnama*, when Arabs, under the command of Abdullah, arrived at Kikan, the Kikanis made an assault upon them, but the Arab Army routed them and secured plentiful booty. The people of Kikan soon regrouped in large numbers and occupied the mountain passes. The mountainous region became completely alive with fighting men; however, the Arabs were able to beat the Kikanis. Following this, they drew back to Makuran. Abdullah ibn Sawwar was reported to have taken all booties and spoils to Damascus, among which was a unique horse much admired by Caliph Mu'awiyah.

During AD 667, Abdullah ibn Sawwar again attacked Kikan with 4,000 troops, but this time, the Kikanis are said to have offered the invaders very stubborn resistance in a fierce battle. It resulted in the killing of Abdullah ibn Sawwar himself, together with many members of his army (Tabari, 2007). The survivors of the Arab Army then returned to Makuran. Another attack was launched under the command of Rashid ibn Amr which was presumably successful, for he compelled the inhabitants of Jebel al-Bayah (which is supposedly the Mashkey area of Balochistan) to pay a fixed tribute. Rashid, thereafter, entered Kikan and made an attack, obtaining booty and spoils. He also dealt severely with the disobedient and outlaws. However, while taking the booty from Kikan and Makuran to Damascus, Rashid was attacked by the Baloch near Pahrāj. The Arabs were defeated, and Rashid himself was killed (Tabari, 2007). Another raid had been reported on eastern Balochistan in the reign of the Umayyad Caliph Yazid when Hakam, the then governor of the province of Kerman, was reported to have successfully raided Kachchi and to have overrun the country.

During the reign of Caliph Walid, the powerful governor of eastern regions, Hajjaj ibn Yousuf, got permission for the invasion of Sindh. He recruited a large army and appointed his nephew Muhammad ibn Qassim al-Thagafi to lead the campaign. In AD 710, Ibn Qassim departed for Makuran from Shiraz with 6,000 cavalry and reached at Tiz (Kufi, 1979). From Tiz, he continued to Kech and then pushed his way to Punjgur where the inhabitants offered stubborn resistance and caused Ibn Qassim hindrance. This resulted in his conquering and ravaging the town, collecting many spoils. From here, he went to Bela (Armabel) and, after waging war for a few days, conquered this city also. He then stayed there several months and, later, headed for Daybul in Sindh.

After the initial Arab occupation, Balochistan went under the rule of newly emerging Saffarids Dynasty based in Sistan. However, during a short period when the power of Saffarids diminished in Fars and Kerman, the caliphate in Baghdad resumed the direct control of the regions previously under Saffarids authority. According to Meskawiah (1915), the Caliph al-Mugtadir's representative in Kerman—Abdullah al Mismasi—carried out an expedition to attack the region of Barez Mountain in AD 925, and on that campaign, he took captive 5,000 of the Koch o Baloch prisoners that were sold as slaves in different regions of the Abbasid Empire.

The Baloch encounters with the Arabs in other parts of Sassanid Iran had been described by Arab writers such as Tabari, Maqaddesi, and others. In Sistan, the Baloch came into contact with the Arab invaders when, during the reign of Caliph Omar, the Arab forces occupied the region. Tabari (2007) described a group of tribes who were in constant war with Turks, Medes, and people of Kandahar. This must indicate the distinct identity of the Baloch tribes who were living in Sistan at that time. It is most probable that the Baloch tribes in Makuran and Turan had fought against the Arabs as part of the army of Makuran under the Sindhi ruler Rasil as mentioned by the writer of *Chachnama* (Kufi, 1979).

After the initial phase of the Arab conquests in Iran, the Baloch in Sistan, Makuran, and Turan became involved in the civil war

between the Kharijites and the followers of *Sunni* sects of Islam. As observed by Mari (1974), although there is no mention of any significant role of the Baloch tribes in Makuran and Turan during the period of early caliphates, it is obvious that the Baloch presence was there and they were part of different uprisings by governors of these regions. It could not have been possible for them, without the active support of the local population, to rise against the overwhelming power of the Caliphs. During the long drawn-out conflicts initiated by the Kharijites, for two centuries, Sistan and Makuran were major centers of Kharijite sentiments, and, obviously, some of the Baloch tribes were the supporters of Amir Hamza, the Kharijite chief (Bosworth, 1968). However, lack of any neutral historical account, regarding the Baloch, during the early Arab period in Iran and because of the Arab authors' characteristic prejudice against the Baloch, the truth can only be found between the lines of their description of the events.

During the last decades of the Sassanid period and at the time of Arab invasion, the pastoralist nomadic Baloch were scattered all over the Iranian plateau. They have their distinct way of life as dwellers of mountains and deserts. The Baloch in Sistan, Makuran, and Turan were not in a position to play important roles in the political upheavals of the time. It can be assumed that the Baloch in Gilan—where Siah Sawar and his allied tribes were most probably based—were a force to be reckoned, and they played important roles and participated in some of the events which were pivotal in changing the political situation of Iran. The Baloch role in Kerman during the early Arab advance was significant as they were part of the Iranian resistance and were giving protection to Iranian religious and administrative officials in their mountain dwellings.

As mobile pastoralist nomads and dwellers of mountains or deserts, the Baloch were poorly integrated into the settled polity of the regions of Kerman, Sistan, Makuran, and Turan. This has been established in historical accounts of various Iranian dynasties. From the account of the Baloch deportation to Syria by Hajjaj ibn Yousuf, it appears that, at least, some of the Baloch were living in tribal

confederacies with some of the allied tribes from other ethnicities as the mention of Jats being reported along with the Baloch being deported to Antakya in Syria is well established. Apart from the defection of some of the Baloch tribes under the leadership of Siah Sawar, the Baloch, in general, were part of Iranian resistance against the invading Arab forces.

Starting from the alliance with Siah Sawar, the Koch o Baloch were met with by the first conquering Arabs, and then the major contact between the Arabs and the Baloch was in Kerman. Although, the Baloch were scattered over Sistan, Makuran, and Turan at the time of Arab invasion of Iran, the southern part of Kerman had been regarded by historians as the chief dwelling place of the Baloch. The Baloch disunity and lack of a united leadership were apparent with their dealings during the struggle of supremacy between the Arabs and the Sassanid Iran. In this protracted and bloody conflict, the Baloch were visibly divided. Some of the Baloch under General Siah Sawar sided with the Arabs, while the rest either adopted a neutral position or joined the Iranian resistance against the invading power. At the end, the Baloch faced persecution, humiliation, and deportations in various regions by the new rulers of Iran.

## Chapter 6 **regional** **Dynasties of iran and the** **Baloch**

**A**fter the collapse of the Sassanid power, Iran was ruled directly by the Arabs from Medina, Damascus, and Baghdad for nearly two centuries. In the initial stages of their conquest, the Arabs replaced the Sassanid rulers of different regions with chiefs of different Arab tribes. After the consolidation of Arab power in Iran, majority of the Sassanid commanders and local notables defected to Arabs, converted to Islam, and secured different administrative positions in the new regime. Some of these notables were allowed to rule locally on the condition that they pay the agreed tribute. Only major cities and centers were occupied, and the Arabs never controlled permanently some regions, such as Gilan, Tabaristan, Gur, Zabolestan, and Balochistan. At the end of the reign of early powerful Abbasid Caliphs, Iran was practically ruled by different dynasties of Iranian origin enjoying various forms of autonomy, and the caliphs virtually became powerless. During the reign of these dynasties, the medieval Iran suffered the onslaught of Ghaznavids, Mongols, Timurids, and the incursions of Guzz Turks. The relationship between the Baloch and nearly all these powers were hostile, and the Baloch suffered enormously during this long period. The Baloch encounters with these powers and the subsequent Baloch miseries forced the Baloch tribes to move from the areas of conflicts and to settle in the far-flung and inaccessible regions. The bloody conflicts with Buyids and Seljuqs were instrumental in waves of migration by the Baloch tribes from Kerman to further east.

## The Saffarids, Ziyarids, And Buyids dynasties

Among the various Iranian dynasties that were actually ruling various parts of Iran under the nominal leadership of the Abbasid Caliphs in Baghdad, the Tahirids Dynasty was the first Persian Dynasty that ruled eastern Iran independently for fifty years from AD 821 to 873 (Bosworth, 1977). The end of the Tahirids domination began with the rise of Saffarids of Sistan and followed by many other regional dynasties.

The Saffarids rule (861-1003) was centered in Sistan, and Ya'qub bin Laith and his brother Amer ibn Laith were the founders of the dynasty. In the beginning, they were able to capture the power with the help of *Ayyaran* (a paramilitary *Sunni* group that was the main militant force against the Kharijites) and some of the disgruntled elements within the Kharijite Movement. They took Kabul and, later, wrested Khurasan from the Tahirids, ultimately adding Kerman, Makuran, and Fars to their rule (Bosworth, 1977).

Figure 13: Map of Saffarids Dynasty

Source: <http://iranpoliticsclub.net>



The Saffarids Empire did not last long, and Amer ibn Laith was defeated in a battle with the Samanids in AD 900. The Saffarids were, subsequently, confined to their heartland of Sistan, with their role reduced to that of vassals of the Samanids and their successors. As observed by Bosworth (1977), the Saffarids were the most powerful among the rulers of Iranian origin, who proudly called themselves Iranians. During their rule, the Persians initiated a practically independent power display after their devastating defeat by the Arabs in the seventh century. Bosworth (1977) posited that as Tahirids were hesitant about admitting their Persian origin, the rise of the Saffarids was, admittedly, the first significant breach in the territorial integrity of the Arab Abbasid Caliphate of Baghdad.

There is no precise and detailed account of any major encounter of the Baloch tribes with the rulers or powers in Sistan, Makuran, and Turan by the Arabs or Persian writers during the Saffarids period. Mari (1974) observed that the Baloch were eternal enemies of Buyids, Turks, and other Iranian rulers but were friendly toward the Saffarids rulers of Sistan. However, according to *Tarikh-e-Sistan* (Gold, 1976), the Baloch, living in Barez Mountain, fought against Yaqub bin Laith at least once in Kerman. In AD 863, Yaqub attacked and captured Bam and advanced toward Kerman, where the local commander Towq ibn Moghallas was taken into prison. Some of the writers mentioned Ali Barezui as the chief of the Baloch tribes living in Barez Mountains. The governor of Kerman Ali ibn Husain (also called Kursh) assembled an army with the help of Koch o Baloch. The army was called the “Army of Kursh” and the fighters were known as Kurshi. We do not know, exactly, the names of the Baloch tribes and their chiefs who were part of this army and fought against Yaqub. We only know that after a fierce fight, the Army of Kursh was defeated and one of the Baloch chief Ali Barezui was taken prisoner. He was taken to Bam where he was executed. A number of Baloch families were also deported into various regions in Persia. The presence of a group of Baloch in the surrounding areas of present day Shiraz calling themselves Kurshi can be explained in the context of this episode of Baloch history. The Baloch tribes loyal to Ali ibn Husain (Kursh) who were deported to Persia might have

been given or taken the name of Kurshi (people or followers of Kursh).

According to Istakhri (1800), the people of Jiruft, with leaders from the Baloch of Barez Mountains and the Koch, along with some other brigands, revolted against Yaqub ibn Laith, but he managed to subdue them, capture their leaders, and imprison them at Bam where they died or executed. It is interesting to note that Istakhri and many other Arabs and Persian writers usually termed the Baloch as brigands in their historical accounts. Istakhri added that despite the impregnability of Jebel (Mountain) Barez, the brothers, Yaqub and Amer, penetrated into the region, took their leaders as hostages, and deported their tribes. Istakhri also mentioned detailed accounts of Yaqub and Amer's encounters with the Baloch in which they were pacified and their leaders killed. With the pacification of the Baloch, the Saffarids introduced Islam in the region, which, until then, had been a bastion of Zoroastrianism.

During the last years of the ninth century, Saffarids chief Amer ibn Laith dispatched Laith ibn Ali, a nephew of Yaqub ibn Laith, with a strong army to reduce Makuran. However, the administration of the Saffarids in Kerman and Makuran ended shortly after the defeat of Amer ibn Laith by the powerful Samanids in the reign of their chief Nasr ibn Ahmad in AD 911. Various writers had established the Baloch presence and influence in Sistan during the Saffarids period. Istakhri mentioned that two provinces of Sistan were known as the Baloch country and were most probably modern Kharan and Chagai. There is also the description of a place in Sistan named Gumbaz-eBaloch in Istakhri's accounts.

Saffarids extended their rule over Makuran, and during late ninth and early tenth centuries, the ruler of the region, Isa ibn Madan, became tributary to the Saffarids of Sistan (Bosworth, 1977, 1968). The Baloch had been on the side of the Madan family in its struggle against different rulers who tried to exert their influence on Makuran. As observed by Bosworth (1977), at that period of the Baloch history, although they were part of various armies, perhaps,



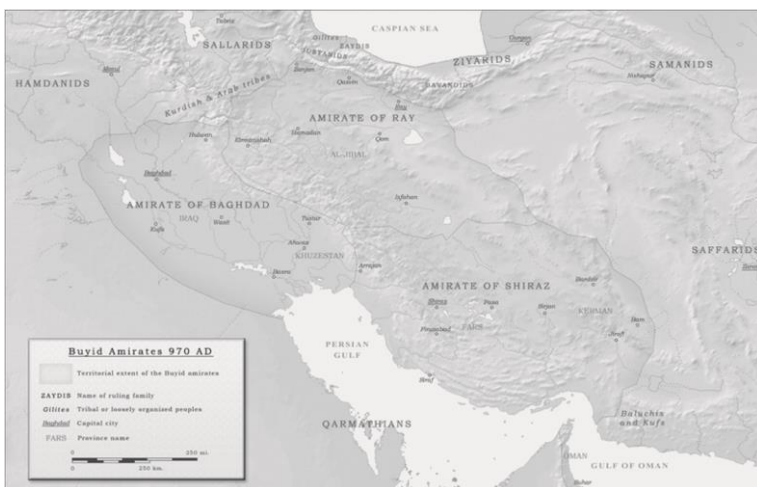
the Baloch were not among the major political players in Sistan, Makuran, and Turan.

In the western and northern Iran, Ziyarids and Buyids emerged as powerful dynasties at the time when the Saffarids were emerging as a regional power in the east. Based in northern Persia, the Deylamite Ziyarids and the Buyids ruled major parts of Iran between AD 928 and 1055 (Bosworth, 1994). Later, they were among the major contemporaries of Ghaznavids who became the dominant power in eastern Iran.

The Deylamites acquired a reputation as hardy and brave fighters in the army of the early Abbasid Caliphs and were supporters of Shi'ism. Deylamite leader, Mardavij ibn Ziar, established his rule in most of northern Persia and captured Hamadan and Holwan near present-day Iranian border with Iraq. In AD 935, he was assassinated, and his empire fell apart, even though his dynasty continued to rule, on and off, in Tabaristan and Gurgan until AD 1090, mostly as vassals of the Ghaznavids (Bosworth, 1968).

Figure 14: **Map of Buyids Dynasty**

Source: <http://iranpoliticsclub.net>



After Mardavij, in 936, three sons of a Deylamite chieftain Buya (Ali, Hassan, and Ahmad) gained power on most of Central Iran and entered Baghdad in 945. A year later, they deposed the Caliph al-Mostakfi and replaced him by al-Moti. Thus began a period of 110 years of domination of the Buyids over the Caliphate. After A'bad's son, Azod-al-Dawla (AD 949-983), the Buyids Empire was divided among his successors. Morgan (1988) observed that at its height of power in the later part of the tenth century, the Buyids Empire included Iraq, central, western, and northern Persia, Kerman, and Oman.

The latter Buyids rule is marked by never-ending conflicts among the descendents of the three founding brothers and their wars with other emerging powers: the Samanids, the Ghaznavids, the later Saffarids, as well as other local warlords. Morgan (1988) believed that these protracted conflicts, eventually, weakened them so that the Sunnite Seljuqs had little difficulty in defeating and putting an end to their rule in Baghdad when they entered it in AD 1055. The Buyids survived for a few more years in Kerman until they succumbed to the Kurdish Shabankara rulers who soon lost Kerman to overwhelming power of emerging Seljuqs.

## **The BALoch And Buyids**

The possession of Kerman was alternatively claimed by various semi -independent dynasties, including the Samanids and the Buyids, throughout the eleventh century. As a major factor in the power politics of the day, the Baloch were caught and minced by the powerful jaws of opposing dynasties. Events developed in such a way that the Baloch became engaged in protracted and bloody conflicts with Buyids, resulting in immense sufferings for the Baloch.

Major concentration of the Baloch at the eleventh century appears to be in Kerman and surrounding regions. According to Istakhri (1961), the country of the Baloch in Kerman was lying between

Barez Mountain and Gulf of Oman. Minorsky (1937) suggested that a number of the Baloch tribes were in a dominating position in an area bounded by the sea in the south, Hormuz and Manujan in the west, the districts of Rudbar and the hill region called Kuhistan-e Abu Ghanim in the north, and Khwash and the desert in the east. Hudud al Alam (see Minorsky, 1970) described the Kuh-e-Kufij as a chain of seven mountains running from Jiruft to the sea, with seven tribes, each with its own chief and being “professional looters.” However, it became obvious, looking at later events, that either these mentioned entities were, in fact, different Baloch tribes, or they were under a tribal confederacy led by the Baloch.

The Baloch entered into historical accounts of the Arabs and Persian writers of medieval Iran as Koch o Baloch. The Arabs and Persian historians of the time, in order to justify the genocidal acts of Buyids, portrayed the Baloch as horrible and barbaric. According to Arab chronicler Tabari (2007), who was writing in the tenth century, the Koch o Baloch seem to have been, nominally, Muslims. He observed that in practice, their behavior was characterized by a distinctly “pagan savagery,” while Maqaddesi, writing at the same time, described the Baloch as pacific pastoralist people who helped travelers and the Koch as barbarians who, in time, were terrorizing the caravan routes across the great desert, respectively. Tabari slighted the Baloch by mentioning them as not only barbarians but also imperfectly Islamized, if Islamized at all. Regardless of their opinions about the Baloch, the accounts they produced, obviously, the biased ones, provided us with an overview of the situation the Baloch were facing in those days of medieval Iran.

The Baloch encounters with the Buyids had been graphically reported by the historians of that period. Bosworth (1994) observed that eastern Kerman and southwestern Makuran were under the effective control of Koch o Baloch tribes in AD 971, when the Buyids General Abid ibn Ali captured Tiz and the surrounding territory and converted the population to Islam. Buyids chiefs Mu'izz ad-Daula and Adud ad-Daula took draconian measures against the Koch o Baloch in Kerman. Maqaddesi was very proud

of the actions of Buyids Adud ad-Daula when he stated that he destroyed them and wrought damage among the Koch and Baloch. From Maqaddesi, it appears that Adud ad-Daula used “very decent tactics” in dealing with the Baloch as he took eighty of their youth as hostages to Shiraz and these hostages were exchanged with other eighty youths every so often. Some of the noble deeds and very decent tactics of this Buyids chief vis-à-vis the Baloch will be described in the following sections.

The relationship between the Koch o Baloch with Buyids dates back to AD 933 when Ali Buya, also known as Imad al-Daulah, recruited an army of 1,600 Deylamites and 500 Turks to subjugate the Baloch. He gave the leadership of the army to his younger brother Ahmad Buya, known as Mu’izz al-Daulah. Tabari (2007) described how Mu’izz ad-Daula was succeeded in subjugating the Baloch. First, Ahmad Buya took Bam. Approaching Jiruft, he was received by the delegation of Ali ibn Kulwaihi (Ali Guluya), the chief of the Baloch and Koch, and other tribes in the area allied with the Baloch.

The Koch o Baloch were known to show courtesy to every major power that approached them by professing submission and paying tribute, but they never attended their courts and never tolerated any infringement on their territory and their way of independent living. This was the ground of negotiations of Ali Kulwaihi with the Buyids. Accordingly, to avoid unnecessary confrontation with a mighty force, the Baloch chief Ali Kulwaihi evacuated the city for Ahmad Buya. He himself encamped in a place ten leagues distant and in an impregnable place. The delegations came and went between the two sides and ended with an agreement to the effect that the Baloch chief would send a hostage and an annual tribute of a million dirham’s supererogatory to the tribute. Furthermore, the Baloch chief acknowledged the Buyids in the *khutbah* (Friday sermon) and thus showed subservience to the Buyids rule.

Ahmad Buya, however, violated the agreement and set out to attack the Baloch unawares. The Baloch chief, being informed about the treachery, prepared to counter the Buyids Army and organized

contingents of his own army in concealment on both sides of a defile in the postulated route of Buyids' advance. This defile was called as Dar-e-Farid or Dilfiirid in the mountain zone connecting the central massif of the Kerman Sardasir with Barez Mountain (Bosworth, 1977). As Buyids' forces passed through it in the darkness of the night, the Koch o Baluch took them by surprise, slaying and capturing so extensively that only few of the Buyids' forces could escape. Ahmad Buya himself received many conspicuous sword-strokes and lost his left hand and several fingers of his right one and was so severely wounded in head and trunk that he fell among the slain. The whole of the Buyids' garrison in Jiruft, when informed about the bitter defeat, fled toward Fars. On the following morning, the Baluch found Buyids' Amir close to death, but he was carried to Jiruft and, on the instruction of the Baluch chief, was treated and taken care for his wounds.

Following these events, Buyids' ruler Ali Buya sent another force of 2,000 toward Kerman. The Baluch chief Ali Kulwaihi, meanwhile, in order to diffuse the situation, sent a mission with a letter to Buyids' capital Istakhr to apologize for the injuries sustained by his brother and to explain the heart of the matter that the Baluch were not to be blamed and to profess obedience. Ali Buya, in turn, dispatched a deputation with the Qadi of Shiraz, Abu al-Abbas al-Hannat, and other notable men to express satisfaction and that he accepted the Baluch leader's explanations and apology and his fulfillment of what had been agreed, and he gave back his hostage and renewed the treaty and covenant. Then, in reciprocation, the Baluch released his brother Ahmad Buya and all other captives after treating them favorably and bestowing on them gifts and other benefits.

However, despite the agreement of his brother, Ahmad Buya launched a reprisal attack from Sirjan to avenge his hurt upon the leader of the Koch o Baluch. Ali Kulwaihi went to meet him in battle and stormed the army of the Buyids in a rainy night when people could hardly discern each other except by their languages, and Koch o Baluch inflicted heavy losses upon their enemy. However, in the

morning, the Buyids forces regrouped and fought the Baloch in a fresh battle, resulting in the ultimate defeat of the Baloch Army. This success seems not to have been a sufficient revenge for the young Buyids chief. According to Meskawiah (1915), Ahmad Buya, having satisfied merely a part of his grief, retired but still cherished hatred against the Baloch in his heart. Nonetheless, the Buyids troops were recalled to Capital Istakhir for the time being as the dynasty was facing another danger in the northwest.

After a decade or so, the Buyids again turned their attention toward Kerman. Buyids chief of Fars and Khuzistan, Adud ad-Daula, launched many punitive expeditions against the Koch and Baloch. The court poet of Adud ad-Daula, Mutanabbi, in AD 965, mentioned in a verse (Bosworth, 1977) that his patron was the one who offered cups of death to his foes on the one hand and cups of wine to his intimates on the other hand, when he made the Koch like the previous day that had passed away totally. However, it appeared that despite this boast, the Baloch did not vanish altogether from the political scene of Kerman.

Adud ad-Daula clashed with the Baloch when he attacked Kerman in AD 967 and defeated Ilyas the son and successor of Muhammad ibn Ilyas (Bosworth, 1977). The Baloch were allied with Ilyas, and a major part of his army was made of the Baloch fighters. Another son of Muhammad ibn Ilyas, Suleiman, attempted with Samanids' help to make a retaliatory attack in AD 970 in alliance with the Koch o Baloch. Although, this time also, the Ilyasid forces were defeated, the resistance against the Buyids from the Koch o Baloch continued for a year or so afterward. Istakhri (1961) observed that this resistance, whose leaders included Abu Saeed Baloch and his sons, compelled Adud ad-Daula to take as drastic measures as possible against this running sore of the Koch o Baloch. In AD 970 and 972, two campaigns were launched against them, and, as a result, the Buyids authority was extended as far eastward as Makuran ( Istakhri, 1961).

According to Istakhri (1961), in the first campaign, the Buyids generals Kurkir ibn Jastin and Abid ibn Ali marched southward from Jiruft, defeating an army of the Koch o Baloch and the Manujaniyans in the south of Jiruft in December AD 970. The Koch o Baloch was routed, with five thousand of their numbers killed, including two sons of their chief, Abu Saeed. The Buyids forces then turned eastward to Tiz. In the second campaign, Adud ad-Daula came personally to Sirjan in order to direct operations against the Baloch; an army penetrated into Barez Mountain, defeating the Baloch under the leadership of Ali Barezui, slaughtering their males, and enslaving the women and children in AD 972 (Bosworth, 1977). The remnants of the Baloch were deported from the Barez Mountain, and peasants and cultivators from other parts of his domain were settled in their place.

According to Meskawiah (1915), Adud al-Daula, during this expedition against the Baloch, resorted to a unique tactic to force out the Baloch from a very narrow valley in the Barez Mountain where, after the main battle, some of the Baloch were taking refuge. As it was dangerous for the army to move into the valley after traversing a very narrow pass without being shot at by the Baloch taking stand on the lofty mountain ridges, he sent a messenger for negotiation. The Baloch were asked for some kind of tribute in order to leave them alone in their hideout. As the Baloch were not in a position to pay any ransom, Adud al-Daula agreed to leave the Baloch if every family would furnish him with a dog. After the Baloch sent him the dogs, these were sent back toward the Baloch bound with burning naphtha on their necks. In the mayhem that followed the burning dogs, the army entered the valley from the narrow pass and massacred the Baloch. With the use of this innovative tactic, he was able to burn the whole settlement of the Baloch and annihilate the population. During the same campaign, an amphibious invasion of Makuran was launched, with ships coming from Siraf and Hormuz and with an army marching by the land. Maqaddesi (1906) observed that after repeated aggressive and extensive campaigns, the Buyids ruler had scattered the Baloch and lay waste their lands, taking some into slavery and settling others else where.

As mentioned by Maqaddesi, the Baloch living in Barez Mountains and surrounding regions were deported or made slaves and their lands were wasted. Later events in the Baloch history showed that the annihilation of the Baloch was not total. The Baloch were still there in Kerman after the victorious campaigns of the Buyids. However, defeats and genocide acts of the Buyids rulers forced an *en masse* migration of the remaining Baloch tribes toward east in to Makuran, Sistan, and Turan. In many ways, this was one of the major exoduses of the Baloch from west to east, toward the lands that later formed the present-day Balochistan. They moved from Kerman and settled in Makuran, Sistan, and Turan where many of the Baloch tribes had already a presence because of their earlier migrations.

Some of the migrating Baloch tribes might have reached Sindh at the period of their long drawn-out struggle against the Buyids in Kerman. The Baloch presence has been reported in the area where they were part of at least two uprisings against the local Summrah Dynasty that was under the protection of Ghaznavids. Masum (1855) described that on one occasion, a Baloch chief Mehran was involved with Shodha and Jharejha tribes in the conspiracy of overthrowing Khafif, a Summrah ruler. On a second occasion, the Baloch were involved in a rebellion against Omar, the grandson of Khafif, forming an alliance with Shodhas and Jats. These two events occurred during the reign of Masud and Moudud of Ghaznavids Dynasty (Masum, 1855).

## The ghAZnAVids dynAsTy

The Samanids Dynasty from the beginning of ninth century to the beginning of eleventh century ruled a large part of northern Iran. The Samanids domain stretched north as far as Chorasmia and the upper Oxus valleys, to Khurasan, Gurgan, and, for a while, it stretched as far as the present-day border with Iraq. Samanids rulers recruited a large number of Turkish captives as soldiers and officers in their army and as pages and servants in their palaces. When the



Samanids state began to weaken, some of these military officers rebelled against their sovereign. Sebuktegin was one of these Turkish slave chiefs, who established a powerful dynasty centered at Ghazni. During the reign of his son Mahmud, the Ghaznavids Dynasty was at its peak of glory and power (Bosworth, 1963). The Baloch were engaged in various encounters with the Ghaznavids rulers who ruled a vast region of Iran from the last decade of the tenth century until the end of the twelfth century.

Mahmud defeated the army of Esmail II, the last of the Samanids, in 1005 and became the master of Khurasan. He then occupied Sistan and expanded his territory into eastern Turkestan (Bosworth, 1963). His raids on the Indian plains of Punjab and Sindh enriched him with considerable booty and numerous Indian slaves. He was also able to recruit a large number of mercenaries from India to bolster his war efforts in conquering a vast region of Central Asia. His devastating advances penetrated the Ganges-Jumna Doab, and he went in search of Indian riches as far as Gwalior in Central India. Later, in his reign, he also annexed Chorasmlia to his possessions and extended his attacks to Buyids territories and captured Ray.

Figure 15: **Map of the Ghaznavids Empire**

Source: <http://iranpoliticsclub.net>



Mahmud was succeeded first by his son Muhammad who was, however, overcome by his brother Masud. Masud was decisively defeated by Seljuqs at Dandanqan in AD 1040 and lost the control of Khurasan (Baihaqi, 1945). With the extension of Seljuqs power, the Ghaznavids territory shrank, and, at the time, it was confined to their Indian regions until the Turkic Ghurids of Afghanistan put an end to the dynasty in AD 1186.

The relation between the Ghaznavids and the Baloch had never been peaceful. Turan and Makuran came under the Ghaznavids founder Sebuktegin's suzerainty as early as AD 976-977 (Bosworth, 1963). The Baloch tribes fought against Sebuktegin when he attacked Khuzdar in AD 994. The Baloch were in the army of Saffarids Amir Khalaf and fought against Mahmud when the Ghaznavids forces invaded Sistan in AD 1013 (Muir, 1924). Many other occasions were mentioned by the historians of the Ghaznavids era in which the Baloch came into confrontation with the Ghaznavids forces (Nizam al-Mulk, 1960). Masud, son of Mahmud, attacked Kerman and occupied it for a period of two years in AD 1034 and 1035 (Bosworth, 1963). The Baloch resisted the occupation of Kerman by Ghaznavids as an ally of local ruler. On the pretext that the Baloch have robbed Mahmud's ambassador in the desert north of Kerman between Tabas and Khabis, Mahmud sent his son Masud against them (Dames, 1904). The Baloch engaged the Ghaznavid forces under the command of Masud three times, and in one of the encounters, they were able to defeat the Ghaznavids contingent under the command of Masud but were defeated in the following two.

The encounter of the Baloch with the Ghaznavids had been mentioned by Nizam al-Mulk (1960) in his famous book *Siyasat Nama*. He described how Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni was forced to deal with the spoliations of the Koch o Baloch as they were marauding the whole region between Sistan and Kerman. Sultan Mahmud sent presents through his ambassador to the ruler of Kerman. According to Nizam al-Mulk, a party of the Baloch marauders between Tabas and Khabis caught the ambassador of the

Sultan, and his party was looted to the last man. The ambassador came back and met the Sultan who was on his way to Khwarezm (Choresmia). While staying at Bust, the Sultan sent his son Masud with a strong contingent to punish the Baloch. The Baloch fought fearlessly and were defeated by the Ghaznavids forces. Many were killed and captured, and their settlements were looted, and Masud returned back with immense booty.

During the reign of Masud, several expeditions were sent to deal with the issue of the ever-hostile Baloch. It appears that while finding it hard to subjugate the Baloch in classical ways of fighting, the Ghaznavids ruler resorted to the poisoning of the Baloch. A caravan of poisoned apples was purposely sent through Kerman desert. The court historians of Ghaznavids rulers, including Nizam al-Mulk, proudly stated that Baloch attacked the caravan and devoured the apples as hungry wolves. The poison acted as an epidemic and exterminated a great number of them.

The Baloch came into conflict with the Ghaznavids in Turan and Makuran in still earlier periods. It is reasonably clear that Turan was brought under the Ghaznavids allegiance, perhaps even before Sebuktegin was proclaimed as independent Amir of Ghazni when in AD 976, he launched an attack upon Khuzdar. The Baloch tribes were with the Kharijite ruler of Turan when Mahmud attacked Khuzdar in AD 1011. At the beginning of the reign of Masud I (AD 1040), he sent an army under his influential uncle Yousuf ibn Sebuktegin to reduce Khuzdar and Makuran. Afterward, in AD 1047, during the reign of Moudud, Turan again rebelled, and an army was dispatched there to compel the rebels into submission.

Another account of the Baloch and the Ghaznavids relation is that mentioned by Baihaqi, where it is said that the Baloch were part of the infantry forces of the ruler of Makuran, Isa ibn Madan, the one who fought against Masud (Baihaqi, 1945)—in this battle, hundreds from Makuran and the fighters from the Baloch tribe of Reiki in Kharan were massacred, and the Ghaznavids Army devastated the area. For ten days, the Ghaznavids killed whoever came into their

sight in Kech Valley. According to Raverty (1888), during the reign of Moudud, after the murder of his father Masud in AD 1047, the Ghaznavids forces entered Turan and quelled a rebellion near Khuzdar.

The mentioning of various encounters of the Baloch and the Ghaznavids, especially in Makuran and Turan, suggests that the Baloch were able to exert their presence in these regions, although their presence was not a significant one politically. This may be because they were still in a transitory phase (as the migrations were still going on) and the pastoralist Baloch tribes were still looking for safe and greener pastures, or maybe they were not fully in charge of their affairs in a satisfactory way. But the accounts also indicate that the Baloch were still a force to be reckoned in some parts of Kerman and Sistan at the time of Sultan Masud of Ghazni, and they were beginning to assert their presence in Makuran and Turan as being allied with local rulers or being parts of their armies.

## **seljuqs eMPire**

Seljuqs established one of the famous and glorious dynasties in medieval Iran. After nearly two hundred years of the Saffarids rule since AD 861, all of Persia and its dependencies came under a single and powerful rule of Seljuqs Dynasty. Guzz, a Turkic nomadic people, began to penetrate into the regions south of Oxus during the early Ghaznavids period. Seljuq was one of the chieftains of Guzz Turkic nomads. The Guzz tribes were united and were led by two brothers, Togrel Beg and Chaghri Beg, the grandsons of Seljuq to which the name of their dynasty is known. According to Morgan (1988), by around AD 1059, the Seljuqs rule was established throughout Persia and Iraq as far as the frontiers of Syria and the Byzantine Empire in Anatolia. Togrel Beg proclaimed himself Sultan in AD 1038 and began a systematic conquest of the various provinces of Persia and Transoxania (Lange, 2011).

The Seljuqs embarked on a number of successful campaigns as far north as Kashgaria and Khotan in eastern Central Asia and as far

west as Syria, Anatolia, and even Yemen, with the Caliph in Baghdad subservient to the wishes of the great Seljuqs sultans. Seljuqs captured Chorasmia from its Ghaznavids governor and secured the submission of Gurgan, Ray, Qazvin, Hamadan, and Jebal and advanced as far west as Holwan and Kanaqayn. Togrel triumphantly entered Baghdad on December 18 AD 1055 as the master of nearly all the lands of Sassanid Iran (Lange, 2011). As observed by Minorsky (1937), the rise of Seljuqs power ended the period of Persian origin rulers of Saffarids, Samanids, Ziyarids, Buyids, and other small local chiefdoms.

Figure 16: **Map of the Seljuqs Dynasty**

Source: [www.worldhistorymaps.info](http://www.worldhistorymaps.info)



Alp Arslan was the most famous of the Seljuqs Sultans who was succeeded by his son Malekshah. After Malekshah, internal strife began to set in, and several Seljuqs lines gradually developed, including the Seljuqs of Kerman (AD 1048-1188) and the Seljuqs of Rum in Anatolia (AD 1081-1307). The unified Seljuqs power practically collapsed with the defeat and imprisonment of Sultan

Sanjar in the hands of Guzz Turks of Transoxania in AD 1153 (Lange, 2011).

During the early Seljuqs period, the Baloch were living in Kerman, Sistan, Makuran, and Turan in relative peace. However, hostilities soon developed between the Seljuqs and the Baloch. Most probably, it was because of the increasing encroachment of the Guzz pastoralist Turks on the traditional Baloch grazing fields in Sistan and Kerman as was observed earlier. As the Seljuqs Dynasty was ruling the region, a head-on confrontation was inevitable with the authorities who were the real power behind the Guzz aggression on the Baloch pastoral lands. According to Tabari (2007), Chaghri Beg and Qawurd made their hostile advances against the Baloch during mid-eleventh century on the pretext of maintaining law and order. According to Tabari, the Koch o Baloch continued to prey upon travelers through the Great Desert, so the Seljuqs reduced their activities to more tolerable proportions.

Seljuqs ruler of Kerman Qawurd unleashed a reign of terror on the Baloch in Kerman around AD 1074. The historian of the Seljuqs of Kerman—Muhammad ibn Ibrahim (Bosworth, 1977; Lange, 2011)—relates how Qawurd prepared an army to overrun the Garmsir region of Kerman, in which lay much of the province's resources and revenues but which, since the time of Adud ad-Daula, had relapsed into anarchy under Buyids Amir's weaker successors. Realizing that the inaccessibility of the Barez Mountain haunts made direct assault difficult, he proceeded with guile and trickery. He sent an envoy to the leader of the Koch o Baloch with robes of honors and presents and formally invested him with the lands from Dar-e-Firid and Sar-e-Bizan to the coastland, saying,

*"I am a Turk, and the water and the climate of the Garmsir are uncongenial to the physical constitution of myself and my followers; I must have a viceroy there on my behalf, and what more suitable viceroy could there be than you?"*

Having established a relationship of confidence, he familiarized himself with the topography of the whole region by establishing a spy network in the territory of the Baloch. The seat of the Koch o Baloch was in the Barez Mountains (Jebel Barez), and Qawurd's spies informed him about a grand gathering of tribal chiefs in a traditional festival at a certain time and place. The place was considered by the leader of the Koch o Baloch as almost inaccessible to any outside force. Qawurd marched out of Jiruft with a massive army, swept down on the Koch o Baloch chiefs at their meeting place, and massacred them to a man.

The hostilities between the encroaching Guzz Turks on the grazing fields of the Baloch in Kerman and Sistan intensified, and the resulting attack on the Baloch by the Seljuqs forces was the final act which compelled the last *en masse* migration of almost all the Baloch tribes from Kerman and many parts of northern Sistan. It is obvious that the second and, perhaps, the last wholesale migration of the Baloch tribes during the Seljuqs era was mainly due to atrocities of the Seljuqs rulers prompted by the rivalries of the Baloch with encroaching Guzz pastoralist nomadic tribes. The influx of pastoralist tribes in Kerman and Sistan not only caused much tension between the two pastoralist ethnic groups but also made the pastoral activities of the Baloch untenable in the face of increased competition.

The massacre of the Baloch by the Seljuqs brought many changes in the Baloch society and polity resulting in some of the fundamental structural changes in the Baloch tribes. The immediate effect was a new wave of *en masse* migration of the Baloch from Kerman that nearly put an end to the political influence of the Baloch in Kerman. The migrating Baloch tribes entered Sistan and then into Makuran and Turan. Later, these tribes organized themselves into tribal confederacies, which shaped the present Baloch national entity, and one of these tribal confederacies was able to establish the first Baloch state in the confinement of the present-day Balochistan. Two other tribal confederacies due to various reasons were compelled to march further eastward into Punjab and Sindh of present-day

Pakistan. With the intensification of the Baloch migrations into Makuran and Turan, the area began to take on the character of modern-day Balochistan.

The migrating Baloch tribes became dominant on every aspects of the region, Balochi started to become the *lingua franca*, and many indigenous tribes and populace began to merge in the emergent and newly dominant Baloch national identity.

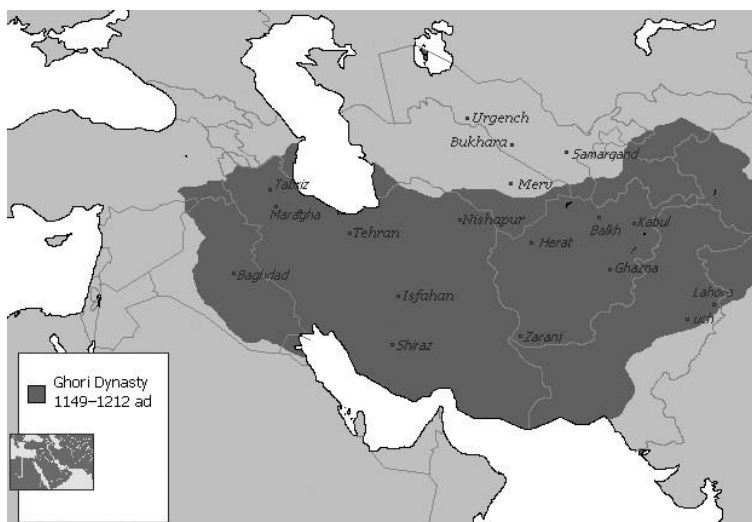
## ghurid And khwAreZMid dynAsTies

During the twelfth century, two short-lived dynasties ruled major parts of Iran. From 1149, the Ghurid tribes of central Afghanistan under their chief Ala-ud-Din Husain declared independence from Ghaznavids and Seljuqs and established the Ghurid Dynasty that continued until 1212 (Pazhvak, 1966). The Ghurid Empire was centered at Ghur and stretched over an area that included the whole of modern Afghanistan, the eastern parts of Iran, and the northern section of the Indian subcontinent as far as Delhi. The Ghurid were succeeded in Persia by the Khwarezmid Dynasty.

Figure 17: **Map of the Ghurid Dynasty**

*Source:* [www.mapsofindia.com](http://www.mapsofindia.com)



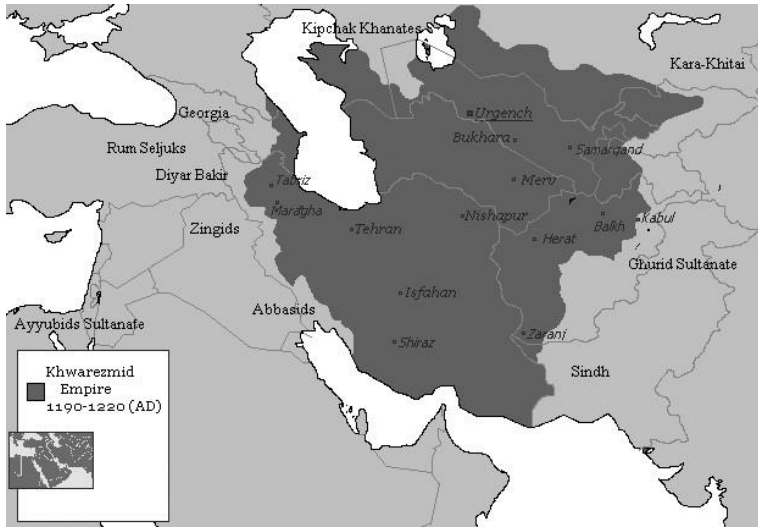


Khwarezm (Chorasmia) was a dependency of Qara-Khitai Empire of Transoxania during the late tenth century. The local rulers of Khwarezm, called Khwarezm Shah, threw off their subjection to Qara-Khitai Empire and, subsequently, with the collapse of Seljuqs power, replaced them in Iran and Iraq. Under Alau-alDin Muhammad ibn Takesh, Khwarezm Empire extended from Persia to Transoxania, and in the east, they defeated the Ghurid in Afghanistan (Rashid al-Din Tabib, 2001). Their empire began in 1077 and eclipsed by 1230 under the Mongol onslaught, despite the brilliant resistance by Alau-al-Din's son Jalal-al-Din.

Figure 18: **Map of the Khwarezm Empire**

Source: James Hutton/Central Asia: from the Aryans to Cossacks

## The Baloch and Balochistan



After the collapse of Ghaznavids Dynasty, areas which later formed parts of Balochistan (Sistan, Turan, and Makuran) came under the rule of Ghurid Empire. There is not much mention of the interaction between the Baloch and the Ghurid. The Baloch tribes, after their many debacles in Kerman, migrated toward east via Sistan and Makuran. According to ancient Baloch ballads, which cannot be considered authentic historical accounts, the Baloch were met with the atrocities of one Badar-ud-din who probably was a Ghurid governor of Sistan (Pazhvak, 1966). It appears that many of the Baloch tribes were forced to migrate from northern Sistan toward Makuran and Turan due to hostile attitudes of Ghurid rulers or their protégés in Sistan. However, there are some accounts of the Baloch being allied with Ghurid rulers of Herat, forming an important part of their army that fought with or against Khwarezm Shah and Mongols.

The Baloch came into confrontation with the Ghurid in Makuran and Turan in AD 1183, when the Ghurid ruler Gias-ul-Din Ghuri attacked Kech and snatched Makuran from the Kharijite chief Amir Husain. Several hundred Baloch were among the killed and wounded in the battle. The Baloch tribes of Turan suffered heavily

when they supported its Kharijite ruler Shabib ibn Habib against the invading Ghurid Army under Gias-al-Din Ghuri near Kalat in AD 1187 ( Pazhvak, 1966).

Just before Genghis Khan swept across Central Asia, Malik Shujah al Din of Zauzan, a nominee of the last Shah of Khivah, attacked and devastated Bampur, perhaps about AD 1212 (Brian, 2007). In the following year, he proceeded to Kech and Tiz, gaining possession of both territories. The last ruler of Khwarezm, Jalal-ul-Din, resisted vigorously against the Mongol hordes who were invading Iran under the leadership of Genghis Khan. Jalal-al-Din Khwarezm Shah is said to have crossed Makuran on his march from India to Kerman in AD 1224 with the intention of reviving his kingdom from the clutches of the Mongols.

It can be established that the Baloch of Makuran, Sistan, Turan, and Kerman were caught in the battles fought between the fugitive Jalal-al-Din Khwarezmshah and the pursuing Mongol hordes. Brian (2007) observed that the Baloch formed a part of the army of Sistan that became involved in the long drawn-out struggle for the control of Iran by the Mongol Hordes. A Sistan army was assembled in support of Khwarezm Shah, in which the Baloch formed the major part. The army marched toward Khurasan to engage the Mongol invaders, and the Mongols slaughtered almost every member of the force near Tirmiz.

## **Mongols And ilkhAnATe**

The Mongol phenomenon changed the destiny of many nations, wiped out many weak ethnic groups from the face of earth, and changed the politics, geography, and sociology of whole Asia drastically and beyond recognition. The national and ethnic entities living in different regions of Iranian plateau were among the people that faced one of the barbaric invasions in the history of humankind. Mongol name became synonymous with atrocities in many languages.

The Mongol phenomenon began with declaration of Genghis Khan as the “Great Khan” of Mongols in the thirteenth century. Genghis Khan established a vast empire that stretched from northern China through Siberia and Central Asia to the Middle East, Russia, Ukraine, and Eastern Europe. In AD 1219, the Mongols invaded Transoxania after subduing various Uralo-Altaic and Turkic tribes and making them subordinate (Amitai, 2007). Khwarezmshah, after some indecisive battles with the Mongol Army, fled south, followed by pursuing Mongol forces. He died on an island in the Caspian Sea. The great majority of the cities in Transoxania and Persia that refused to submit were destroyed, with their whole populations put to the sword. Bukhara, Samarkand, Otrar, Kojand, Tirmiz, Marv, Balkh, Taleqan, Nishapur, Tus, Herat, Juzjan, Bamiyan, Ray, and the cities of Tabaristan suffered large-scale destruction in this way (Amitai, 2007).

After the death of Genghis Khan in AD 1227, his vast empire was divided between his four sons or their descendents. In AD 1251, one of Genghis Khan’s grandsons, Mongke, became the Great Khan, and he dispatched one of his brothers, Hulegu Khan, to control Persia. Hulegu Khan defeated the Ismailis (Assassins) in 1256, destroyed their mountain fortress, entered Baghdad, and put the last Abbasid Caliph to death in 1258, ending the long-lasting Abbasid Caliphate, thus bringing to a close an era of Islamic history (Amitai, 2007). After subduing the notorious Assassins and after capturing Baghdad and murdering the last Abbasid Caliph, Hulegu Khan established in Iran an empire for himself and his descendants that continued for more than a century.

**Figure 19: Map of Ilkhanate**

*Source:* <http://www.google.co.uk/imgres>

## regional dynasties of Iran and The Baloch



The empire, which Hulegu created, became known as Il Khanid, and their rulers were called Il Khans, meaning vassals of the Great Khan. His descendants, gradually, became practically independent of any central authority, particularly after Gazan Khan converted to Islam in early fourteenth century (Amitai, 2007). His brother Oljeutu succeeded him. Abu Said Bahador, the son of Oljeutu, who ruled between AD 1316 and 1335, was the last of the powerful Il Khans (Amitai, 2007). After him the domain of the Il Khans became divided between the Karts in eastern Khurasan and northern

Afghanistan, the Mozaffarids in Yazd, Kerman, in western Persia and Azerbaijan, the Injuyids in Fars, the Jalayerids in Kurdistan and Iraq, and Sarbedarids in western Khurasan at different periods. Timur (Tamerlane) terminated the Il Khanid rules, and the Mongol phenomenon ended in AD 1358 ( Du Bec, 1650).

There are only passing references of Baloch encounters with the Mongol hordes. In one of the classical Balochi ballads, there is mention of a Baloch chieftain, Shah Baloch, who, no doubt, heroically resisted a Mongol advance somewhere in Sistan. Kutlugh Shah, the Chagatai Mongol chief of Transoxania attacked Kerman, made it desolate, and looted thousands of the cattle from the Baloch

and other nomadic population of the province before withdrawing to north (Amitai, 2007; Du Bec, 1650). In AD 1224, a Mongol horde, numbering 30,000 fighters, entered Makuran and, after devastating the whole region, camped at Punjgur for many months (Mari, 1974). This Mongol Army, however, was twice trapped by the Baloch in Makuran cliffs, first in Gokprosh hills near Turbat and then in a place to the north of Sami hills, sixty kilometers from Turbat, commemorated to this day by the name *Mughal-e-Gat* (the Mongol's precipice). They were, eventually, defeated by an epidemic that broke out among them in Punjgur, causing many deaths and compelling the survivors to retire. The Baloch legends tell the story of atrocities of Mongols when Genghis Khan is said to have passed across the country of eastern Balochistan. The brutalities of Mongol ruler of Kharan Malik Chap caused a rising of the Baloch in which he was killed (Ahmadzai, 1995).

Figure 20: **Map of Timurids Empire**

Source: Wikimedia.org



Timur (Tamerlane), a local chieftain in Transoxania, was from the Chagatai Mongols. By AD 1370, he became an unchallenged ruler of Transoxania (Nicolle, 1990). In AD 1381, after conquering Chorasmia, he subdued the ruler of the Qepchaq plains and occupied Khurasan, Mazandaran, Astarabad, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Shirvan,

and Armenia. In AD 1398, he invaded India, sacked Delhi, and massacred some 100,000 people. His son Shahrukh, who ruled between AD 1405 and 1447, was able to hold together a large portion of his father's empire in Khurasan, Transoxania, southern Iran, and Iraq (Nicolle, 1990). The Timurids rule ended soon after the death of Sultan Husain, a great-grandson of Timur, because of repeated Uzbek incursions. The Timurids Dynasty lasted until AD 1405 (Du Bec, 1650).

Timur, during his formative days, attacked Sistan and fought bloody battles with its Keiani chief Jalal-a-Din Mahmud (Nicolle, 1990). The Baloch in Sistan, as ally of the local ruler, were part of the local army. Timur, after establishing his power in Transoxania, invaded Sistan, massacred its population, and made the area desolate for a long time. Sistan was unable to regain its economic prosperity as Timur destroyed the dam on Helmand River that was the backbone of agriculture-based economy of Sistan. During Timurids attacks of Dozzab (modern-day Zahedan) and Bust, the Baloch casualties were immense. According to the Baloch legends, the atrocities of the Timurids Army were far exceeding the atrocities the Baloch suffered under the Buyids in Kerman earlier.

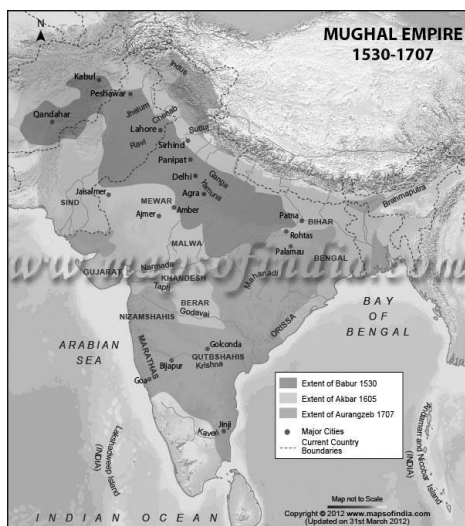
## The Mughals And The Baloch

Babur, son of a local ruler in Ferghana, conquered Kabul in AD 1514 and advanced upon India, establishing the Mughal Empire in AD 1526. At the height of their power in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, the Mughals controlled most of the Indian subcontinent, extending from Bengal in the east to Balochistan in the west, Kashmir in the north to the Kaveri basin in the south (Srivastava, 1977). The Mughal rule formally ended in 1857 by the British East India Company.

Figure 21: **Map of Mughal Empire in India**

Source: <http://www.mapsofindia.com>

## The Baloch and Balochistan



The Mughal rule in Balochistan was not direct but was through proxy rulers from Kandahar, Multan, and Sindh. As a large group of the Baloch tribes were moving further east into Punjab, and the Mughals were consolidating their hold on northern India, the encounters with the powers of the day were inevitable. However, there is no mention of major incidences between the Baloch and Mughals in historical accounts. Babur mentioned the Baloch in his memoirs when, in AD 1519, he sent Haider Alemdar (the standard-bearer) to the Baloch in Punjab, who were settled in the country of Behreh or Bhira (a town on Jhelum River) and Khushab. He wrote that next morning, the Baloch came with an almond-colored Tipchak horse and made their submission. Having learned that the troops had exercised some severities toward the inhabitants of Bhira and using them ill, Babur sent out a party to punish his soldiers. The punitive squad, having seized a few soldiers that had been guilty of excesses, put some of them to death on the orders of Babur and slit the noses of some others, and made them led about the camp in that condition (Leyden and Erskine, 1929). The Baloch were also mentioned receiving gratuities after the defeat of Ibrahim Lodhi, showing that the Baloch were part of the Mughal Army at that time.

The next mention of the Baloch in Babur's memoriam is about sending an expedition against them in AD 1529. He narrated how



he sent Chin Timur Sultan to proceed and assemble the Amirs of Sirhind and Samaneh and that neighborhood. He ordered them to join Chin Timur with arms and provisions for six months' service to proceed against the Baloch and punish them for the devastation they brought about in several places in southern Punjab. According to memoirs, Chin Timur Sultan returned after some months, informing the emperor that he had inflicted a severe chastisement on the Baloch (Leyden and Erskine, 1929).

Turan remained under the control of Kamran Mirza, the rebellious brother of Mughal Emperor Humayun, for a long time before the reestablishment of Humayun's rule. It is interesting to mention one episode of Emperor Humayun with a Baloch chief after they passed Quetta Valley, quoted by Gulbadan Begum (1902) in *Humayun Nama*. It appeared that while journeying toward Iran, the emperor's entourage suffered a lot after they passed through Bolan Pass and Shal Valley (present Quetta) in northern Balochistan. Passing through Chagai area, they suffered from hunger and cold. They came to a Baloch settlement of Sanjarani tribe, where the Baloch chief (Malik Khathi) told the emperor thus: "I had orders from my brothers, Kamran and Askari, to arrest you and send you to Kandahar. However, I assure you that as you are my guest and in need, I would not hesitate to sacrifice my sons and family to protect you, and for this, I am ready to face the wrath of your brothers." Gulbadan Begum also mentioned the help offered to Humayun by the Baloch chieftain Bakshoo Baloch of Multan while the emperor was trying to cross the river Sindh.

During the Mughal period, the two Baloch confederacies of Rind and Laashaar (in eastern Balochistan and Punjab) remained allied with opposing powers. In the initial struggle between Emperor Humayun and Sher Shah Suri and later between Emperor Humayun and his brothers, the Rind appeared to be with Humayun, while Laashaars chose to support Sher Shah and, later, the rebellious brothers of Humayun. During the confusion that followed the flight of Emperor Humayun to Persia, a Baloch tribal union, headed by Fateh Khan Dodai, occupied Multan. However, after regaining the

throne of India, he sent an army under the command of General Hebat Khan who, after a bloody battle, defeated the Baloch, and the Mughals retook Multan. During the reigns of Emperor Akbar the Great and Emperor Shah Jahan, Balochistan was under firm Mughal control. According to Raverty (1888), during Akbar's reign, the Mughal governor of Multan, Abdurrahman Khan-e-Khanan, sent many punitive expeditions against the Baloch. However, there is no mention of any significant encounter with the Baloch tribes during the reign of Emperor Shah Jahan.

## **The Baloch And The regional dynASTies: An oVerView**

The history of the Baloch during the period that is characterized with the rule of various regional dynasties in Iran is marked by persecutions, deportations, and migrations. During the reigns of various regional powers in Iran after the weakening of the Arab rule, the Baloch in Kerman and Sistan suffered the worst persecutions and genocides. The confrontations with emerging powers caused the dispersion of the Baloch tribes in Makuran, Turan, and further east into Sindh and Punjab. The Buyids, the Ghaznavids, the Mongols, and Timurids dealt heavy blows to the Baloch, sometimes adopting inhuman tactics; the effects of these conflicts were so devastating that it took many centuries for the Baloch to assert themselves as a significant political or social entity in the regions which, today, form the landmass of Balochistan.

By all accounts, conflicts with the regional dynasties were not because of what the authors of the victorious powers called the continual harassment of the settled population by nomadic Baloch tribes. It was rather a reaction from the Baloch against encroachments on their traditional way of living a life independent of any state or organized authority.

On many occasions, the Baloch were parts of the armies of various dynasties ruling these areas; however, it is obvious that they did not play a significant role in the politics of the day, but these were the days of facing genocides, deportations, and dispersions. It was the

time apart from struggling to survive physically and find pastures and political sympathizers that the Baloch were engaged in a process of forming tribal confederacies and alliances. Initially, these tribal alliances and confederacies were not a major factor in the political affairs of the regions, where the Baloch were extensively diffusing; nevertheless, these were the buds from where the future Baloch national entity in Balochistan flourished. It was also the time of the domination of the Baloch culture and the merger of the indigenous population into Baloch tribes and tribal alliances. This was the time when Balochi language began to evolve as the *lingua franca* of the region. It is worth mentioning that the finest of Balochi classical poetry evolved during this period.

Koch o Baloch, during and after the Arab conquest of Iran, several times offered their lives generously to defend their people, land, and independent way of life against foreigners and invaders. Various national figures emerged at the head of these gallant men like Ali Kulwaihi, Abu Saeed, and Ali Barezui. Although the Baloch became very weak materially and militarily, an increased sense of solidarity and national pride developed among them. This became fundamental in the formation of a national consciousness during the dark days of wanderings and migrations into Sistan, Makuran, and Turan. During later periods, it was the great resilience of the Baloch that kept them intact, and after the wanderings of many centuries, they were able to rise again into a position of importance in many regions. Sufferings compelled the disorganized and disunited Baloch to organize them into tribal confederacies that gave rise to a national consciousness. During this period, a group of Baloch tribes, after migrating from Barez Mountain in Kerman, settled in Turan as Brahui. As will be discussed in the following sections, this group of the Baloch tribes played the fundamental role in the establishment of the Baloch national state.

# The Baloch in medieval Times

**T**he period between the twelfth and seventeenth centuries is of profound importance for the development of the Baloch national identity. This is marked in the Baloch history with *en masse* migrations of the Baloch tribes from Kerman and northern Sistan further into east, formations of tribal confederacies, and introduction of far-reaching social, cultural, and linguistic changes in the Baloch society.

## The BALoch MigrATIons in conText

In the previous sections, various unpleasant encounters of the Baloch with the regional dynasties were discussed. The conflicts with different powers resulted in the wholesale migrations of the Baloch, and they were compelled to move from one region to another to seek relief or find a safer abode. To escape from hostile political situation and to look for the survival of their livestock were the primary motives for large-scale Baloch migrations from west toward east, and the Baloch used migrations as a means of survival. On the other hand, deportations were among the strategies adopted by various dynasties in dealing with the Baloch problem; expulsion and settling them into remote areas was employed by hostile powers to gain a firm control of the region.

The Baloch entered into conflicts and hostilities with superior powers because they were not ready to accept any kind of foreign domination in their territory or encroachment on their way of life. It appears that a fierce sense of being independent of any foreign control was the basic reason of resisting the onslaught of powerful

dynasties, without looking at the consequences. However, one can notice that on many occasions, the Baloch tried their best to reach a compromise with the Buyids rulers of Kerman and with the Saffarids rulers of Sistan. Somehow, they failed to reach honorable agreements with the powers of the time for a peaceful coexistence.

Apart from political reasons, economic and environmental conditions also played important roles in the Baloch migrations toward east. For a pastoralist nomadic people, green pastures were vital for the survival of the community as their whole economy was based on the productions related to the well-being of their herds. With the increase in population both of human beings and the herds and probable encroachments of other pastoral nomadic population upon their vicinity, it was natural for the Baloch to look for areas both of sparse population and of good grazing possibilities.

## **The eAsTwArD MigrATions**

It is also important to understand why the Baloch decided to migrate into the semiarid areas that now constitute Balochistan rather than migrate west or north where environmental conditions were far better environmentally. In migrations where a whole community or a major portion of a community is involved, two factors are very important to determine the direction of the movements. First attraction is the area of least resistance, and second is a familiarity with the region aimed at and relationship or affiliation with the population of the destined location. While taking into account these factors, one can easily understand the logic of the Baloch migrations going toward east. It has already been observed that the Baloch presence (whether it was voluntary or forced is not relevant) was in the areas that are now the constituent parts of Balochistan from a very long time. As mentioned in the earlier sections of the book, the Baloch migration into present-day Balochistan started very early in ancient times, perhaps during the time of Median and Achaemenid empires.

Another factor that was instrumental in the eastward migration instead of westward or northward was the huge influx of nomadic populations from Central Asia into the Iranian plateau. As observed by Heape (1931), migrations of nomadic tribes are governed by certain universal laws that include the territorial rights from encroaching upon neighboring territory that is already occupied by others. The Guzz Turks had occupied a large part of pastureland in Khurasan and were encroaching and pushing toward south in Sistan and the Arab, and the Kurdish tribes were encroaching from west into Kerman, Fars, and the surrounding areas. It would have been natural that any Baloch moving toward these territories would have caused hostilities and conflicts. The Baloch felt comfortable being with the people belonging to their own community rather than going west or north to engage in continued conflicts with other contenders of these grazing fields.

Least resistance has always been observed for the newcomers in lands that are on the margins economically, socially, and politically. The regions on the periphery of settled societies have always been attractive for the movements of pastoralist nomads. The mobility of the nomads enables them to exploit the meager resources of these marginal lands in a way not possible for settled societies. Southern ranges of Sistan, Makuran, Turan, and Kachchi appear to have had this criterion regarding feasible migration of a pastoralist community. With a Baloch population already having settled there and the land being sparsely populated, there was the least resistance for the new arrivals. In fact, it appears that they were welcomed and supported. Perhaps this welcoming attitude was one of the factors in the adoption of sedentary way of life by some of the Baloch during the end of medieval period. The migrating Baloch tribes took the path of least resistance and joined their own tribes or other Baloch tribes who have been living in the areas of Sistan, Makuran, Turan, and Kachchi throughout the middle ages.

The migration of the Baloch into areas of present Balochistan dates back to the period of Balashagan. It seems that the migrating Baloch from Balashagan first settled primarily in the southern Caspian

regions, Kerman and northern Sistan. However, some tribes may have taken a long route into Makuran and Turan at the same time. These early Baloch pockets in Makuran and Turan would have been the dominating factors of the wholesale Baloch migrations into these areas during the Arab invasion of Iran and during the rule of later Iranian dynasties.

## **koch As BrAhui**

Naming a group of the Baloch tribes as Brahui probably began during the Arab encounters with the Baloch. However, it was during the Buyids and Seljuqs periods that some of the Baloch tribes from Barez Mountains of Kerman were forced to migrate and were identified first as Barezui. Later, with their settlement in Turan, the Barezui tribes became Brahui, and with the formation of a powerful tribal confederacy, they created the Baloch state of Kalat in later medieval times. These Baloch tribes from Barez Mountain in Kerman had been mentioned by Arab historians as Kufici (mountaineers), distinguishing them from other Baloch tribes who were dwelling mostly in the deserts of Kerman and Sistan. Hudud-al-Alam describes Jebel Barez (Kuh-e-Kufij) as a chain of seven mountains running from Jiruft to the sea, with seven tribes, each with its own chief and being “professional looters” (see Bosworth, 1976). Later, the term Koch o Baloch was used for the Baloch tribes as a whole in historical accounts. Some of the Arab writers, including Ibn Haukal (see Istakhri, 1800), did mention a Baloch tribe called Brahui among his list of ethnic groups. Other writers linked them with the Baloch as barbarians, imperfectly Islamized, if Islamized at all, who terrorized the great central deserts of Persia by their raids and preyed upon travelers and caravans (Bosworth, 1976; Le Strange, 1905).

From various historical narrations, it appeared that there was not much difference between the language of Koch and the Baloch at that time; however, the Brahui tribes may have their own dialect that may not be much different from Balochi. European linguists had

investigated the origin of the Brahui group of the Baloch tribes from a particular angle. However, from the investigations of Dr. Gershevitch, it can be deduced that the Brahui were among the tribal confederacy of the Baloch tribes in Kerman. Dr. Gershevitch, investigating the Bashkardi dialect, observed that apart from having absorbed some Brahui and Arabic, the Bashkardi dialects are pure Iranian. It is interesting to note that Bashkard is surrounded by the Baloch territory as mentioned by the Arab writers of the seventh century. If we assume the original country of the Brahui tribes in Turan, how can one explain the loan Brahui words in the Bashkardi dialects, keeping in mind the distance of Turan and Kerman or Bashkard?

Minorsky (1958) believed that the Brahui are the Koch. Gershevitch (1962a, b) traced the origin of Bashkardi dialects to the Bradazhui tribe of central Persia during the Achaemenid period. There is a possibility that the people of Barez Mountain, who became known as the Koch in the writings of Arab scholars, were from that tribe of Bradazhui who were deported by Cyrus the Great into the hills of Kerman. There is also mention of a people from Barez Mountain along with the Baloch as part of the Xerxes Army when he marched against the Greek.

Koch or Baloch entered in the accounts of Arab writers of the medieval Iran mainly in respect of their encounters with Buyids. Many authorities on medieval Iranian history, including Bosworth, observed that Koch was a separate ethnic entity that later merged with the Baloch entity; however, they failed to prove this on authentic ground. Some of the Baloch writers, including Mari (1974) and Janmahmad (1982) believed that the Koch were the Baloch tribes living in Barez Mountain (the Kuh-e-Kufij of the Arab writers), who were among the early migrating Baloch tribes and who finally settled in Turan.

It can safely be deduced that it was after the arrival of a great number of the Baloch tribes in Kerman in later Sassanid period that was responsible for the merging of the Koch into the greater Baloch



ethnic entity. Arabic writer Ibn Haukal, writing in the tenth century in his “Belad-al-Islam” quoted by Mari (1974), mentioned Bradazhui tribe living around the Fars country with Koch o Baloch. Maqaddesi (1906) observed that by the tenth century, the Baloch had spread as far as Turan, and, obviously, these Baloch most probably were from the Bradazhui Baloch tribes of Barez Mountain who, later, became Brahui of modern-day Balochistan.

During early Islamic times, the Brahui tribes inhabited Barez Mountain (the naming of the mountain as Kuh-e-Barez or Jebel Barez by the Arabs probably was after that tribe) in Kerman. It is not improbable that some of these tribes might have been part of the larger Baloch migrating tribes toward east into their present abode during Sassanid era. However, it appeared that Brahui were the first among the Baloch tribes who fled *en masse* from Kerman after the Buyids incursions, taking the eastward routes, traversing the Great desert, and resting in Sistan for a while before settling in present-day central Balochistan in Pakistan. This assumption makes sense as from the time of the Buyids genocide of the Baloch in Kerman, the mention of the Koch along with the Baloch vanished altogether. It appears that during their journey eastward, this group of the Baloch tribes took the identity of Barezui Baloch that, later, changed to modern Brahui. From the works of Dr. Gershevitch, it became apparent that the present Brahui language is an admixture of Balochi, Bashkardi, and some of the Dravidian languages. This is most plausible as there is evidence of the presence of Jats among the Baloch tribes in Kerman speaking a Dravidian language. At the time of the Baloch migration into Turan, there was a significant presence of Hephthalites Turks in the region. The influence of the Dravidian and Turkic dialects must have influenced the language when the Baloch tribes, who finally settled and intermarried with the indigenous Dravidian and Turkic population of Turan of that time.

## **socioPolitical Transformation of The Baloch**

Wholesale migration of the Baloch tribes initiated a process of social and political transformation of the Baloch society. Far-reaching changes occurred in the Baloch social life, those which became the permanent features of the Baloch society. The tribes were structured in military formations; different tribes united to form tribal unions and confederacies. Balochi became the *lingua franca* of the region, and many Baloch tribes or sections of some tribes began to adapt a settled lifestyle in rural and urban areas.

### **formation of Tribal unions**

At least four strong tribal confederacies evolved in different regions where the migrating Baloch tribes were struggling for a political role after the dust of their tortuous migratory process settled down. Beginning from the twelfth century, Sistan, Makuran, Turan, and Kachchi were the centers of various tribal confederacies. These confederacies were able in various ways to put the Baloch in a prominent position politically in different areas of present-day Balochistan. Altogether, these were not powerful enough to acquire political power because of internal disputes causing divisions in these confederacies, weakening them, and making them political irrelevant; however, one of these tribal confederacies was converted into a chieftdom in Turan and was the forerunner of the Baloch state of Kalat.

### **The Baloch Tribe**

The tribes are organizations of a localized group of people designed to unite families and clans into a community in which different responsibilities and obligatory functions are performed by different members. Mostly tribes are based on kinship or on a myth of common ancestry. Each tribe adopts a remarkable social coherence, which is derived from a strict hierarchical order with clear obligations and responsibilities for all members of the tribe. The affiliation to a tribe is the main glue of social coherence and

cohesion of tribal identity. Even today, when many Baloch tribes have abandoned their traditional way of life and settled in rural or urban areas, the sense of belonging to a tribe or subtribe is still a powerful element of personal and social identity.

Far-reaching changes began to occur in the Baloch society from the twelfth century in a time when large-scale migrations were occurring. The nomadic Baloch were traveling through settled and unchartered territories. They had to win or snatch pastureland and had to fight and hold what they won, which itself necessitated enlargements of tribal and social units. From forced or voluntary long marches, they had lost or ruined much of their cattle breeding, and new forms of productive labor, such as settled agriculture, had to be adopted. The need to be constantly vigilant in the face of uncertainty and frequent warfare with a hostile indigenous population also meant that there was a crying need for clear and definite forms of leadership. This was fundamental in creating among the Baloch a system of organized tribes. These would be based on military formations and the development of a leadership system, which was based not simply on age and clan relation but on competence. The Baloch became organized in strict tribal structures in which the tribal chief or Sardar became the focus of the tribal institution. A clear and transparent system of chieftaincies for the tribe began to evolve, which continued among the Baloch until the introduction of the British rule.

Uncertain climactic conditions, fear of an administrative system controlled by settled populations, and rivalries between various tribes on pastures and grazing rights were the factors that made the Baloch tribes to be in a constant state of emergency. This state of permanent emergency prompted the tribes to adopt more strict organizational and hierarchical structures. The tribes were divided into sections (subtribes) and were again divided into clans and clans were made from the union of different families. The whole tribe became subordinate to Sardar who enjoyed authority but used his powers through general consent (Janmahmad, 1982). The Sardar had powers over the section heads that were responsible for carrying out the policy guidelines formulated by him with the approval of the council of elders. As observed by Janmahmad (1982), although the

chief of different subsections of the tribe had administrative powers, the power to make war or peace always remained with the Sardar of the tribe.

Establishment of a council of elders was an important aspect of the development and institutionalization of tribal system among the Baloch in medieval Balochistan. All important decisions about the tribe were to be passed through this council. According to Janmahmad (1982), the decisions in the council of elders were taken by majority vote. In this way, the Baloch Sardar had considerable checks on his authority, and, likewise, the clan chiefs or council of elders were also controlled by controlling bodies. Janmahmad (1982) observed that during medieval times, in the absence of any formal governmental machinery, the guiding factor was the Baloch code of conduct and traditions. A Sardar, or any other office holder in the tribe, could not act contrary to the traditions and moral values of the Baloch. After the occupation of Balochistan in 1839, the British administrators introduced a system that upset these aspects of a democratic tribal structure in the Baloch society.

### **The Tribalism And nomadism**

Tribalism has been among the political dimensions of pastoral nomadism, and the tribe has been conventionally synonymous with the nomads. Pastoral nomads normally wander over a definite territorial area which they regard as their own, or which may, in part, be recognized as neutral territory. This kind of nomadism is usually characterized by the regulation of nomadic movements in order to secure favorable places for the grazing of their herds in different seasons of the year. Pastoral nomadism is found commonly where climatic conditions produce seasonal pastures but cannot support sustained agriculture. Baloch tribalism in medieval times was synonymous with pastoral nomadism. Nomadic people, as observed by Heape (1931), regard themselves as the superior of sedentary or agriculturist. It is, perhaps, because the occupation of nomads made them strong, active, and inured to hardship and the dangers which beset a mobile life. A nomad is independent and of dominant character. Perhaps, sometimes he is fierce and brutal, but, as a

whole, he is proud, dignified, and peculiarly hospitable. Even today, when the Baloch tribes have both sedentary and nomadic segments, this is a common perception about and toward the Baloch, and many of the Baloch cherish the “ways of a nomadic life.”

Johnson (1969) observed that nomadic pastoralists view the husbandry of grazing animals as the ideal way of making a living, and the regular movement of all or part of their society is considered a normal and natural part of life. The geography and ecology in most of the regions where the Baloch tribes were migrating favored pastoral nomadism. The terrain and climate made large areas uncultivable and suitable only for seasonal grazing; as only a small proportion of such pasture could be used by village-based livestock, vast ranges of desert, semidesert, and mountains were left to be exploited by nomadic pastoralists.

### **Tribal unions And confederacies**

Various tribes can live in one and the same locality but exist largely independent from one another. Each tribe, however, recognizes a clear internal hierarchical structure of other tribes when dealing with them. The term tribal confederacy or confederation is used for a group of tribes politically unified usually under a central authority, sometimes with an ideology of a common descent.

Evolution into tribal confederacies occurred in the response of the tribes to economic and political situations. Other factors that determine the establishment of a tribal confederacy include cultural and demographic environment. As observed by Beck (1990), tribal confederacies were formed out of the intersection of dependence on resources (land for pastoralism and agriculture, water, migratory routes, trade routes, markets), external powers, and pressures and a personality which has the potential to mediate with different tribes having different interests. Sahlins (1968) saw confederacy as a superstructure, separated from tribal substructure and local groups by a structural gap, while Barth (1964) viewed confederacy as a response to factors, usually political, originating outside the tribal system.

The areas of Balochistan where the Baloch tribes moved in had a sedentary population, and the Baloch tribes were compelled to deal with their sedentary neighbors. Being in a weaker position, the Baloch tribes were in need of constant vigils for their survival in new lands. To deal with this problem, they began to make alliances and organized themselves into a more structured way. The structural solution to this problem was to create tribal confederacies or unions. Thus, in conditions of insecurity and disorder or when threatened by a predatory regional authority or a hostile central government, several tribal communities would form a cluster around a chief who had demonstrated his ability to offer protection and security. Lacking any huge influence in the power structures of the territories where they settled, the Baloch tribes or cluster of tribes often managed to survive by aligning themselves with one ruler or the other among the warring feudal chieftains of different ethnic origins who were vying for the control of various territories in Balochistan. This phenomenon can easily be observed in Makuran of medieval era, where different Baloch tribal groups were part of feuding Saffarids Malik rulers.

Beginning from the thirteenth century, the Baloch history is marked with the formation of loose tribal unions in different parts of Balochistan. Joining hands by various tribes in the formation of four Baloch tribal confederacies were administrative and political alliances. Different Baloch tribes and tribal unions were linked economically through trade and agricultural and animal products. They interacted socially, cooperated politically, and united militarily whenever faced with a common external threat (Janmahmad, 1989). The acceptance of hierarchy as a normal feature of the Baloch tribal life made it much easier for their leaders to create tribal confederacies by variously incorporating individuals, local lineages, clans, and whole tribes as the building blocks of a political and military organization that could resist external encroachments on the tribal lands or tribal way of life. In a tribal confederacy, the original social organization of uniting tribe was maintained and a central administration was provided to deal with external forces and to mediate for the resolution of inter-tribal feuds within the confederacy. Other responsibilities of a chief in a

confederacy included combating seasonal hardships, distribute the surplus, and expand the territory of tribes by organizing invasions and conquests.

The tribal confederacies put the Baloch in a prominent political position in different areas of present-day Balochistan. After the passing of time, tribal confederacies made local sedentary populace subordinate to the central rule of their chiefs, and it was the transformation of the union into a more organized chiefdom. We can observe this phenomenon when the tribal confederacy of the Baloch tribes in Sarawan and Jhalawan converted into chiefdom and became known as the Khanate of Kalat in the seventeenth century as will be discussed in Chapter 9.

## **The Baloch confederacy in Sistan**

In Sistan, the Baloch had their presence from the time of the Median Empire. At least two regions of Sistan had a majority Baloch population during the Arab invasion; however, bulk of the migrating tribes entered this area after the Arab incursions in Iran or after the Buyids invasions of the Baloch tribes in Kerman. In the southern regions of Sistan, which, today, are known as Sarhad, Nemroz, Chagai, and Kharan, a strong confederacy of the Baloch tribes emerged under the leadership of the Nahrui tribe in late medieval times. The Baloch tribes in Sistan had enjoyed a considerable political influence during the reign of later Saffarids. However, they suffered devastating blows during the long period of turmoil beginning with Mongol invasion of Khurasan and the widespread destruction caused by Timurids in Sistan. The tribes again became united under the leadership of Nahrui chiefs in the period of great anarchy that followed the collapse of Safavid Dynasty in Iran. Although this tribal confederacy of the Baloch tribes was of importance locally, this failed to exert its presence in the wider power games of the region. The confederacy split into small alliances of various Baloch tribes in later years. Spooner (1983) has described a confederacy of five “leading” tribes of Iranian

Balochistan during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries namely, the Barakzai, Moradzai, Bozorgzada, Boladai, Shirani, and Mobaraki. It seems that these tribes, together with others, the Laashaari, Reiki, and the Esmailzai, then had a dominant influence throughout Iranian Balochistan and that the remaining Baloch tribes were all in some way attached to them.

The tribal confederacies were in existence among the Baloch even in the Qajar period in Iran. The Baloch under the leadership of Nahrui chiefs ruled many parts of Sistan in western Balochistan. In Sistan, a strong union of the Baloch tribes under the leadership of Sardar Ebrahim Khan Sanjarani of Chankansur and Sardar Sharif Nahrui (son of Sardar Alam Khan) asserted its power by expelling Iranian and Afghan officials from Sistan after the demarcation of Goldsmid Line. It took a long and bloody conflict to overcome the resistance of the Baloch tribes in Sistan for the Persians.

The tribal unions of the Baloch in that part of Balochistan disbanded under the brutal and coercive manipulations of the Qajar rulers of Persia. Some kind of tribal alliance was also visible even in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries before the Iranians were finally able to crush the national fabrics of the Baloch society in western Balochistan.

## **The Baloch confederacy in TurAn**

During the sixteenth century, the Baloch tribes in Sarawan and Jhalawan began to organize into a strong union, and the Mirwadi tribe headed this union or confederacy. The constituent tribes were mainly the original Barezui tribes who migrated from the Barez Mountains in Kerman after the defeat of the Baloch by the Buyids and the subsequent genocide. In Sarawan and Jhalawan, these tribes called themselves Brahui. Later, many tribes from Kharan and Chagai also joined the confederacy. In the formative stages, this union faced serious challenges from other migrating Baloch tribes from Makuran. The powerful and aggressive tribal confederacies



headed by Rind and Laashaar tribes were looking for greener pastures and came into conflict with various tribes of the Brahui confederacy. After some minor clashes with Bizenjo tribe, the Rind tribe clashed with Mirwadi tribe that was holding the Kalat region. Mirwadi chief Omar was killed in a battle, and a relative of Mir Chakar, the Rind chieftain, Mir Mando, became the administrator of Kalat on behalf of the Rind confederacy. However, Mir Mando was later killed, and Mirwadi, again, established the supremacy of the Brahui tribes in Kalat under the leadership of their chief Mir Bijjar and dominated the region for a while. Within a century, this confederacy of the Baloch tribes under the leadership of Mir Ahmad in 1666 became able to establish a chiefdom that later became the first Baloch national state based in Kalat. It was also indicative of the great potential and structural capacities of the tribal leaders of that confederacy to not only maintain a large-scale confederacy but also convert it into a nation-state.

## **The Baloch confederacy in Makuran**

The last of the *en masse* migrations of the Baloch occurred during the Seljuqs reign of Kerman. Mostly it was because of the atrocities of Seljuqs ruler Malik Quward that compelled the remaining Baloch from Kerman to move eastward into Makuran. The most famous of the Baloch tribal confederacies was established in Makuran in the thirteenth century; it was an alliance of two tribal unions. The tribal unions of Rind and Laashaar seemed to be in close alliance while they were in Makuran. According to Baloch legends, the tribal union headed by Mir Jalal Khan Rind consisted of fortyfour tribes. The other union headed by Mir Nodbandag of Laashaar tribe also comprised a large number of the Baloch tribes. The two unions initially settled in Makuran—the Laashaar union based in the Laashaar valley in the west, while the Rinds were based in eastern Makuran.

It seems that their sojourn in Makuran did not become permanent. Makuran was not suitable to sustain a huge number of herds due to

its climactic conditions, which brought these tribes into perpetual conflicts with other Baloch tribes who were settled in the area in an earlier period. The second reason which compelled this huge mass of the Baloch tribes to move further east was probably the hostility of the Seljuqs ruler of Kerman and Makuran, Malik Dinar, whose high-handedness made it impossible for these pastoral nomads to sustain their presence in Makuran.

However, the movement eastward of this alliance of the Baloch tribes was also not smooth. After their departure from Laashaar and Kech valleys, they encountered the fierce and bloody resistance from Bizenjo tribe when they tried to settle in Kolwah (which is the border region of Makuran and Turan). After some unsuccessful attempts to dominate the Bizenjo tribe, they marched further east into better grazing fields of northern Turan.

In Turan at this time, the confederacy of the Brahui tribes under the leadership of Mirwadi chiefs was a formidable force to be reckoned with. It appears that, initially, the new arrivals were welcomed, and they scattered about with their herds in the valleys of Surab and Mangocher; however, hostilities soon broke out between the two confederacies of the Baloch tribes over the domination of grazing fields. In the ensuing conflicts, the chief of Mirwadi tribe, who was controlling the Kalat region, was killed in a battle, and the dominance of the Rind tribes prevailed in Sarawan. However, for obvious reasons, seeing their stay in Turan not tenable, majority of the Rind tribes moved toward Kachchi via Bolan Pass. The Laashaar union followed them into Kachchi via Mola Pass. Mirwadis, later, subdued the remaining Rind tribes, and Kalat, again, remained in the hands of the Brahui confederacy.

The Saffarids ruled Makuran until the mid-seventeenth century. Their rulers were called Maliks. The Malik rulers of Saffarids Dynasty were replaced by a Baloch confederacy in Makuran led by the Buladai tribe. The Buladai confederacy was a loose union of different Baloch tribes with their chiefs ruling various regions of Makuran as independent rulers (*Hakoms*). Gichkis replaced the Buladais during the eighteenth century; however, Makuran was

soon incorporated into the administrative and political control of the Khanate of Kalat.

## **The Baloch confederacies in Kachchi And Derajat**

While in Kachchi, the Rind and Laashar tribal unions grew in wealth and power; however, soon, personality clash between the Rind chief Mir Chakar and Laashar chief Mir Gowahram was converted into full-blown conflicts between the two powerful unions of the Baloch tribes. The alliance broke down, and two distinct tribal unions of Rind and Laashar emerged. Bloody battles between the two weakened them economically and politically. In the prevailing anarchic atmosphere of the region caused by the long drawn-out struggle between the Suri rulers of northern India and the Mughal Emperor Humayun and his brothers, these two groups of the Baloch tribes sided with opposing forces, fighting in the armies of one or the other, thereby weakening their position further. After a few decades, both tribal confederacies became insignificant in the region with the migration of Laashar chief Mir Gowahram to Gujarat (India) and of Rind chief Mir Chakar to Punjab. Some of the tribes of these disbanded unions settled in Sibi and adjoining regions, while some went further east into the heartland of Punjab and Gujarat territories. Some of the Baloch tribes settled into present-day Derajat region where they regained a semblance of political prominence with the establishment of another Baloch confederacy head by the Dodai tribe.

According to Baloch (1987), in the middle of the fifteenth century, several Baloch tribes such as the Dodai, Meerani, Kolachi, Gorchani, Hoth, and Jaskani clan of Laashar confederacy migrated into Derajat and laid down the foundation of the Baloch confederacy of Derajat. In time, the Baloch in the region became relatively prosperous, and they had a strong fighting force. Gankovsky (1971) observed that the clan aristocracy of the Baloch tribes was slowly growing into a close-knit feudal estate as they took possession of the best grazing grounds and arable lands and brought into subjection

both the local farming population and the impoverished nomadic population.

For a short period, this Baloch confederacy was also able to occupy the prosperous region of Multan. As observed earlier, during the confusion that followed the flight of Mughal Emperor Humayun to Persia, the Baloch tribal union headed by Fateh Khan Dodai occupied Multan which was later retaken by the Mughals Army under the command of General Hebat Khan on the orders of Emperor Humayun (Latif, 1965).

Baloch (1987) observed that the Dodai confederacy was divided into four *Niabats* (administrative districts) namely, Dera Ismail Khan, Dera Ghazi Khan, Dera Fateh Khan, and Niabat of BakharLiaya. The tribal chiefs ruled their *niabats* independently, and Dodai were only the nominal heads of the confederacy. The attempts by the confederacy to acquire an independent status or making the confederacy into a Baloch state were crushed by the Mughals. However, during the declining phase of the Mughal Empire after the death of Aurangzeb, the confederacy gained a semblance of independence from Delhi for a short period. Their sovereignty, however, did not last long, and the confederacy came under the control of the Khanate of Kalat from 1717 to 1795 (Naseer, 1979). As the Khanate was experiencing a state of turmoil after the death of Mir Naseer Khan I, the confederacy collapsed under the Afghan push toward Sindh and Punjab. The Afghan king Zaman Shah finally defeated the Baloch forces and annexed Derajat into Afghanistan in 1795. The Baloch resistance against the Afghan rule and the occupation of Derajat by the Sikh rulers of Punjab were unsuccessful as the tribes were not united under a single command, and the Khan of the Baloch was unable to help their fellow Baloch as the Khanate was itself facing a phase of decline.

## **The BALoch TriBes in PerMANent seTTleMenTs**

During the process of *en masse* migration into present-day Balochistan, an important change occurred in the nomadic Baloch

society. Beginning from the fifteenth century with the adoption of a sedentary way of life by a significant number of the Baloch in permanent settlements, describing the Baloch society as purely nomadic or agro-pastoralist would be a misconception. The Baloch society became complex by that time with varied social and economic characteristics. A great number of the Baloch tribes, either wholly or partly, became sedentary. During the long period of *en masse* migrations, the Baloch were traveling through settled territories, and it could not have been possible to survive simply as wandering nomads. Perpetual migrations, hostile attitudes of other tribes and rulers, and adverse climactic conditions ruined much of their cattle breeding. Settled agriculture became a necessity for the survival of herds and an increased population. They began to combine settled agriculture with animal husbandry. The Baloch tribes now consisted of sedentary and nomadic population, a composition that remained an established feature of the Baloch tribes until recently.

During the same period, the mode of production changed from mere nomadic cattle breeding to a complex economy wherein substantial sectors consisted of settled agrarian relations of production. Contact with feudal social institutions of the territories they now entered and settled began to influence the Baloch population. An increased segment of the Baloch society was now settled in villages and townships. It was adopting new economic productive skills that were previously unknown to them in their days of wandering as pure agropastoralist nomads. A feudal class began to emerge among the settled Baloch population in villages and townships. Agropastoralism became only one of the characteristics of the Baloch society among others.

During medieval period, the Baloch migrated from Kerman, northern Sistan, and many areas of Fars, where some of the Baloch tribes had been deported by the Arabs and the Buyids. It appears that the deported tribes, which include Sia Pads of General Siah Sawar along with their allied Jats, came to settle in Kerman soon after the Arab grip on power loosened after the fall of the Umayyad Dynasty.

From Kerman, they migrated toward Makuran during the Baloch conflicts with Buyids and Seljuqs Turks. It appears that the Baloch tribal confederacy, which was later known as Rind o Laashaar Union primarily, consisted of these returning tribes from Syria. The Bradazhui or Barezui tribes seem to have abandoned the Barez Mountain region altogether after the genocide of the Baloch by the Buyids and Seljuqs. Their migration appears to be through Sistan before settling into modern-day Sarawan and Jhalawan regions of Balochistan where they became known as Brahui. Other Baloch tribes migrated into southern Sistan that is modern-day Sarhad, Nemroz, Chagai, and Kharan regions.

During the long and tortuous struggles for survival, the Baloch faced some of the worst atrocities, acts of genocide, and forced migrations; however, during middle ages, they emerged from all traumas of psychological, social, economical, and political nature. During this period, their tribal structures consolidated, and they grouped themselves in different tribal confederacies. One of the important developments was the appearance of the Baloch tribal confederacy that was later known as Rind o Laashaar Union. This union, although, for obvious reasons, could not play a major political role, yet it was the dominating cultural and linguistic influences of this union that later formed the basis of the Baloch national identity. Various tribal unions in Sistan and western Balochistan played important roles in the subsequent Baloch struggle for sovereignty. The abandoning of Barez Mountain in Kerman by a group of powerful Baloch tribes during the reigns of Buyids and Seljuqs and finally settling in the Turan region of Balochistan was one of the most important happenings. The union of these tribes, who became known as Barezui or Brahui, into a confederacy paved the way for the establishment of the first Baloch state.

The Baloch society was comprised of a pastoralist nomadic people from the days of Balashagan. However, at the end of the medieval period when the majority of the tribes began to adopt a settled lifestyle in Sistan, Makuran, and Turan, the society had both nomadic and settled components. The adaption of a settled way of

life and involvement in the agricultural activities by a section of the Baloch tribes brought fundamental changes in the Baloch society as well be discussed in later sections.

## **Development of Baloch cultural Values**

**T**he cultural values which are the pillars of the Baloch individual and national identity were firmly established during the twelfth and sixteenth centuries, a period which not only brought sufferings for the Baloch and forced them into *en masse* migrations but also brought fundamental sociocultural transformation of the Baloch society. An overlapping of pastoral ecology and tribal structure had shaped contemporary Baloch social values. The pastoralist nomadic way of life and the inclination to resist the assimilation attempts of various powerful ethnic identities shaped the peculiar Baloch ethnic identity. It was the persecution by strong and organized religions for the last two thousand years that has shaped their secular attitude about religion in social or community affairs. Their independent and stubborn behavior as the distinctive feature of the Baloch identity is consistent with their nomadic or agro-pastoral past. Baloch society is governed by a very definite set of conventions and system of laws. These conventions are to regulate marriage, inheritance, religious observance, dispute resolution, decision making, duties, and rights of individuals and the community as a whole. With the development of distinct cultural values, a Baloch national consciousness began to emerge, which caused the overwhelming and assimilation of various indigenous ethnic and linguistic entities in Balochistan into a broader Baloch national identity.



## The BAloch culTurAl VAlues

Culture is the sum of shared traditions, attitudes, customs, and beliefs that distinguishes one group of people from another. According to Tyler (1920), culture is that complex whole, which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society. The cultural values develop in a particular context. The Baloch cultural values and traditions might have been influenced by the tortuous history of their migration, sufferings, and many historical happenings in and around the region where the Baloch made their existence.

In the development of core Balochi values, Balochi language played the central role. Boas (1940) maintained that the shared language of a community is the most essential carrier of their common culture. Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) observed that language is not just one cultural trait among many but is rather the direct expression of a people's national character. Despite the isolation of the scattered pastoral communities in Balochistan, the Balochi language and a relatively uniform Baloch folklore tradition and value system have provided a common denominator for the diverse Baloch tribal groupings scattered over the vast area from the Indus River in the east to the Iranian province of Kerman in the west.

Due to the firm establishment of cultural values, the linguistic and cultural transformation of the Baloch from the medieval times to the modern era had been surprisingly very slow and without any marked or drastic impact on their general cultural outlook (Baloch, 1987; Janmahmad, 1982; Mari, 1974; Naseer, 1979). This can be explained, taking into consideration the contextual factors that had shaped the Baloch cultural behaviors mentioned earlier. Among these is included protective mentality of the Baloch as a whole in the face of continuous pressures from various corners for the last many centuries.

In the Baloch schema of cultural identity, there are set standards that are applied to identify a perfect Baloch. These standards or codes of cultural ethics guide every Baloch in his religious, economic, and sociopolitical affairs. Special personal qualities are thought to be embodied by the Baloch and inherited as part of one's start in life. Over a lifetime, a Baloch is expected to build on privileged inherited characteristics and to do so according to standards of what is called the "Balochi Way." As observed by Dashti (2010), these are demanding measures, but, clearly, this does not mean that every Baloch meets the standards; nevertheless, inattention to these standards may threaten the social standing of everybody.

Among the social behaviors of the Baloch, *Haal* is the sharing of information in detail. It remained the most effective mode of communication among the Baloch in their wandering days, and it has still its social importance. *Haal* was not only the sharing of information, but it also encompassed broader social norms. In a gathering, the notable person was supposed to initiate the process of *Haal*.

Being balanced or in control of emotions and body is an essential feature of "the Balochi way." Being out of control is shameful and not part of Balochi standards. To act without restraint is to degrade one's standing among the family and community members. It is believed that excess in anything will spoil the will of the person, and a person without a strong willpower is considered to be below the standard. It is traditional not to let others observe your sadness and vulnerability. Dignity, pride, patience, endurance, and a deep sense of shame are supposed to be the guiding principles in the life of a Baloch (Janmahmad, 1983). "It is better to die than be ashamed" is frequently uttered in general conversations.

The complex phenomenon of honor and shame has been a defining feature of the Baloch cultural identity. The honor and shame complex links the individual to a wider society. The concept of shame describes situations in which a member of the community acts in a manner that is not sanctioned by the society or that is in conflict with social obligations. In a Baloch context, shame is an

index of female reputation, just as honor is an index of male; it is related to the notion of female chastity. Having shame involves having or displaying the requisite reticence in public places. Shame is directly related to honor; in that, a reduction of the shame of women becomes a direct reflection on the honor of its men. The mechanism, by which the phenomenon of honor and shame operates, amounts to maintaining a moral reputation in the face of the community.

The concept of honor and shame as a sanction on behavior incorporates male virility, female fertility, hospitality, generosity, and keeping the Baloch moral standards during family relationship and disputes with others. It also encompasses the notions of cowardliness and bravery during a battle. Involvement in any extramarital sexual relationship is an unforgivable offence among the Baloch. Illicit sexual affairs are kept in extreme secrecy. Honor defines prestige or reputation, and it defines people's trustworthiness. Honor is not simply related to the social standing of individual men but also to the standing of the family to which they belong. The honor of a family is inextricably linked to the reputation of the women. Their reputation, in turn, is sealed by the public display of shame. The principles of shame and honor act as bonds that tie a Baloch to his family, community, and to his or her broader ethnic group as an honorable Baloch. Personal lapses are not easily forgiven or forgotten. Failure to live up to the principles of shame and honor results in one being shunned or cast off from the family or community. Such a person is bound not to be taken seriously by family or community.

The valuing of family considerations over individual ones is almost universal in the Baloch society, and there is, usually, a strong reliance on family in day-to-day functions and crises (Janmahmad, 1982; Mari, 1974; Pehrson, 1966). The family is often significantly involved in caring for a family member who is sick or dying. Women tend to do most of the actual care. The father or oldest male (direct relative) holds the greatest power in most families and may make important decisions. The family system, particularly the

extended family, is a kind of communal arrangement headed by a patriarch. Due to such a structure, the Baloch society is hierarchical, and the dominance of male over female and older over younger is observed. Women are expected to manifest respect and even submission to their husbands. Privately, however, some women will hold a greater degree of power. The woman is expected to be the primary force holding the family and home together through cultural wisdom and is the primary caregiver and is responsible for most parenting. Women's social status is strongly contingent upon being married, faithful, and rearing children. A Baloch individual lives in an interdependent relationship with their families, seeing themselves as extensions of a collective core identity.

Truthfulness, honesty, generosity, hospitality, justice, intolerance to any kind of supremacy, revenge, and *lajj o mayaar* are the basic ingredients of Baloch social conduct (Fabietti, 1996). The term "Baloch," in the individual and collective sense, characterizes a person who is acting in accordance with the code of conduct prescribed by the society. "He is not a Baloch" does emphatically denote a person acting not in accordance with traditional mores in his or her individual life or even referring to person without a living soul (Janmahmad, 1982). *Lajj o mayaar* literally means shame and hesitation. It refers to the deep sense of pride and egoism. It is, in a way, the basic pillar of Baloch social conduct and remains the strongest barrier in crossing the limits of social norms and values. A *be-lajj o mayaar* (a person not observing *Lajj o mayaar*) is equal to a social outcast. Keeping one's words (*Qoul*) is another cultural code of the Baloch that comes under the broader meaning of observing *Lajj o mayaar* by a Baloch.

Revening the blood of a relative or a person belonging to the tribe is a fundamental and universally observed Balochi code. Not to forget avenging a blood feud for two hundred years is part of everyday vocabulary of the Baloch, and it denotes that unless settled, a blood feud runs through generations.

Asylum-granting is another pillar of the Baloch cultural code. It is obligatory for the Baloch to give refuge to a person fleeing from

persecution on unjust grounds. The protection of an asylum-seeker is the responsibility of the family, tribe, and the members of the local community. However, to give asylum to a person involved in adultery or crimes against women and children are against the traditional Baloch values.

*Med o Maraka*, for resolution of disputes among the Baloch, is a much-honored tradition. In a broader context, it is, in a way, accepting the guilt by the accused or offender and asking for forgiveness from the affected party. Usually, the offender himself does this by going to the home of the affected person and asking for forgiveness. He can either send his mother, sister, or wife to the house of the affected family or he can send a delegation comprising the elderly persons of the community to ask for the resolution of the dispute.

Hospitality is one of the most cherished values of the Baloch society. It is necessary for the Baloch to welcome everybody into his home. Entertaining the guests with whatever can be afforded is the considered norm, and avoidance of hospitality is considered a mean behavior.

A sense of community participation in an illness, on marriages, and situation of natural calamity is a well-developed phenomenon; it is understandable, taking into account the context of perpetual migrations, persecution, and uncertainties the Baloch were facing during medieval times. Helping a needy person is among the core social values, and this help is extended by *Bijjar*. *Bijjar* is the basic pillar of the Baloch cultural traditions, in which help is extended in case of a natural calamity, in deaths, and in marriages. However, *Bijjar* is considered reciprocal.

Dress code and personal upkeep are among the cultural values, which distinguish a Baloch from others. The Baloch dress and personal upkeep very much resemble the Median and Parthian ways. Surprisingly, no significant changes can be observed in the Balochi dress since the ancient times. A typical Balochi outfit

consisted of loose-fitting and many-folded trousers held by garters, bobbed hair, shirt (*qamis*), and a head turban. Generally, both hair and beard were carefully curled, but, sometimes, they depended on long straight locks. A typical dress of a Baloch woman consists of a long frock and trouser (*Shalwaar*) with a headscarf.

Music is the core entertainment and recreational structure. The Baloch musical instruments include *Soroz*, *Tumborag*, *Nal*, and *Chang*. With the settlement of the Baloch in various regions of present-day Balochistan, *Surna* and *Dhol* were also incorporated in the schema of musical instruments. The traditional music incorporates *Soath*, *Nazenk*, *Sepath*, *laelo*, *Laeko*, *Nal o Sur*, and *Zaheerok*. During medieval times, creation of famous ballads and reciting them in typical Balochi *Diwans* were the practices, which are still being cherished by the Baloch.

The development of the Balochi language is well depicted during the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries with productions of some of the finest ballads. The poetic narrations of the Baloch migrations and the battles between various tribes, especially the Rind and Laashar conflict, and various narratives of conflicts between the Brahui tribes and Jadgals are masterpieces of classical standards. In the same period, a powerful element of romantic poetry made its place in the classical Balochi literature with the introduction of all-time popular Hani-Shey Mureed love story.

Balochi belongs to the northwestern group of Iranian languages related to Middle Persian and Parthian languages, having close affinities with Median languages like Kurdish, Tati, and Taleshi (MacKenzie, 1961). The languages spoken in the areas where the Baloch finally settled had influenced Balochi. It had also absorbed or borrowed from other Indo-Aryan languages to which the Baloch came into contact during their long period of migrations. It can be safely argued that Balochi is among the factors that played a fundamental role in the consolidation of the Baloch cultural values and development of a national identity.

## The BAloch religious idenTiTy

Historically, there is no documented evidence of religious practices of the Baloch in ancient times. Many among the Baloch writers (Janmahmad, 1982; Mari, 1974; Naseer, 1979) observed that the persecutions of the Baloch by Sassanid Emperor Shahpur and Khusrow had a strong religious or sectarian element. They believed that there are strong indications that the Baloch were the followers of Mazdakian and Manichean sects of Zoroastrian religion at the time of their fatal encounters with Sassanid forces. No elaborate structure of religious institutions has been visible in the Baloch society during the middle ages. Originally, the Baloch were the followers of the Zoroastrian religion and its various sects, converted to Islam (nearly all Baloch belong to the Sunni sect of Islam) after the Arab invasion of Balochistan during the seventh century.

In present times, the Baloch enjoy an identity regarding their religious beliefs, which is significantly different from their neighboring Persian, Afghan, and Pakistani fundamentalist religious mindset. The Baloch are distinct in their attitude toward religious tolerance, having a liberal or secular mindset compared with other neighboring nations. Redaelli (2003, p. 21) put it thus:

*“It is not by chance that the Baloch enjoy the unenviable reputation of being ‘bad Muslims.’”*

The orthodox religious institutions in Iran and Pakistan have used the term “bad Muslim” for the Baloch to exploit the Baloch indifference in following the strict or fundamentalist Muslim tenets in their social affairs. In fact, unlike other Muslim people of the area, they have never politicized their own religious faith, which has remained linked to the personal sphere and to tradition, without becoming a real sociopolitical discriminating factor. Another factor in calling the Baloch bad Muslims by the Iranian and Pakistani religious and political establishment may be the acceptance of a large number of Hindus and Sikhs in Balochistan, having a friendly and equal sociopolitical status in the Baloch society. The other reason for defining the Baloch as bad Muslims is that a section of

the Baloch population belongs to a religious sect *Zigri* or *Zikri*, which the orthodox Muslim religious leaders consider non-Islamic.

A significant part of the Baloch population in Southern Balochistan is the follower of the *Zigri* sect, the foundation of which is based on the assumption that the long-awaited messiah or *Mehdi* has arrived. Although they read the Koran as their holy book, they repudiate its orthodox interpretation. Instead of going to Mecca for annual pilgrimage of *Hajj*, they visit a place called Koh-e-Murad in Kech District of Southern Balochistan for this purpose. They also skip the five-times-a-day prayers of mainstream Islam in their religious practices. In their places of worship (*Zigrana*), men and women are allowed to pray together (see Baloch, 1987; Janmahmad, 1982).

As observed by Janmahmad (1989), the Baloch are neither irreligious nor atheists, and the majority of them considered themselves as Muslims. However, the Baloch had never accepted the dominance of religious beliefs over their cherished sociocultural values and ethos. The Baloch behavior of not taking the religious beliefs very seriously can be traced in their tortuous relationship with the two dominant religions of the region. The Baloch had been persecuted by Sassanid rulers of Persia in the name of God Ahura Mazda. They had also suffered persecution, humiliation, and deportation by the Arab followers of God Allah. It is perhaps the memories of persecutions in the name of different gods that formed a very secular attitude of the Baloch toward religions. The absorption of various indigenous ethnic entities with their respective mythological belief systems into the national entity of the migrating Baloch pastoralist tribes is an extraordinary social phenomenon. A tolerant and secular outlook that is among the building blocks of the Baloch culture has certainly been shaped by the assimilation of these ethnic entities.

Until recent past, among the Baloch, the role of the priest (*mullah*) was limited to taking care of the mosque and performing death and marriage rites. The majority of them were non-Baloch as the Baloch considered such jobs against their personal honor. It is quite



interesting to note that contrary to the behavior of surrounding nationalities, there is no influence of *Pirs* and *Sayyads* (*Pirs* are followers of *Sufi* saints and *Sayyads* are believed to be the descendents of Prophet Muhammad) in the Baloch sociopolitical affairs. The British administrator Robert Sandeman, who introduced far-reaching social and administrative changes in the Baloch society during the nineteenth century observed that the Baloch pays scant respect to the *Sayyad* or the *Moulvi* (*Moulvi* is the priest of higher status), and these religious leaders had no influence on sociopolitical matters (Thornton, 1985). However, they are respected as “people of God” and superstitious individuals in matters of health, illness, and other misfortunes seek their help.

Appeasement of God and ancestral spirits by almsgiving and animal sacrifice and safeguarding oneself against spirit attack by avoiding visits to the perceived abodes of evil spirits are important parts of the Baloch preventive measures against misfortunes. The Baloch sacrifice animals in the name of God to appease him in order to be safe from his wrath. Therapeutic and preventive sacrifice among the Baloch is quite different from the routine Islamic sacrifices on Muslim holidays like *Eid* as they are considered general and not particular or individual sacrifice. Making vows for the sacrifice of a specific animal or a material sacrifice is quite popular among the Baloch in order to thwart an impending or perceived misfortune, ill health, or death.

## deVeloPMent of The BALoch nATionAl idenTiTy

Evolving a national identity among the diverse tribes and various tribal confederacies is the major phenomenon that shaped the future destiny of the Baloch in the region. Various factors could have been influential in the development of national consciousness among the tribes and taking a shape of a proper Baloch identity.

Development of a national identity among a group of people is the realization that they might possess a common history, religion,

language, or race. It is necessary for the expression of nationalism for a community to identify itself as belonging to a large group of people having something common. Weber (1976) argued that the nation must not be seen as a given reality but it is a work in progress, a model of something to be built and to be treated for political reasons as already in existence. It is not only the objective factors like language, religion, and culture that determine a national group, but, as observed by Connor (1990), it is also the “self-awareness” and “self-consciousness” that provides the essential ingredient in the formation of a nation. Anderson (1991) believed that nation is imagined, for in the mind of each of its member lives the image of their communion. However, it is the bonds of allegiance and belonging which so many people feel and cultural resources and traditions that endow them with a sense of tangible reality.

Two factors were paramount toward the aspiration and achievement of the Baloch sense of a national identity: first is the sociocultural transformation of the Baloch society (discussed above in detail), and second is the political situation of the region at the end of medieval periods. On sociocultural front, the Baloch’s moving toward the formation of a national consciousness became possible when, after the settlement of the Baloch tribes in urban settings, they drew on urban financial and social resources and the Baloch psyche became something different. In the changed scenario of medieval Balochistan, many tribes and ethnic groups began to think themselves as part of the greater Baloch identity and, ultimately, were very much absorbed into the Baloch national identity. The spreading and expanding of the Baloch tribal confederacies led to the incorporation of new people and new sources of income for confederating tribes.

The universalization of the Balochi language as the *lingua franca* with a rich folklore tradition and a set of cultural value system provided a common denominator for the diverse tribal groups and rural population in the vast territory that created a sense of national identity, which, in the coming decades, accelerated the search for a national state.

## The BAloch culTurAl doMinAnce

The process of the development of the Baloch ethnolinguistic identity was complex. Internally, the tribal organizations began to develop in a more strict and formal shape. Externally, it began to assimilate vast segments of other ethnic groups. The Baloch came into contact in Balochistan with a myriad of indigenous and other ethnic entities, including Druise or Darzada, Sakas, White Huns, remnants of some of the Median tribes, Jats, Pashtun, Persian, and Dravidian. Majority of them were fully incorporated into greater Baloch identity during the middle ages.

Over the course of human history, people have been able to influence or shape, or reshape, not only its surrounding environment but were also able to dominate the human environment and the society in accordance with its own constructs. It is not comprehensible—if the Baloch were insignificantly present in these areas—how it came about those ethnic entities which became absorbed into the identity of an insignificant group, or how, being nomadic pastoralists, they became dominant over the beliefs, institutions, and social ideologies of a region with diverse ethnic and linguistic entities. This should be thoroughly researched by social scientists. However, it can be observed that this cultural hegemony was probably brought about with the combined forces of Balochi language as *lingua franca* and the dominating role of various Baloch confederacies. The areas of the Baloch cultural and linguistic dominance extended from Turkmenistan in the north and Persian Gulf in the south, from Kerman in the west to the bank of River Indus in the east. Whatever might be possible explanations of this hegemonic phenomenon, at the end of the medieval era, the Baloch cultural and social institutions dominated a vast geographical landmass that incorporated the southern regions of Sistan, Makuran, Turan, and Kachchi plains.

History of the Baloch people during medieval times is a history of fundamental social transformation. Among the important developments in this period is the establishment of core cultural

values. During this period, strong cultural traditions took firm roots in the society. The establishment of Balochi as *lingua franca* of the region and the development of Baloch cultural values led to the domination of the Baloch on a vast region that is the modern-day Balochistan. A phenomenon of the Baloch national identity began to take shape. Internally, the Baloch society moved from the smaller tribal or clan units to the larger one of tribal unions or territorial confederacies. Externally, it began to assimilate vast segments of other ethnic groups.

The Baloch cultural values developed during the medieval times are the basic building blocks of their contemporary cultural traditions. These values became part of the unwritten constitution of the Baloch sociopolitical life. Abiding by these cultural values became the distinguishing feature of a Baloch individual in the society.

Being a Baloch is in many ways a voluntary choice. It is not the origin of an individual but the adaption of certain code of conducts which make a person a Baloch in traditional Baloch perspective. Spooner (1983) rightly summarized that a Baloch is one who calls himself Baloch, and no one who is not a Baloch will so call himself. Fabietti (1996) observed that the Baloch society consists of some basics or fundamentals; adherence to these fundamentals makes a person a Baloch, while negation of any one of these can proclaim the person a Baloch of lower status. It is interesting to note that the cultural values and traditions developed in medieval times are strictly observed in contemporary Baloch society. It is despite the fact that the original nucleus that migrated from the Caspian region of Balashagan has absorbed a variety of disparate groups along the way. Nevertheless, in the cultural terms, the Baloch have been remarkably successful in preserving a distinct identity in the face of continuous pressures from strong cultures in neighboring areas.

## Chapter 9

# Birth of the Baloch state

The seventeenth century is a landmark in the history of the Baloch. The powerful Mughal Empire in India and Safavid in Persia were leading a path of disintegration. The European powers were increasingly encroaching upon the economics and politics of the region. With the loosening grip of Mughals and Safavid powers on the Baloch territories, the situation was ripe for the Baloch to carve out a nation-state. The confederacy of Brahui tribes in Turan exploited the political situation and, ultimately, succeeded in establishing a state for the Baloch.

## Political scenario Around Balochistan in seventeenth century

After the devastation of Timur (Tamerlane) in the fourteenth century, Central Asia and India remained in political and economic disarray for a long time. The whole area was being ruled by minor dynasties that were in constant conflicts with each other for land and prestige. During the sixteenth century, out of chaos emerged two powerful empires that brought central control over the area. In Iran, a family of religious background established the powerful Safavid Empire, and the Mughals, under the leadership of Babur, founded the famous Mughal Empire in India. Balochistan remained divided into Safavid and Mughal area of influence during this period. Meanwhile, a third power appeared near the Baloch land that later played fundamental roles in Baloch political and social history. The arrival of European colonialists from Portugal, Holland, and England under the guise of trading companies began the occupation of many coastal regions of the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf. The

external pressures from these new arrivals and the internal contradictions of various natures caused the crumbling of the Safavid and the Mughal Empires during the seventeenth century. From the debris of these empires, several ethnic groups emerged with their own national aspirations. From the ruins of Safavid and Mughal, among others, the Afghan and the Baloch began to establish political control over their respective areas and ultimately carved-out national states.

## **decline of sAfAvid eMPire**

From the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Safavid Dynasty was struggling to maintain its supremacy in Iran. When Shah Safi became the king of Persia after the death of Shah Abbas I, the prevailing situation in Safavid Iran was an atmosphere of discord and rebellion. Various regional and provincial forces taking advantage of the death of the powerful ruler began to assert themselves and tried to regain autonomy. Gilan was in rebellion. The powerful ruler of Fars was asserting his autonomy. The actions against these uprisings made the empire weak morally and financially. As observed by Dale (2009), the antagonism between the powerful Qezelbash tribe and court circles that Shah Safi inherited caused the weakening of Persia's fighting spirit and contributed to the decline of the Safavid Dynasty.

After the death of Shah Safi in AD 1642 and during the reign of his son Shah Abbas II, the Safavid Dynasty tried to regain some of its prestige by reclaiming the territory of Kandahar from the Mughals. The reign of Shah Abbas II witnessed a sociopolitical stratification of the Iranian society created by increased religious intolerance instigated by the government. After gaining importance and influence, high-ranking religious leaders went well beyond advocating a more active part in the governance of the state. They were asserting their power by openly calling for a direct role in the governance of the kingdom and declaring the rule of the Shah illegitimate (Abisaab, 2003). The accession of Shah Safi II, after

Shah Abbas II, in 1666, exposed further signs of the country's weakening state. The period following his enthronement was followed by epidemics and famine, causing further weakening of the religious state.

The royal coffers were badly depleted by the long wars against the Ottomans in the west and the Mughals in the east. Inherently, there was a state of economic collapse in the administration of Safavid Iran due to corrosive effects of mismanagement. Savory (1980) pointed out that continuing budget constraints indeed caused the army to grow ever weaker. Military weaknesses at this point vitiated central control. In order to forestall attacks by Turkmen tribesmen in 1670, the control of important province of Mazandaran was outsourced to Qajar tribal chiefs. The situation was further aggravated by personal weaknesses of the rulers. Beginning with Shah Solayman, it was the eunuchs of the royal harem who wielded effective power, taking over the Shah's task of balancing competing interests among state courtiers. Women of the harem became *de facto* rulers. Under a weak Shah, the rivalry and factionalism endemic to the system paralyzed decision making. In his reign, as observed by Mitchell (2011), the country's weakness became apparent in numerous insurrections and invasions around the country. In 1695, an Omani naval force plundered the port of Kong. Taking advantage of the anarchic situation, the Baloch, in 1699, organized raids into Kerman and surrounding areas, exposing the vulnerability of the border areas of the Persian Empire. During the second decade of the eighteenth century, rebellion erupted in many parts of the country, and outside forces were threatening many other regions. In the Caucasus, the Lezgi tribes of Dagestan intensified their incursions into Safavid territory that they had been conducting since 1708. In 1721, they seized and pillaged Shamaki, the area's capital and commercial center. In the Persian Gulf, the Omani forces in 1717 took Bahrain. Simultaneously, revolts broke out in Kurdistan and Luristan (Dale, 2009).

From east, a serious threat was emerging. The Abdali Afghans revolted in Khurasan, taking Herat and Mashad. As pointed out by

Savory (1980), the decisive blow was to come from Kandahar. In 1701, unrest broke out in Kandahar, and in 1722, the Afghans under the leadership of Mahmud Gilzai and his cousin Ashraf Gilzai captured Isfahan and practically ended the rule of the Safavid Dynasty. Iran became no more a centralized power, and the Ottomans and the Russians ultimately cutting it into its present-day size initiated a process of strangulation of Iran.

## **The decay of Mughal Power**

The Mughal Empire, which held sway over a large part of India, began to decline in power and prestige from the seventeenth century. Like the Safavid Empire, the empire of the Great Mughals in India was facing the same situation of decay under the rule of fanatic Emperor Aurangzeb whose reign is marked by numerous rebellions in the distant provinces of the Mughal Empire.

The Mughal Empire was already weakened by the wars of accession between Aurangzeb and his brothers. After brutally eliminating his brothers and imprisoning his father and sister, Aurangzeb tried to unite the empire in vain. The gulf between the ruler and the people widened because of inefficient rule, and various pockets of resistance appeared against the Mughal rule.

For nearly twenty years, Aurangzeb was busy fighting with the Jats, the Marathas in the south, the Pashtuns in the northwest, Santali around Delhi, Ahoy Kingdom in the far east, Rajput in Rajasthan, his own son Akbar, and the Sikhs in Punjab. The Mughal Empire, due to these long-drawn costly and bloody internal conflicts, was near total collapse during the last days of Aurangzeb. Not only did the political boundaries of the empire shrink, but the decline also saw the collapse of the administrative structure so assiduously built by rulers like Emperor Akbar and Emperor Shah Jahan. In the wake of the collapse of the Mughal power, a number of independent principalities emerged in all parts of the empire.



Hintze (1997) attempted to identify the causes of the decline of the Mughal Empire within the structure and functioning of the empire itself. According to him, the decline was the consequence of an administrative maladjustment due to which erupted a crisis in the *jagir* (feudal) system, which, ultimately, led to the emergence of regional power centers. Lane-Poole (1901) looked at the causes of the decline into regional conflicts that subsequently gave rise to rebellions by the Jats, the Satnamis, and the Sikhs. As observed by Leonard (1979), what followed then was a process of readjustment of all the diverse constituents of the system in the empire, the result being a dislocation of the empire and the emergence of regional powers.

Whatever were the causes of the decline, the collapse of the Mughal power gave rise to the emergence of various new phenomena. Important among them was the growing influence of European powers that ultimately created the conditions in which the whole region became a British colony for a long time.

## **ArriVAL of euroPeAn Powers in The gulf**

The arrival of European powers in this part of the world can be traced back in the fifteenth century when, in 1449, Vasco da Gama made his historic voyage from Portugal to India. Within a few years, the Portuguese had established a trading station at Goa on the west coast of India, laying the foundation of the Portuguese Empire in Asia.

The first Portuguese incursion into Persian Gulf took place in 1506 when Alfonso de Albuquerque attacked and occupied the island of Hormuz and the coastal regions of Oman (Risso, 1986). Hormuz became a protectorate of Portugal for a long time. Soon, the Portuguese strengthened their position by building fortifications on the coastal strip of the Persian Gulf and controlling the trade in the area. For one hundred years, the Persian Gulf practically remained under Portuguese control. In 1515, the Persian king Shah Esmail was forced to accept the Portuguese occupation of Hormoz and

concluded a treaty with Admiral Alfonso de Albuquerque. Under the terms of agreement, the provision that the Portuguese would assist the Safavid in suppressing a revolt in Makuran was included. The Portuguese frequently sent raiding parties toward various settlements on the Baloch coast.

As the whole Persian Gulf was in political and administrative turmoil since 1505, on the pretext to counter piracy, Alfonso de Albuquerque took offensive actions against Nautaque (Nakhuli) pirates on the Makuran Coast to secure trade routes that were plundered more often. In AD 1581, they raided Tiz, Gwadar, Pasni, and Kalamat and devastated these areas (Al-Qasimi, 1988). The legend of Hammal Kalmati and his heroic fight against the Europeans developed after these devastating raids on the Baloch coast. The episode of Hammal Kalmati perhaps occurred during one of the actions taken (according to Portuguese chronicles) against the pirates' disturbing Portuguese movements in the Persian Gulf. Two years later in AD 1583, the Portuguese again attacked Pasni but were defeated by the forces of Malik ruler of Makuran (Al-Qasimi, 1988).

From the beginning of the seventeenth century, other European powers became involved in the power struggle to control the Persian Gulf. At that time, the Portuguese were the master of the Gulf. However, the Portuguese dominance ended in the early years of the seventeenth century with the appearance of English on the Persian scene. The British East India Company, in 1608, established a trading station in Surat on the northwest coast of India. In 1615, the company got permission from Shah Abbas of Safavid Dynasty for trade in Persia (Steengaard, 1974). In 1619, in reward of the East India Company's cooperation with Persia against the Portuguese blockade of the Persian Gulf, the Shah of Persia granted permission for a trading station in Baloch coastal town of Jask.

Eventually, Shah Abbas Safavi managed to drive out the Portuguese with some naval help from the British East India Company. He ordered their fortifications to be destroyed and established a partial Persian suzerainty in the Persian Gulf and Bahrain. The tension

between the Portuguese and the English culminated in a joint attack by the English and the Persians on Hormuz in 1621 (Wilson, 1928). The capture of Hormuz was the end of Portuguese supremacy in the Gulf and beginning of the English supremacy of the whole region, which lasted for 300 hundred years.

The Dutch arrived in Hormoz at the beginning of the seventeenth century. After the end of Spanish rule over the Netherlands in 1595, the Dutch had begun to develop a formidable naval force and initiated a competition with the Portuguese and the English in the Persian Gulf region and on the Indian coastline up to Indonesia. In 1625, they opened a trading mission in Bander Abbas and threatened the English monopoly of silk trade (Gaastra, 2003). In 1652, because of English—Dutch war in Europe, the Dutch defeated the English in the gulf region several times and became as powerful as the Portuguese. However, the Dutch influence soon ended in the Persian Gulf in 1765 because of the defeat of Holland in the European war theatre and the overall decrease of power and prestige of Holland (Gaastra, 2003).

The Baloch in coastal Balochistan joined the armed forces of these European powers in different times. In 1650, a Baloch guard defended Muscat on behalf of the Portuguese. All the Europeans readily took on various groups of Baloch as guards and mercenaries.

## **TowArD The forMAtion of A Baloch sTATe**

The collapse of two powerful empires of Mughals and Safavids and the consolidating efforts of newly arrived European colonialists had created chaotic conditions throughout the Iranian plateau and the Indian subcontinent. Consolidation of different tribal confederacies and the development of an ethnic identity of the Baloch during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries gave impetus to a search for a nation-state among the chief of various tribes and tribal unions. With the loosening control of Safavid and Mughals, various Baloch confederacies began to assert their political and military prowess on a Baloch ethnolinguistic foundation. The Baloch confederacy, which had been gaining influence in Kalat and the surrounding

areas, had been converted into chiefdom under the leadership of Mirwadi tribe and later converted into the first Baloch state.

## **eMergence of The BALoch sTATe: TheoreTicAl PersPecTiVe**

The state has been defined as a geopolitical entity, and the term nation-state is a territorial unit serving as a sovereign entity for a nation. The origin of the state, its various nature, and the types of authority have been argued among social scientists. According to Marxist point of view, the state first emerges in the tribal formation as a structure that represents the interests of the community. On the process of state formation, Marx and Friedrich (1848) observed that the emergence of state is primarily due to contradictions inherent in the division of labor, which pits the interests of the individual against the interests of the family and those of the family against those of the tribe. Marx explained that out of this contradiction, between the interests of individual and the community, the latter takes an independent form as the state. At first, the state represents the general interests of the community or tribe, which must practically control the conflict of individual interests threatening the unity.

Chiefdoms are intermediate forms of societies between tribal and large-scale state societies and existed in many parts of the world. They tend to consist of centralized economic and political sociocultural systems in contrast to those of foragers or tribes. Wright (1977) defined the chiefdom as a society with centralized but not internally specialized authority. For him, the different administrative principles that define chiefdoms and states are necessarily associated with correspondingly distinct optimal regulatory strategies. Influential theorists of the state formation, including Mosca (1939), Fried (1967), Engels (1972), Service (1975), Wright (1977), Spencer (1990), and Weber (1997), had argued the nature of chiefdom and the type of authority in chiefdom variously. In chiefdoms, authority is permanently centralized in the office of the Chief, which exists apart from the person who occupies

it, and upon the death of a chief, the office of Chief or Khan must be filled by someone from his line of descent or someone of similarly elite descent. In chiefdoms, high status is largely inherited. Tapper (1983) posited that the tribal confederacies have ranged from small, loosely organized, diffused, and noncentralized tribal groups to fragmented and ephemeral tribal confederacies and large state-like confederacies with centralized hierarchical leadership system.

A successful chief of a confederacy may institutionalize his dominance over the tribal chiefs, turning the confederacy into chiefdom, a territorially bounded collectivity with coordinated and dynastic mechanisms. The process of chiefdom and ultimate state formation among the seventeenth century Baloch tribes denoted a departure from confederacy phase and assumption of more state attributes. With the weakening or collapse of powerful Safavid and Mughal Empires, the newly developed sense of ethnicity was channelized by the chiefs of Mirwadi tribe. The confederacy of the Brahui tribes in Turan engaged in a process of territorial expansion to conquer new pastoral lands and strategic areas or routes. It overpowered other Baloch or non-Baloch tribes in the region militarily, and there happened an internal consolidation of confederacy. Swidler (1972) suggested that the confederacy structure developed in Kalat was an adaptation of the response to the ecological requirements of a pastoralist nomadic way of life. She believed that the institutional development of the office of the Khan was based on a specialized agricultural estate, the resources of which, prior to the rise of the Khanate, were not systematically integrated into the Kalat economy.

From the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Baloch society was composed of a population of cultivators and pastoralist nomads. The Baloch tribes had acquired formal organizational structures with Sardars having powers in all spheres of tribal life. As mentioned earlier, various Baloch tribes had allied themselves in unions or confederacies. Among these, only the confederacy in Turan had a semblance of structural unity. This structural unity was able to hold at bay the inter-tribal disputes and intra-tribal

factionalism in control to a degree where the tribes were able to concentrate on the broader goals of achieving a state identity for the Baloch. Nevertheless, it was not an ideal situation of unity among the tribes. On many occasions, many tribes of the confederacy tried to involve other neighboring powers within their inter-tribal conflicts.

Economic needs of the tribes had been postulated as the main stimulating factors in grouping together of tribes and formation of Chiefdoms. Swidler (1972) viewed the development of Khanate of Kalat as a response to the transhumant patterns of adaptation that required the use of highland and the plain. She saw in it the need for the large group of pastoralists to secure enough grazing field for winter grazing. The competition for the grazing fields of Kachchi with Rind and Laashaar confederacies had, perhaps, been the fundamental factor for the tribes in Turan to forge stronger bonds.

The development of a Baloch national consciousness was another stimulus in the establishment of the Chiefdom of Kalat. The subsequent birth of the Baloch state was an inevitable consequence of a long period of subjugations, deprivations, and denial of an honorable sociopolitical status for the Baloch by various powers. With facing more oppression, the desire of the Baloch to acquire a dignified position among the community of nations became more solidified. With the right opportunity, they became able to assert themselves by declaring the region of Balochistan, which was called Turan by the Arab historians, a state. Karl (1996) posited that when a group of people is organized for political action to acquire a measure of effective control over its member for the establishment of sovereignty over a territory, it progresses to become a nation when it acquires the needed power to achieve and sustain its various aspirations. As observed by Breuilly (1993), nationalism is the primary form of politics and politics is about power; to exercise power, it is necessary to control a territory, and this controlled territory is the state in modern sense. The birth of Khanate of Kalat was in essence the birth of the Baloch nation by its achievement of sovereign status in a state.

Despite the differences between various tribes of the confederacy and the difficulties of forging a solid structure of tribal unity, the tribes of Turan in the seventeenth century, under the leadership of Mirwadi tribe, managed to establish a structure that was, by all accounts, the birth of the Baloch state. Common economic interests and a newly developed sense of national identity constrained chronic inter-tribal feuds to produce a minimal but crucial degree of solidarity that was essential for the newly acquired sovereignty on the territories around Kalat in the formative years of the Baloch state.

## **BirTh of The khAnATe of kAlAT**

In the absence of any authentic written document, the history of the beginning of the Baloch state of Kalat is based mostly on the Baloch legends. Some of the Baloch authors like Gul Khan Naseer and Agha Naseer Khan Ahmadzai tried to give a concrete shape of history of the Khanate of Kalat, and their accounts are mostly based on the notes of Akhund Siddique whose family was in the service of the ruling Ahmadzai clan. Some of the English intelligence officers also contributed on many aspects of the history of the Khanate, but the accounts of English writers inevitably had the perspective of a colonial power. By correlating legends with historical accounts of the period, it appears that the Baloch tribal confederacy in Turan that developed into chiefdom in early seventeenth century began to shape as a Khanate after Mir Ahmad assumed the leadership of the confederacy in 1666.

At the later part of the seventeenth century, the part of Balochistan known as Turan was under the nominal sovereignty of the crumbling Mughal Empire. The Baloch, under the leadership of Mirwadi tribe and with the help of Dehwar tribe (Dehwar was a Persian-speaking Tajik tribe that is now completely absorbed into wider Baloch ethnicity), ousted the Mughal Chieftain of Kalat and established an effective chiefdom (Naseer, 1979). Mir Hassan was the chief of Mirwadi tribe at that time. In 1666, Mir Ahmad, son of Mir Kambar,

was selected as the chief of the Baloch confederacy, holding Kalat as their power base after the death of Mir Hassan who died heirless. The selection of Mir Ahmad as the chief of the confederacy was a landmark in the history of the Baloch as with his farsightedness and ambitions for creating a state, the chieftdom was transformed into the first Baloch state.

The first major test of strength for the newly appointed chief came with the advance of a Mughal force from Kandahar. According to Ahmadzai (1995), in the chaotic situation arising from the invasion of Kandahar by Safavid king Shah Abbas II, a Mughal Chieftain, Agha Jaffer, fled from Kandahar and occupied Shal (Quetta), Mastung, and Mangocher. However, Dehwar (2007) believed that Agha Jaffer was sent by the new Safavid governor of Kandahar to take charge of these areas that were previously under the control of the Mughal governor of that region. The Baloch forces, under the command of Mir Ahmad, confronted the forces of Agha Jaffer at Kad Koocha and then in the Quetta valley in AD 1667, and with the defeat of the Mughal Chieftain, these areas came under the dominance of Kalat.

This initial success was very fundamental in the sense that perhaps it was after the capture and inclusion of Mangocher, Mastung, Shal, and Chagai into the domain of Kalat that Mir Ahmad was declared the Khan of the Baloch. Kalat began to develop into a state with the establishment of a primitive administrative setup composed of component tribal chiefs and a bureaucracy comprised of members of Dehwar tribe. The finances and trade was almost entirely controlled by the Hindu business community in Kalat, Khuzdar and other towns and villages of the newly emerging Baloch state. Although, in the process, there emerged a local aristocracy who increasingly became influential in the affairs of Khanate, the overall dominance was based in the tribally organized pastoral nomadic institutions.

At the time Baloch confederacy of Brahui tribes in Turan was emerging as a state, at least three other Baloch confederacies were holding considerable political powers in different regions of



Balochistan. In Makuran, a tribal confederacy under Buladai tribe was ruling the region after the fall of Saffarids Malik rule. In Kharan, the Baloch tribal confederacy was under the command of Noshervani tribe, and it was yielding much influence, while in Sistan, the Nahrui were leading a powerful and influential confederacy of various Baloch tribes. However, the once-powerful Rind and Laashar confederacies had nearly vanished on the political map of the region as the constituent tribes of these confederacies migrated *en masse* into Punjab, Sindh, and Gujarat regions of India. In Derajat, Arund, and Dajal, the powerful Dodai confederacy of the Baloch tribes was holding ground with a semblance of some sovereignty over these areas.

## forMATiVe yeArs of The khAnATe

With the establishment of an administrative setup, the Khanate of Kalat assumed the status of a centralized power, and the Khan became responsible for catering the needs of its constituent agro-pastoralist and nomadic tribal population. To cope with the challenges and opportunities of a growing state, the tribal chiefs of the confederacy delegated some of their authorities to the Khan, thus strengthening the state attributes of the Khanate. The control of new territories in the north offered new financial resources. Emboldened by the merger of Sarawan and Shal into his domain, with increased revenues for the Khanate, Mir Ahmad began to expand his domain. The expansionist ambitions of the Khanate soon resulted in skirmishes and conflicts with other Baloch tribal confederacies and with Barozais, Jat, and Jadgal tribes.

## AdVAnces in kAchchi

Kachchi had been the source of survival for the nomadic Baloch tribes since their arrival in Turan. Although rainfall is scanty and erratic throughout the territory of Kachchi, it had been the winter grazing area of the Baloch tribes of Turan. The Baloch tribes used

to take their herds of sheep and goats, crossing Mola and Bolan Passes, entering Kachchi plains during winter, and returning in spring using the same routes. This migration by the passing of time became part of the socioeconomic traditions of the Baloch.

At the time of the establishment of the Baloch state under Mir Ahmad, Kachchi was under the control of the Barozai tribe as a protectorate of the Mughal governorate of Multan. The once powerful Baloch confederacies of Rind and Laashaar who exerted their influences in the region were scattered and majority of them had moved into Punjab, Sindh, and Gujarat. This happened as a result of protracted warfare between these two tribal confederacies. It weakened them, and they were unable to protect their grazing fields and sustain their political influence under the growing advances of Arghun and other Pashtun tribes.

On the pretext of helping the Baloch chieftain Shah Beg Mandowani, the forces of Khanate first began their encroachment into the plain of Kachchi in order to bring the vast and favorite grazing region under the domination of the Khanate. The Baloch legends tell us about seventeen indecisive battles with the Barozais. In the first battle, the Baloch forces were nearly crushed, and in another, the legendary sister of Mir Ahmad, Bibi Beebu, was killed in the battle; according to the Baloch legends, she was actually leading a formation of the Baloch forces. In another battle near Sarhing, Mir Ahmad himself sustained wounds, and many of his family members were killed. In the last of the battles, although indecisive, the Khanate forces were able to cause a crushing defeat on the Barozais. It is noteworthy that some of the Baloch tribes living in Kachchi area felt threatened by the increasing power of the Khanate and its ambitions to control the Kachchi plains and so joined hands with the Barozais and fought against the Khanate forces. Naseer (1979) listed the names of Magsi, Dombiki and some of the Rinds as supporters of the Barozais.

The incursions of the Khanate forces into Kachchi began in 1669 and ended in 1687 when the Barozais' chief Buland Bakhth Khan

agreed to grant concessions to the Khan of the Baloch on pastoral rights in Kachchi for the tribes of Sarawan and Jhalawan (Ahmadzai, 1994). In practical terms, it was the beginning of the domination of Kachchi plains by the emerging Baloch state. Although the Khanate forces won some battles and received some grazing concession during the reign of Mir Ahmad, they did not establish permanent control in Kachchi (Naseer, 1979).

Mir Ahmad also made incursions further north. In 1694, the Khanate forces from Shal attacked Pishin but were unable to occupy it, and the Baloch forces returned after reducing the surrounding areas. The Kachchi expeditions and the plundering of areas surrounding Pishin boosted the finances of the Khanate and nourished the expansionist desires of the Khan. In 1694, a force under the command of Khan's brother, Mir Kambar, ended the Jat control of Jhalawan, extending the Khanate boundaries up to Zehri and Wadh.

## **The khAnATe AfTer Mir AhMAd**

The founder of the Baloch state and the first Khan of the Baloch died in 1695, and his son Mir Mehrab Khan succeeded him as the second Khan of the Baloch. The Khanate soon found itself in a bloody confrontation with the Kalhoda rulers of Sindh, in which the Khan, Mir Mehrab Khan, was killed. After his death, the Khanate witnessed a period of violent struggle between the contenders for the throne of Kalat that made further consolidation of the Khanate to a standstill.

In the seventeenth century, the Kalhoda tribe had appeared as a formidable force and gained recognition from Prince Mu'zzudin, the Mughal governor of Multan, to rule Sindh, and the rulers of the dynasty were endowed with the title of Nawabs by the Mughal emperors. The Kalhoda family entered into conflicts with Barozais of Kachchi for personal reasons, and it appears that by default, Mir Mehrab Khan became preoccupied during his whole tenure as the Khan of the Baloch with the Kalhoda of Sindh. As the Barozais were under the protection of the Mughals, the Mughal Prince Mu'azzam led an expeditionary force against Kalhoda and forced

their chiefs to flee. In 1697, the Mughal Prince Mu'azzam asked Mir Mehrab Khan to locate and arrest fugitive Kalhoda brothers Daud Muhammad Kalhoda and Noor Muhammad Kalhoda who were reported to be hiding in Khan's territory (Raverty, 1988). The Khan confronted the Kalhoda chiefs near Karkh and arrested them after a minor resistance from them. However, the Khan was mistakenly hit by the arrow of his own entourage and died after three days. The Kalhoda issue was settled, in which the successor of Mir Mehrab Khan played the mediating role in reconciling the Kalhoda chiefs and Prince Mu'azzam who was the governor of the Mughal provinces of Multan, Sindh, Sibi, and the surrounding areas.

His nephew, Mir Samander Khan, succeeded Mir Mehrab Khan as the next Khan of the Baloch. Soon, he was confronted with a major threat from Persia. In 1698, a Safavid force from Sistan, under the command of General Tahmasp, entered the Khanate territory, pillaged Chagai region, and advanced toward Kalat (Ahmadzai, 1994; Dehwar, 2007; Naseer, 1979). It was under the orders of Gurgin Khan, grand commander of the Safavid forces in Kandahar, and he was tasked to take control of the Turan region. Mir Samander Khan was in Multan at the time. On hearing the news of Safavid advance, he returned in haste, gathered a force of thirty thousand Baloch fighters, and confronted the Iranians near Kad Koocha in Mastung. In the ensuing battle, the Iranian forces were crushed, and Mir Samander Khan killed their commander in a one-to-one fight. The remaining force fled in disarray, and a major threat for the survival of the Khanate was thwarted.

After the repulsion of Persian attack, the Khanate was soon engulfed in a bloody struggle for power, involving the Khan and his brother. In 1699, Mir Samander Khan faced a rebellion from his brother Mir Kalandar Khan. Mir Samander prevailed, and the Khan near Shirin Ab (Naseer, 1979) killed Mir Kalandar Khan.

After beating the Persians and the victory in the struggle against his brother, the Khan's position strengthened, and he was able to pursue the goal of expanding the Khanate territory and authority that was

stopped with the death of Mir Ahmad. In 1701, the Khan led an expeditionary force into Loralai (Bori) and Zhob. He remained in the area for a month and collected a large booty from the Pashtun tribes (Tate, 1973). The Khan resumed excursions in east, and in an expedition during the same year, the Khanate forces snatched the control of Dhadar and Gandava from the Kalhodas.

The Khanate again was engulfed in a bloody war of succession when Mir Samander Khan died in 1714 after an eventful reign of sixteen years. He was succeeded by his eldest son Mir Ahmad II as the Khan of the Baloch. However, majority of the tribes rallied with his younger brother and the governor of Shal, Mir Abdullah Khan, rose against him, and after a struggle which spread for two years with much bloodshed between the supporters of the two brothers, Mir Abdullah Khan, eventually, succeeded in murdering Mir Ahmad II while he was on his sick bed in the Miri Fort of Kalat. Thus, Mir Abdullah Khan was declared the Khan of the Baloch in 1716 (Ahmadzai, 1994). With the ascendancy of Mir Abdullah Khan, a new era began in the history of the Baloch state as will be discussed in detail in the next section of the book.

The period between the emergence of Khanate in 1666 by Mir Ahmad and the ascendancy of Mir Abdullah Khan as the Khan of the Baloch comprised of formative years of the Baloch state. The Khanate increasingly acquired the shape of a state, despite its lack of any major institutions. During this period, the status of Khanate was established as the buffer between the Mughal in the east and Safavid in the west. It appears that the Mughal Prince Mu'azzam, in order to have a buffer between the Mughal Empire in India and the Safavid in Iran as a political strategy, not only recognized the Khan's suzerainty over the area but also extended financial assistance to the Khan. According to Naseer (1979), Emperor Aurangzeb ordered Prince Mu'azzam to fix an annual grant of 200,000 rupees for the Khan after Khan successfully repulsed an attack by the Safavid forces under the command of General Tahmasp near Mastung in 1698. The coastal town of Karachi was taken from Kalhodas and given to the authority of Khanate that

became the main source of revenue generation for the Khan. An annual grant of 40,000 rupees was also fixed for the Khan from Kalhodas by the order of Prince Mu'azzam (Dehwar, 2007).

On socioeconomic front, the expansion of the Khanate into Kachchi and Gandava and expeditions and lootings in the north made the constituent tribes of the confederacy relatively rich. With the establishment of law and order in the region, economic activities increased, resulting in the emergence of a business community. More Baloch tribes and clans began to abandon nomadic lifestyle and settled in town and villages.

Initial attempts were also made to erect a state structure in order to safeguard the broader sociopolitical and economic interests of the community that the Khanate represented. The primitive bureaucracy composed mainly from the tribal or clan chiefs, and the traders' community grew into influence, and Sardars of constituent tribes of the Khanate began to assert their influence in the affairs of the governance. As will be discussed in later sections, the manipulation of Sardars for influence in the governance of the Khanate became a huge problem for the Khans in the coming decades. The Khans, who were able to maintain an often-challenged authority by manipulating Sardars, were successful, and the Khans who were carried away by the manipulative activities became unable to rule. It is likely that the grouping of tribes into the divisions of Sarawan (those to the north of Kalat town) and Jhalawan (those to the south) developed during this period, and this was part of the Khan's administrative and manipulative endeavors for the stabilization of the newly founded state.

At the time of the murder of Mir Ahmad II, the environment was conducive to be exploited by the coming Khans to consolidate the gains already made and to extend the existing boundaries of Khanate to other regions of Balochistan. The continued confrontation with the Barozais with resultant gaining of some grounds in Kachchi increased the economic base of the Khanate. The battle with Safavid forces and the convincing victory over Persians emboldened the tribes, and an increased desire for expansion of the state was

prevailing at the advent of the reign of Mir Abdullah Khan as the Khan of the Baloch.

The seventeenth century had thus witnessed dramatic changes in the power struggle of the region. The powerful empires of the Mughals and the Safavids, which had been the controlling authority on various regions of Balochistan for a long time, were facing decline in power and prestige. The Portuguese, the Dutch, and the British were increasingly encroaching on the region. A state of chaos prevailed upon the region in which various local and regional powers began to assert their presence on the political scene of the region. In the wake of the crumbling Mughal Empire in India and the weakening of the Safavid Empire in Iran, the first Baloch state emerged from the fog of the chaotic state of affairs in the region. Beginning as a chieftdom controlled by a confederacy of the Baloch tribes of Turan, it transformed into a state by clever manipulations of the first Khan of the Baloch, Mir Ahmad. The establishment of Khanate was the ultimate result of a growing Baloch national consciousness after overwhelming the indigenous population of the region by different Baloch tribal confederacies. The Khanate incorporated the cherished Baloch social and tribal values into its unwritten constitution, and the ruler as the “Khan of the Baloch” became not only the ruler but later also became the spiritual and national symbol of the Baloch national identity. The state created by Mir Ahmad became known as the Khanate of Kalat and remained on the map of the world for about three hundred years as an independent, autonomous, and semiautonomous country before it was finally occupied by Pakistan in April 1948.

# **consolidation and expansion of the khanate**

**T**he early decades of the eighteenth century witnessed a rapid increase in the power and prestige of the Baloch state. The Khanate territory expanded in all directions.

Exploiting the anarchic situation in the region and his alliance with the rising power of Nader Shah Afshar in Persia, Mir Abdullah Khan made successful attempts to incorporate whole Kachchi, Makuran, and Derajat. A highly mobile Khanate force made plundering raids on surrounding regions, and this made the finances of the Khan stable and the subject population relatively prosperous. However, after the death of Mir Abdullah Khan, different contenders among the Ahmadzai clan of Mirwadi tribe could not maintain the strength of the Khanate due to violent competitions for power.

## **exPansion under Mir ABdullah khAn**

Mir Abdullah Khan (1716-1731) was a very ambitious and adventurous person. During his reign, the borders of the Khanate expanded, and he made inroads in Kerman, Derajat, and Kandahar. Makuran was annexed in his time, and he made battles with the Kalhoda forces over the control of Kachchi and was killed fighting the Kalhoda forces. With five thousand strong highly mobile forces, he undertook plundering raids in Kerman, Loralai, and Zhob.

One of the important developments during the reign of Mir Abdullah Khan was the incorporation of Kachchi into the Khanate. The Kalhoda forces of Sindh were in control of the region that was previously



a protectorate of Multan province of the Mughals. In 1718, Mir Abdullah Khan entered Kachchi and reduced Gajjan, Sanni, Shoran, Dhadar, and Gandava (Ahmadzai, 1995). The Khan remained camped in Kachchi for months and collected taxes while the Kalhoda officials fled from the areas.

Advance in Derajat was another important event of that period. In 1719, Mir Abdullah Khan gathered a huge force and attacked Dera Ghazi Khan that was being ruled by a Baloch confederacy led by Dodai tribes since early sixteenth century (Ahmadzai, 1995). The Baloch forces from both sides fought bravely, and at the end, the Khanate forces prevailed upon the Baloch of Derajat. However, Khan's plans for a complete merger of Dera Ghazi Khan with the Khanate of Kalat were foiled by unruly behaviors of his tribal chiefs (Sardars) who pressurized the Khan to abandon his plans and return to Kalat. They were worried about the news of increasing pressure on Kachchi from Kalhoda of Sindh.

During this period, the Khanate extended west into Makuran. Makuran was being ruled by a Baloch confederacy led by Buladai tribe since 1623 when the last Saffarids Malik was ousted from power. In 1723, Gichkis replaced Buladais, a family belonging to Gichk area near Punjgur (Ahmadzai, 1995). The Khanate forces entered Punjgur, and the Gichki ruler submitted without resistance. In the same year, Mir Abdullah Khan entered Kech from Punjgur, and after an initial resistance, the ruler of Kech, Malik Dinar Gichki, agreed to pay tribute to the Khan, and Makuran became a dependency of the Khanate.

From Makuran, the Khan personally led an expeditionary force to reduce Bander Abbas. It was, most probably, for plunder and not for occupation. But it appeared that the Khanate forces failed to achieve their objective of raiding the port city. This was due to unexpected and stubborn resistance from the Europeans guarding their factories in Bander Abbas. However, the surrounding areas of the port and southern Kerman were reduced before the Khanate forces returned back to Makuran.

One of the important events during the reign of Mir Abdullah Khan was his confrontation with Gilzai rulers of Kandahar. After the Makuran campaigns in 1724, the Khanate forces under the command of Mir Feroz Raisani occupied Pishin, and the Gilzai governor of the area fled back to Kandahar. Another force under the command of Mir Sultan Shahwani occupied Shorawak and made it part of the Khanate. Emboldened by these successes, the Khan assembled a force under the command of Mullah Issa Raisani to gain further territory north of Pishin. According to Raverty (1888), the Khan under the instigation of Nader Shah Afshar sent this expeditionary force toward Kandahar. It was a tactical move from the Iranian General to divert the attention of the Gilzais in Kandahar so that they would refrain from allying with Abdalis of Herat with whom he was engaged for the control of the region. Shah Hussain Gilzai, the ruler of Kandahar, assembled a huge army and confronted the Baloch forces near Chaman. The more experienced forces of Kandahar outnumbered and outmaneuvered the Baloch forces. The Afghan Army inflicted heavy losses upon the Baloch, and their commander, Mullah Issa Raisani, was killed in the fight.

The defeat of the Baloch forces by the Afghans and killing of many of the able and notable chiefs of the Baloch was shocking, and the whole nation began preparation for a revenge attack. Next year, in 1725, the Khan assembled a huge army to attack Kandahar in order to revenge the earlier defeat (Naseer, 1979). Some fifty miles from Kandahar, the two forces met in a fierce and bloody battle. The Kandahar Army was defeated, and the ruler, Shah Hussain Gilzai, fled from the scene along with his remaining forces to the safety of Kandahar Fort. The Baloch legends had mentioned the tales of extraordinary personal courage shown by the Khan during the battle, which forced the Kandahar ruler to flee. On the Baloch side, the death toll was very high and the Khan saw it prudent to abandon the planned attack on Kandahar city, so he returned to Kalat after plundering the areas of Zhob and Loralai.

Fearing the advances of an increasingly powerful Khanate, the neighboring rulers began planning to limit the Khanate within its

own boundaries, and the Kalhoda rulers in Sindh and Gilzai rulers in Kandahar forged an alliance for that purpose. The allies decided to take the northern regions of the Khanate in a joint attack. A pincer attack was launched against the Khanate forces in Quetta when the Kalhoda entered Quetta valley from Bolan Pass and the Afghan forces moved toward Pishin. The Baloch forces were squeezed between the two forces. The Khanate forces, under the command of Lehdi chief Sardar Kakad Khan Lehdi, offered fierce resistance to the invading forces in Bolan Pass but was overwhelmed and killed along with several of his companions. The Afghan forces from Kandahar attacked Pishin and overwhelmed the Baloch contingent there; the Khanate governor, Mir Feroz Raisani, was killed and the surviving Baloch forces retreated to Quetta valley to be entrenched in the Shal Fort. Another Afghan contingent advanced toward Shorawak, and the region was lost to Gilzai forces (Naseer, 1979).

The combined armies of Kalhoda and Gilzai surrounded the Shal fortress in September 1725 (Ahmadzai, 1995). The Baloch commander of the Fort refused to surrender and fiercely resisted attempts of the invading forces to enter the fortress. The Khan came to the rescue of the besieged forces and camped at Mastung and organized sorties from his base camp at Mastung to make hit-and-run attacks on the forces surrounding the Shal fortress. The night raids by Baloch units put heavy tolls on the Kalhoda and Gilzai forces. The Khanate Army also made it impossible for the Kalhoda forces to receive any supply or reinforcement through Bolan Pass.

With the coming of winter and no hope for any immediate victory, the Kalhoda chief Noor Muhammad Kalhoda decided to withdraw his forces from Quetta valley in December 1725 (Ahmadzai, 1995). On his way back, he suffered heavy losses in men and material from the hit-and-run squads of different Baloch tribes while crossing the Bolan Pass.

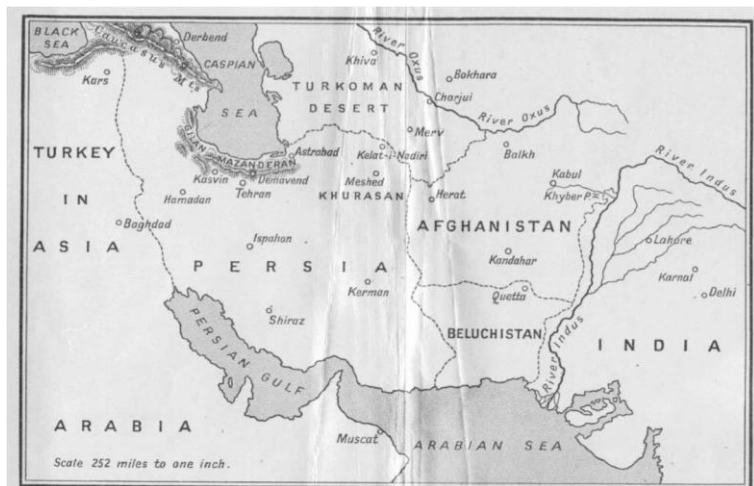
After the withdrawal of the Kalhoda forces from the Khanate territory, the stage was set for a one-to-one showdown between the Baloch and the Gilzai forces in Shal. Mir Abdullah Khan was amassing a huge force in the final countdown while, suddenly, in

January 1726, the Kandahar Army withdrew from Quetta valley (Ahmadzai, 1995). This sudden withdrawal by the Afghan forces might have been in the anticipation of a certain defeat in a battle with the Khanate forces, or it might have been because of a bigger danger from the Persians for Kandahar.

Emboldened by the events in Quetta where the combined forces of Kandahar and Sindh were unable to occupy the Baloch territory, the Khan planned a decisive advance on Kachchi to wipe out Kalhoda influence there forever. In 1731, the Khan crossed the Bolan Pass at the head of his army from Sarawan to meet the Khanate forces from Jhalawan in Sanni (Naseer, 1979). From there, the joint force was to move toward Gandava. The Kalhodas, being aware of the coming of the Khanate Army, assembled a large force to counter the Baloch advance. Due to some mismanagement on the part of the commander of the Jhalawan forces, the two forces from Sarawan and Jhalawan could not be joined, and the Khan, arriving earlier near the Kalhoda forces, had to fight a many time bigger force. At Jandari Had, the two armies collided by which, although, the Khanate Army prevailed upon the Kalhodas, yet Mir Abdullah Khan was killed in the battle. According to Naseer (1979), nearly 700 Baloch fighters were killed in the fight while many more among the Kalhoda Army also perished.

**Figure 22: Map of Balochistan in AD 1732  
(after the death of Mir Abdullah Khan)**

Source: Axworthy (2006)



With the death of Mir Abdullah Khan, a glorious chapter of the Khanate came to an end. He was a person of many qualities. Not only a brave adventurer, but he was also an able strategist and a competent political manipulator. By exploiting the prevailing situation of the region, he successfully managed to expand the Khanate territories manyfold. His advances in the north and confrontations with Kandahar rulers were to cement his alliance with Nader Shah Afshar who was emerging as an irresistible power. With his alliance with Persians, he was able to force out the Kalhodas from Kachchi. He manifested his strategic qualities by denying any victory to the combined forces of Kandahar and Sindh. By frequent raids on the surrounding regions, he was able to stable the financial position of the Khanate. Apart from being a statesman and strategist, Mir Abdullah Khan was a good poet also. He composed some very remarkable poetry in Balochi, which contributed in enriching Balochi classical literature. By all accounts, he became a legend in the history of the Khanate for his services.

## **civil war And Anarchy After Mir Abdullah Khan**

After the death of Mir Abdullah Khan, Balochistan underwent a period of civil strife, and a state of anarchy prevailed in the Khanate

territory. Mir Mahabat Khan, the successor of Mir Abdullah Khan, was incompetent, which, in fact, provided the tribal chiefs the opportunity to assert themselves and interfere in the Khanate affairs by helping one or another contender for the throne of Kalat. In the ensuing struggle for power, the neighboring powers took their chance and made encroachments on the Baloch territories, and the Baloch state nearly lost its sovereignty over many of its territories captured during the reign of Mir Abdullah Khan.

His eldest son Mir Mahabat Khan succeeded Mir Abdullah Khan as the Khan of the Baloch in 1731. This was the period in the history of the Khanate when Sardars of various tribes became increasingly influential and when one group of the tribes, led by Mir Lashkari Raisani, conspired to replace Mir Mahabat Khan with his younger brother Mir Altaz Khan as the Khan. According to Naseer (1979) and Ahmadzai (1994), the tribal chiefs rallied against the Khan because of his personal characters, which were not according to the recognized Balochi norms. Accusing him of being a characterless person, on April 8, 1731, the tribal chiefs, under the leadership of Mir Lashkari Raisani, deposed Mir Mahabat Khan and put his younger brother Mir Altaz Khan on the throne of the Khanate as the Khan of the Baloch. Mir Mahabat Khan was allowed to live a retired life in Jhalawan in the protection of Mengal tribe.

The tribal chiefs who were instrumental in the change of power in Kalat were influencing every administrative decision of the Khan. Mir Altaz Khan, in order to release himself from the ever-dominating influences of Sardars who put him on the throne, extended a hand of reconciliation toward his brother, the former Khan. In 1735, Mir Altaz Khan allowed his elder brother (the former Khan) to settle in Kalat (Ahmadzai, 1994). This caused schism between the Khan and his supporters. The supporters of the new Khan became disgruntled with his decision of extending the hand of friendship toward the deposed Khan and remained noncommittal concerning the affairs of the Khanate. Feeling insulted with the reconciliation policy of the Khan, Mir Lashkari Raisani, the chief of the Raisani tribe who was the main character in deposing Mir

Mahabat Khan as the Khan, left Kalat and ended his support for Mir Altaz Khan. Mir Altaz Khan was left with no sincere advisor after Mir Lashkari's departure from Kalat, and the capital became the hub of conspiracies led by those tribal chiefs who were against the new Khan. Mir Altaz Khan was in a very weak position and could not curb the activities of hostile elements. In the absence of any standing army under his control, he was unable to stand firm against the tribal chiefs who were in the capital with their armed supporters.

The deposed Khan, Mir Mahabat Khan, was engaged in conspiracies to regain his lost throne with other disgruntled tribal chiefs. In a clever move, Sardars of opposite camp sent emissaries to the court of Nader Shah Afshar to seek help in removing Mir Altaz Khan and reinstating Mir Mahabat Khan as the Khan of the Baloch. They tried to convince the Persian ruler that Mir Altaz Khan was a usurper of the throne of Kalat. In 1736, Nader Shah Afshar summoned both the brothers and the tribal chiefs to his court in order to settle the issue (Naseer, 1979). After taking the opinions of the Baloch chieftains, the majority of whom were obviously against Mir Altaz Khan, Nader Shah Afshar recognized Mir Mahabat Khan as the legitimate Khan of the Baloch. Mir Mahabat Khan returned to Kalat, accompanied with an Iranian force under General Lutf Ali and regained power. The deposed Khan, Mir Altaz Khan, and his youngest brother Mir Naseer Khan I and other family members were kept as captives in Kandahar where it is said that Mir Naseer Khan killed his elder brother after arguing over a petty matter (Ahmadzai, 1994).

With the reinstatement of Mir Mahabat Khan as the Khan of the Baloch for the second time, Khanate was immediately faced with a crisis of existence. With Khanate in an unstable and weak position, in 1737, a detachment of Gilzai Army from Kandahar attacked and occupied Shal, reduced Mastung, and devastated the surrounding areas of Kalat before returning to Kandahar (Naseer, 1979). The Khan was not able to put a significant resistance against the invaders. The capital, Kalat, itself was threatened by advancing army of Kandahar; however, a major confrontation with Afghan was

averted as the Gilzai Army was compelled to return in a hurry after receiving the news that Nader Shah Afshar was approaching fast to free Kandahar from the Gilzai rebels and reassert Persian rule there.

With the emerging power of Nader Shah Afshar, western Balochistan became vulnerable to the Persians. The Persians began to enforce their direct rule in western Balochistan. For many decades, local Baloch chieftains from different tribal unions were ruling various regions of western Makuran and Sarhad. They were asserting their power independent of the Khanate or the Persian sovereignty. After reducing Kandahar, Nader Shah Afshar sent a strong army to subdue western Makuran. Initially, the force under General Lutf Ali initially was successful in defeating the Baloch forces in Sarbaz; however, the Baloch soon regrouped, and in the ensuing battle, the Baloch prevailed against the Iranian Army, and General Lutf Ali Khan was killed.

The Persians also made incursions in Sarhad region. Nader Shah Afshar sent another force under the command of Muhammad Ali Beg to subdue the Baloch in Shorawak. In a bloody encounter, hundreds of the Baloch were killed in the battle near Shorawak. Next, the Iranian Army attacked the Baloch forces under Sardar Sher Khan Sanjarani who was killed near Noshki along with several Baloch fighters. Another detachment was sent to reduce Kharan under the command of Pir Muhammad and Islam Khan. During these campaigns against the Baloch, the Khan of the Baloch remained suspiciously neutral and did not, or could not, do anything to extend help toward the Baloch who were facing the might of Nader Shah Afshar.

The issue of ownership of Kachchi between the Khanate and Kalhoda was finally settled during the reign of Mir Mahabat Khan. Nader Shah Afshar ordered that Kachchi should be given to the control of the Khanate as the blood money of Mir Abdullah Khan who was killed in the battle with the Kalhoda. In this way, the Baloch tribes living in Kachchi again came formally under the domain of the Khanate. Under the pressure from Sardars, the Khan



was compelled to divide the land of Kachchi among the tribes participating in the battle of Jandari Had.

After being enthroned with the help of Nader Shah Afshar, the Khan practically became a vassal of the Persian ruler. He provided fighting contingent on the demand of Nader Shah Afshar on many occasions. During the reign of Mir Mahabat Khan as the Khan, the Baloch forces accompanied the army of Nader Shah Afshar on his campaigns in Afghanistan, Sindh, Punjab, and Delhi.

Another event during the reign of Mir Mahabat Khan was the total incorporation of Las Bela into the Khanate. Las Bela was being ruled by a Baloch tribal confederacy under the Bulfat tribe. This tribal confederacy came to power in the region after the overthrow of Jam Ibrahim Gangho in 1717 (Naseer, 1979). From 1730, the *de facto* ruler of Las Bela was Bibi Chagali, (Shah Guli) a brave lady of Bulfat tribe. Jam Aali, the chief of Jamote tribe, asked for help against Bibi Chagali from Mir Mahabat Khan, and in return, he agreed to submit Las Bela under the sovereignty of the Khanate. He also agreed to give half of the revenue to the Khanate. The Khan sent a force from Jhalawan under the command of his prime minister Akhund Muhammad Hayat, which attacked Bela on December 10, 1740 (Naseer, 1979). Bibi Chagali fought bravely against the Khanate Army but was killed along with her family members in a bloody encounter. Jam Aali became the ruler of Las Bela under the Khanate suzerainty.

The Khan was able to maintain his grip on the rulers of Makuran by manipulation. He exerted his influence by replacing one ruler with another and playing with various contenders in different regions of Makuran. In 1741, Mir Mahabat Khan went to Punjgur and settled a dispute between two clans of the Gichki tribe on the governance of Punjgur and installed Mir Lalla Gichki as the ruler of Punjgur. However, the Gichki rulers of Makuran, realizing the weaknesses of the Khan, soon began to rule on their own without recognizing his suzerainty.

Mir Mahabat Khan as the Khan was a mere puppet of those tribal chiefs who helped him to seek the assistance of Nader Shah Afshar in regaining the throne. His popularity was nonexistent as he was brought back on the throne with the help of Iranian forces, and secondly, he had given his stepbrothers and stepmother in the hands of others to be kept as hostages in Kandahar. His unsuccessful attempts to bring Sardars under control broadened the gulf between the Khan and the Sardars of different tribes.

## **Mir nAseer khAn's enTering The scene**

The Sardars who were initially allied with Mir Mahabat Khan now began to conspire against the Khan. They were trying to replace Mir Mahabat Khan with his younger brother Mir Naseer Khan as Khan of the Baloch. Mir Naseer Khan was being kept as a hostage along with his family and family friends in Kandahar. The situation became favorable for the supporters of Mir Naseer Khan with the occurrence of an unexpected event in Persia. The murder of Nader Shah Afshar in 1747 offered the chance to Mir Naseer Khan to escape the detention from Kandahar (Ahmadzai, 1994). He came to Sindh via Makuran and increased his contacts and correspondence with Sardars who were against Mir Mahabat Khan, all in order to find ways for the eventual removal of his brother as the Khan.

In 1747, Ahmad Shah Abdali became the king of Afghanistan by founding a new kingdom out of Persian provinces. Iran was engulfed with serious anarchic conditions at the time, which made it possible for Ahmad Shah Abdali to begin encroaching on surrounding regions and asserting his influence on areas that were previously considered as Nader Shah Afshar's protectorate, including the Khanate of Kalat.

Mir Naseer Khan I, during his detention in Kandahar, developed a very friendly relationship with one of the Afghan chiefs Shah Wali who was now the prime minister of Ahmad Shah Abdali. After escaping Kandahar after the death of Nader Shah Afshar, Mir Naseer

Khan was staying with the Kalhoda chiefs in Sindh. He tried to use his personal friendship with Shah Wali to gain the support of Ahamad Shah Abdali as part of his attempts for gaining the rulership of the Khanate. He became engaged in correspondence with Shah Wali in order to seek ways for dethroning his brother. Becoming aware of his younger brother's activities, Mir Mahabat Khan, in an attempt to make a working relationship with the newly rising power and to neutralize his brother's maneuverings, sent Mir Sultan Shahwani as emissary to the court of the Afghan king.

The neutralizing efforts of the Khan misfired and resulted in a direct confrontation with the rising power of Ahmad Shah Abdali. Mir Sultan Shahwani, in his zeal to make the friendship of Ahmad Shah Abdali with Mir Mahabat Khan on a permanent basis, offered the hand of Khan's daughter in marriage with the Afghan leader—an act for which he had no mandate from the Khan (Naseer, 1979). The Khan refused to honor the commitment offered by his emissary. An enraged Ahmad Shah Abdali then entered the Khanate territory with a huge force. Mir Mahabat Khan could not assemble a formidable force as he had made many of his tribal chiefs hostile and alienated. The Khanate forces were heavily defeated by the Afghans near Mangocher. The Khan fled to Kalat within the protection of the Miri Fort. The Afghan Army reduced Mastung, arrested several Baloch notables, and devastated the surrounding areas of Kalat before the Khan submitted to the demand of the Afghan king. This submission was made possible by the intervention of the spiritual leader Hajji Rahim Babi. The Afghan Army returned from Mangocher, and the Khan sent his daughter as the bride of the Afghan king along with a delegation of the Baloch notables to Ghazni. The arrested Baloch chiefs and others were released, and the relations between the Khanate and the Afghan Kingdom became normal to some extent.

But the relationship between the Khan and the Afghan king could not remain cordial for long (despite the newly developed marital relationship) because of the constant manipulation of his prime minister Shah Wali. Ahmad Shah Abdali became infuriated on the news (which was, most probably, circulated by Mir Naseer Khan

and Shah Wali's network) that the Khan of the Baloch was planning an attack on Kandahar to revenge his defeat at the hand of Ahmad Shah Abdali in Mastung. He asked Mir Mahabat Khan to clarify his position. The Khan went to Kandahar along with the Baloch tribal chiefs (who were secretly supporting Mir Naseer's claim on the throne of the Khanate). In the court of Ahmad Shah Abdali, Mir Naseer Khan, with the help of Shah Wali, presented his claim on the throne of Kalat. After taking the opinions of Sardars, Ahmad Shah Abdali, who was already suspicious of Mir Mahabat Khan's intentions, sided with Mir Naseer Khan. Mir Mahabat Khan was deposed, and Mir Naseer Khan was proclaimed as Khan of the Baloch. Mir Mahabat Khan was imprisoned in Kandahar and later killed on the orders of Shah Wali. Mir Naseer Khan came to Kalat in 1749 as the new Khan of the Baloch (Ahmadzai, 1994).

The period from 1716 to 1749 witnessed the expansion of Khanate as well as some internal feuds and anarchic situations. The Khanate was engulfed in the long-drawn struggles for the rulership among the sons of Mir Abdullah Khan who was among the robust leaders of the Khanate history. During his reign, the Baloch state witnessed one of its glorious times. The Khanate expanded in every direction. However, his successor sons became engaged in power struggle and could not retain the gains of Mir Abdullah Khan. The period after Mir Abdullah Khan was a period of constant turmoil. Mir Mahabat Khan was a man of many personal qualities. He was very brave and a man of honor but lacked the qualities of statesmanship. He was unable to sustain the gains his father made in political, administrative, or financial realms. Throughout his reign as the Khan, Mir Mahabat Khan was preoccupied with continued disputes with the Sardars and his brothers. During his first tenure, he was merely a puppet of the Sardars. During his second tenure as the Khan, he alienated the Sardars who were instrumental in his regaining the power. This, finally, cost him his throne and also his life. On the face of external threats, the Sardars, at times, did contribute somewhat in his war efforts, but, internally, the Khanate had little solidarity. The Sardars were operating with considerable independence, often breaching the solidarity of the Khanate by appealing to authorities at Sindh and Kandahar for support in

factional disputes among themselves and with the Khan. To counter the influence of Sardars, Mir Mahabat Khan nearly surrendered the sovereignty of the Baloch state to Nader Shah Afshar and Ahmad Shah Abdali on humiliating terms. The situation in Balochistan in terms of law and order was anarchic. Kachchi was at the mercy of robbers and plunderers. The Baloch tribes of Derajat were out of control. Las Bela refused to pay the half of its revenue as was agreed. The Gichki rulers of Makuran were not under central control of the Khanate. He antagonized the trading community with unreasonable taxations, and many of the traders were compelled to leave the Khanate territory. He was one of the most unpopular among the Khans in the history of the Khanate for obvious reasons. Due to his unpopularity, Mir Naseer Khan (known in the Baloch history as Mir Naseer Khan I or Naseer Khan Noori) was acclaimed when finally he was declared the Khan of the Baloch with the help of Afghan king Ahmad Shah Abdali.

# The khanate at its Peak

**A**mong the Baloch, the second half of the eighteenth century is universally regarded as the golden age of the Baloch state. This was the period when the Baloch state was being run by Mir Naseer Khan I, the ablest of the leaders in the Baloch history. He was able to achieve an equal status for the Khanate vis-à-vis Afghanistan who was emerging as a formidable power after the death of Nader Shah Afshar of Iran. His sustained endeavors, internally and externally, made the Khanate an example of a tribal state converting into a powerful and organized state, which, in many respects, was equal to the existing states in the region at that period. Economically, this was the period when the Baloch were in their best position.

## The Khanate under Mir Naseer Khan I

At the time when Mir Naseer Khan I became the Khan of the Baloch in 1749, the Khanate, due to various reasons, discussed in the previous sections, had lost its sovereign status and with all practical purposes was a vassal of the newly created Afghan Kingdom. The prime concern of Mir Naseer Khan I was to take the Baloch state out from the humiliating treaty obligations made by Mir Mahabat Khan with Afghanistan. He brought about far-reaching reforms and introduced many new initiatives in political, economic, and military sectors of the Khanate. He took measures, some of them controversial, to force the rebellious regions of the Khanate into submission and brought them into a centralized administrative setup. In order to improve the economic conditions of the Khanate,

he joined Ahmad Shah Abdali in his plundering raids in India and Persia.

The Khanate of Kalat as subordinate to the Abdali court of Kandahar under a treaty obligation was bound to an annual tribute of 2,000 rupees to Kandahar (Naseer, 1979). The Khan was also treaty-bound to maintain a Baloch contingent of a thousand soldiers in Kandahar as military assistance to Abdali rulers of Afghanistan. This treaty was signed by Mir Mahabat Khan and was considered most humiliating by the Baloch. They viewed it as a treaty signed under duress. As many among the Baloch considered the rule of Mir Mahabat Khan as illegitimate, they also considered the treaty illegal.

From the very beginning, Mir Naseer Khan I ignored the treaty between the Khanate and Afghanistan. He stopped paying the annual tribute. He also refused to maintain a military contingent in Kandahar. This enraged Ahmad Shah Abdali, and soon, he found an excuse to attack the Baloch state.

Accusing Mir Naseer Khan I of giving asylum to a presumed enemy of Afghanistan from Sindh, Ahmad Shah Abdali sent an army under the command of his prime minister Shah Wali toward Kalat in 1757 (Naseer, 1979). The Khan confronted the Afghan force near Pedang Abad in Mastung, and in the ensuing battle, the Afghan Army was defeated. On hearing the news of the defeat, Ahmad Shah Abdali, at the head of a strong army, came in support of his prime minister, and at Mangocher, a bloody battle was fought, in which the Baloch forces suffered a heavy defeat. Mir Naseer Khan I retreated to Kalat, and Ahmad Shah Abdali surrounded the Miri Fort of Kalat for forty days. Although the Afghan forces reduced the surrounding areas of Kalat by burning all settlements, they were unable to breach the defenses of Miri.

After failing five times to storm the fort, Ahmad Shah Abdali resorted to negotiations, which ended in the formulation of a peace and friendship treaty between Balochistan and Afghanistan. This was the first treaty of friendship in the history of the region, which

was, in essence, a strategic alliance between the Baloch and the Afghans. This agreement was signed by the Khan of the Baloch and the Afghan king and made possible by the efforts of the prime minister of Kalat Akhund Muhammad Hayat and the prime minister of Afghanistan Shah Wali. The translation of the Treaty of Kalat (see Baloch, 1987, p. 203) stated thus:

*“The Khan of the Baloch, Mir Naseer Khan shall not pay any tribute to the king of Afghan in future.*

*The Khan of the Baloch shall not supply the Military Assistance to Ahmad Shah Abdali but in case of war against external enemies, the Khan will supply a military contingent. As a help in return of this aid, the Afghan king will provide annually a sum of Rupees 100,000 as well as military weapons and expenditure of the army as a reward at the time of requirement to the Khan of the Baloch.*

*The Khan of the Baloch will not provide any help or asylum to any prince of the Sadozai family who has come to him as a rebel. The Afghan king would not provide any kind of help or refuge to any prince of the Ahmadzai royal family of Kalat who has revolted against the Baloch Government.*

*The king of Afghanistan will not interfere in future in the internal affairs, disputes and other matters of Balochistan.*

*All those areas of the Khan which are in the possession of the Afghan king will be handed over immediately today to the Khan of the Baloch.”*

**Figure 23: Map of Balochistan showing the approximate boundaries of the Khanate during the reign of Mir Naseer Khan I within the present boundaries of Pakistan, Iran, and Afghanistan. Source: Author**



Among the priorities of Mir Naseer Khan I were internal unity and stability of the Khanate. After taking charge, his first initiative was to reconcile the hostile tribes. He tried to treat each tribal chief respectfully and took serious note of their suggestions on state affairs. This measure removed the feeling of alienation among the tribes and procured a sense of empowerment and unity, which was unprecedented in the history of the Khanate. He also played a neutral role in settling inter-tribal and intra-tribal disputes, the office of the Khan assuming only a paternal position. This was fundamental in securing the allegiance of tribes, and Khanate became stable and united for a long time.

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Sarawan and Jhalawan under the command of their respective chiefs, empowering the offices of the chief of Sarawan and the chief of Jhalawan. Each tribe was made responsible to provide fighting men for the state army, and the tribes were responsible for the welfare of their fighting men and expenses of any military expedition ordered by the Khan. This made possible for the Khan to establish a standing army under his own command—a practice abandoned after the death of his father by his elder brothers. This standing army was used by the Khan to fulfill his expansionist ambitions and to keep internal order and a stable condition throughout his reign.

The army of the Khanate was composed of three units (*Dasta*). *Dasta Khas* (Royal Guard) was under the direct command of the Khan, and it was mostly recruited from Makuran, Kachchi, from the Baluch tribes of Sulaiman Mountains, and Sibi. *Dasta Sarawan* was composed of the warriors from the tribes of Sarawan and was led by the Raisani chief by virtue of being the chief of Sarawan. *Dasta Jhalawan* was led by Zehri chief by virtue of being the chief of Jhalawan. The units of the Khanate Army were further subdivided into many sections, according to the social organization of respective tribes. At the time of wars and emergencies, thousands of volunteers were also ready to join the Khanate forces.

### **enforceMent of order And exPansion of The khAnATe**

Reintegration of the Baluch territories into Khanate was an important achievement of Mir Naseer Khan I. Many areas of the Khanate became autonomous under the rule of Mir Mahabat Khan. He moved against the territories of Kharan, Makuran, and Las Bela to bring them back into a centralized setup.

Under the rule of his brothers, Las Bela became autonomous by all practical purposes. The rulers of Las Bela were not paying attention to the agreed obligations. A strong contingent of the Khanate Army, which was sent toward Las Bela, forced the Jam of Bela to honor his commitment of sending half of the revenue to the Khanate.

To bring back Punjgur under the control of Khanate, in 1751, Mir Naseer Khan I marched with a strong force and appointed his favorite Karam Shah Gichki as the ruler of the area (Naseer, 1979). However, shortly after he was back home from the region, the people of Punjgur rebelled against his appointed ruler, and during the same year, he sent another force under the command of Akhund Muhammad Hayat to subdue the rebellious population of Punjgur.

The affairs of Kech had been a major problem for the rulers of the Khanate for a long time. During the reign of Mir Naseer Khan I, the Gichki rulers of Kech again became rebellious, and in 1753, the Khan attacked Kech and killed the ruler Malik Dinar Gichki (Ahmadzai, 1994). However, he was unable to settle the issue of Kech satisfactorily because of external pressure. Ahamad Shah Abdali intervened on behalf of the Gichki ruler, and the Khan had to abandon his campaign in Kech abruptly. Another reason for abandoning the Makuran campaign might have been the attempted rebellion by his nephew Mir Hajji Khan who, in the absence of Mir Naseer Khan I from Kalat, proclaimed his ascendancy on the throne of the Khanate.

Mir Naseer Khan I faced a serious rebellion led by his nephew with the help of some of the tribes in Sarawan. The rebel tribes declared his nephew Mir Hajji Khan as the Khan while he was busy campaigning in Makuran. The Khan rushed back to Kalat after hearing about the rebellion and resorted to very harsh measures in dealing with the rebellion. He executed all conspirators and forced Mir Hajji Khan to flee from Balochistan and take refuge in Kandahar.

Taking the advantage of Khan's preoccupation in Makuran and his dispute with Mir Hajji Khan, Kharan became rebellious. Its ruler was making efforts to gain an independent status outside the Khanate. In 1758, he forced the ruler of Kharan, Mir Shahdad Noshervani, into submission by sending an army toward Kharan (Ahmadzai, 1994).

Kech ignored the sovereign authority of the Khan under the leadership of Shey Omar Gichki, the son of the slain Gichki chief of Kech. Shey Omar Gichki was ambitious to become an independent ruler of Kech and ignored the calls of submission from the Khan. In 1758, the Khan marched at the head of a strong force toward Kech (Naseer, 1979). In a bloody battle around Nasirabad Fort on May 17, 1758, the Khanate Army defeated the Army of Kech. It is said that thousands of people were massacred in revenge of nearly one thousand of those killed among the Khanate Army. The Khan returned to Kalat after appointing Mir Dosthen Mirwani as the ruler of Kech. However, the people of Kech soon rose against the Khanate contingent stationed at Miri Fort near Turbat and killing many, including Mir Dosthen Mirwani. This prompted the Khan to a peaceful settlement, and Shey Omar Gichki was reinstated as the ruler of Kech who was asked by the Khan to renege from his original *Zikri* sectarian faith to become a believer of Hanafi doctrine of Islam, which he accepted. However, this act antagonized the people of Kech, who were not ready to accept a ruler who changed his faith under duress. Instead, they declared his brother Shugrullah Gichki as their chief. The Khan immediately came to Kech and, after much bloodshed, was able to reinstall Shey Omar Gichki as the ruler of Kech. But within a year, the rebellious population of Kech killed Shey Omar Gichki. Mir Naseer Khan sent Akhund Fateh Muhammad to find a negotiated settlement to the issue of Kech. In 1759, Naseer Khan I accepted Shey Baiyan Gichki as the ruler of Kech (Ahmadzai, 1994). However, the Buladais resisted the move, and the Khanate forces ended the Buladai resistance by murdering dozens of Buladai notables.

Western Balochistan was being ruled independent of Khanate authority under various chieftains. In 1759, the Khan advanced from Kech toward western Balochistan and annexed the whole area up to Minaab and making Sardar Niamattullah as the chief of areas west of Kech (Naseer, 1979). In the absence of the Khan, Kech again rose into rebellion. After returning from his campaigns in western Balochistan, Mir Naseer Khan I subdued the rebellion in Kech with much bloodshed. Thousands of people of Kech faced persecutions and suffered very badly.

The Hasni tribes in northeast were ignoring the call for submission, and in 1783, the Khan went to Kohlu to punish the Hasni tribe.

During the reign of Mir Naseer Khan I, the Khanate acquired maximum expansion. By annexation of various areas and taking them into firm control, he made the Khanate a vast state. The British ruler of India, Lord Curzon (1966), had defined Balochistan at the time of Mir Naseer Khan I as “the country between the Helmand and the Arabian Sea, and between Kerman and Sind.”

## **AdMinisTrATiVe sTrucTure of The khAnATe under nAseer khAn i**

Mir Naseer Khan I introduced far-reaching administrative and political changes. The Wazir (prime minister) who was overall incharge of the government headed the Khanate administration. He was responsible for external affairs, the maintenance of law and order, security, and recommendation for the selection of other officials of the state. The prime minister also recommended officials for the department of finance, justice, and other relevant departments. The prime minister was responsible to look after the affairs of revenues, which were collected by the *Mustufi* (revenue officer). *Darugha* (city chief) was responsible for the internal security of capital Kalat. To look after the political and social affairs of the court, a *Shahgasi* (court minister) was appointed. *Kazis* (judges) were appointed to deliver justice; however, the parallel courts of tribal chiefs were also in existence (Naseer, 1979).

Administratively, the Khanate was divided into various administrative regions, which included Makuran, Kharan, Las Bela, Shal, Kachchi, Sarawan, Jhalawan, and Derajat. These areas were further divided into administrative units called *Niabats* (Districts), which were headed by *Naibs* (district administrators).

## socioeconomic reforms

With a standing army and making peace with Afghanistan, the borders of Balochistan were secure. Wide-ranging administrative and political reforms created a state of peace and stability in Balochistan and put the Khan in a much better position to take cognizance of socioeconomic situation of the country.

In many parts of Balochistan, agriculture was dependent on *Karez* system (*Karez* is an underground water channel, which is developed by connecting dozens of wells). Mir Naseer Khan I paid special attention in the maintenance of *Karezes* and developing new *Karez* in various regions to increase agricultural productivity. It is said that he introduced many new crops and fruit trees in Balochistan, which he brought from Persia and India during his campaigns in these regions.

Kachchi, however, was the main pillar of the Khanate economy. It provided an agrarian surplus that consolidated the economy. The irrigation systems of Kachchi comprised dams and channels, which had been established from ancient times. Under the instruction of the Khan, the officials organized and supervised the dams and channel systems strictly. The Kachchi lands were divided between different tribes of Sarawan and Jhalawan, according to their military participation in the army or their role in various battles. Tribal lands were divided between different constituent clans of the tribe. Each Sardar (tribal chief) was responsible to grant overlord rights to the sections of the tribe. While the overlord right was thus widely distributed, with many tribesmen receiving a harvest share, it was, in fact, a significant resource only for the ruling clan of the tribe. For the vast majority, the share of the ordinary member of the tribe was a minor adjunct to subsistence. The vastly increased resources reinforced the personal authority of tribal chiefs, which might have played an important role of transforming the *Sardari* (chieftaincy) from being elective to becoming hereditary. As observed by Swidler (1972), the acquisition of Kachchi provided the Khanate with a subject population possessing a complex production system

compatible with, and probably resulting from, prior tributary relations. It changed the socioeconomic dynamics of the Baloch society; in that, it established the tribal chiefs as landlords—a phenomenon which was new in the pastoralist nomadic Baloch society.

Trade also expanded during the reign of Mir Naseer Khan I. Several trade routes linked the ports on the Indian Ocean to Kalat and to Kandahar, which became a center of trade between India and Central Asia. The coastal town of Sonmiani became a trade and manufacturing center, specializing in the production of cloth and carpets for the coastal trade; horses were exported to Bombay, while dyestuffs and hides went to Muscat (Hughes, 1977). A caravan trade was organized by Hindu merchants and Babi Afghans, both of whom maintained settlements in Kalat (Pottinger, 1816). Taxation on trades contributed meaningfully to the financial resources of the Khanate.

Other means of revenue collection was agricultural tax. The Khanate officials were very strict in collecting *Batai* (agricultural tax) which was introduced by the Khan in line with the Mughal taxing traditions in India. *Batai* from Kachchi lands was the main source of income for the Khanate. Widespread changes in the land distribution of Kachchi plain among various tribes and enforcement of strict tax collection measures reinforced the finances of the Khanate to a certain extent. However, the prosperity of the Khanate came from another source—the plundering raids of the Khanate forces in Persia and India in alliance with Ahmad Shah Abdali.

## **BAlloch forces in khurAsAn And PunjAB**

Mir Naseer Khan I joined Ahmad Shah Abdali in his plundering raids in Punjab (India) and Khurasan (Persia). Under the Kalat Treaty signed between Ahmad Shah Abdali and Mir Naseer Khan I, Ahmad Shah Abdali asked the Khan of the Baloch to assist him in his campaigns in Khurasan (Persia) and Punjab (India). This was an

opportunity for the Khanate to share the gains of the campaigns with Afghanistan.

The Baloch forces played vital roles in the campaigns in Khurasan. Mir Naseer Khan, with an army of twenty thousand strong men, joined Ahmad Shah Abdali in Mashad in 1752 (Sykes, 1940). The role of Baloch was decisive in the battle at Turbat-e-Jam, in which the Iranian chief of Khurasan, Mir Alam, was killed. The Persian Army was shattered after the initial shock inflicted upon them by the Afghan and the Baloch forces. Nevertheless, they soon regrouped and launched a strong counterattack in which the flanks of the Afghan Army suffered heavily and began to retreat in disarray. But a three thousand strong Baloch cavalry, under the guidance of the Khan, changed the situation in favor of the invaders. The Baloch Army, under the command of their Khan, again played the pivotal role in the battle against Ali Murad Khan, the ruler of Tun and Tabbas, near Tirshush (Sykes, 1940).

In majority of seventeen raids made by Ahmad Shah Abdali on Punjab, the Baloch forces were the major parts of the invading army. In 1759, a Baloch force under the command of Mir Abdul Karim was sent to assist Ahmad Shah Abdali in his Indian campaigns (Naseer, 1979). Next year, Mir Naseer Khan I, at the head of a thirty thousand strong Baloch army, marched through Punjab to Delhi to participate in the campaigns of Ahmad Shah Abdali against the Marathas (Naseer, 1979). In this and on subsequent campaigns, the Khan acted as the main strategic advisor to Ahmad Shah Abdali. In January 1761, the Baloch forces fought against the Marathas in the third battle of Panipath as part of the army of Ahmad Shah Abdali. The Khan also agreed to provide a thousand strong contingents to be stationed in Kashmir on permanent basis supplementing Afghan forces in the region (Ahmadzai, 1994).

In 1764, the Baloch forces, under the command of Mir Naseer Khan I and Sardar Ghazi Khan of Derajat, joined the forces of Ahmad Shah Abdali against the Sikh resistance in Punjab. In the battle of Lahore, the Baloch forces suffered much casualties, and Mir Naseer Khan I narrowly escaped (Ahmadzai, 1994). After a long campaign



in Punjab, the Baloch forces returned to Balochistan in 1765. The Baloch forces were also sent in the aid of Afghan Army in their campaigns in Sindh and Bahawalpur during the reigns of later Abdali rulers of Afghanistan.

An important event during the reign of Mir Naseer Khan I was giving Gwadar as a gift to an Omani prince in 1783 (Spooner, 1988). In 1740, Ahmad ibn Saeed founded the Al Bu Saeed Dynasty in Muscat and Oman. In 1784, a pretender to the throne of Oman named Sayyad Sultan ibn Ahmad, sought refuge in Zik, a village of the Mirwadi tribe in Kolwah in eastern Makuran. The chief of the village, Mir Dad Karim Mirwadi, took the fugitive prince to Kharan, where Mir Jahangir Noshervani, the chief of Kharan, accompanied them to the court of the Khan at Kalat. The fugitive prince asked for help in his endeavors to capture the throne of Muscat and Oman. The Khan of the Baloch ignored his request of military support; however, he granted the revenue of port city of Gwadar as a gift to the fugitive prince. Later, when the prince sorted out his differences with his family members, Omani rulers claimed that the gift was intended to be in perpetuity, which the later Khans denied but were generally unable to contest. When Sayyad Sultan finally became ruler of Oman in 1792, he made Gwadar a base for expeditions against other coastal regions of Persian Gulf (Spooner, 1988). He then sent a force to Chahbahar and took the town by surprise from a Buladai chief named Shafi Muhammad Buladai.

Two events during the reign of Mir Naseer Khan I had been much criticized in a Baloch nationalistic perspective. First, he exploited the sectarian divisions among the Baloch to fulfill his ambitions of extending his domain in Makuran, and second, he assisted the Afghan aggressions against his fellow Baloch Talpur tribes of Sindh. Though his gifting of Gwadar was in line with traditional Baloch values of showing hospitality, yet failing to regain the territory was the beginning of foreign rule on the vast region of southern Balochistan in subsequent years. The killing of his brother Mir Altaz Khan and suspected involvement in the killing of his other brother, Mir Mahabat Khan, shows major weaknesses in his

personal character. Using as precedents, these disgusting acts were, on many occasions, repeated by later rulers of the Khanate.

## The unwritten constitution of The Khanate

The Khanate was being run during the reign of Mir Naseer Khan I according to cherished traditional societal values of the Baluch. These traditions were strictly followed in settling disputes of various natures among individual tribes and between tribes and the Khan. These traditional laws were called *Balochi Rawaj* or *Dastur e Baloch* and treated as the unwritten constitution of Balochistan. *Balochi Rawaj* included the complete set of laws on civil and criminal justice system of the Khanate.

Mir Naseer Khan constituted a Council of State for consultation on major issues of internal and external importance. This council comprised the chiefs of Sarawan and Jhalawan and included three of the prominent personalities among the ruling Ahmadzai clan. Political decisions of war and peace were taken with the consultation of the tribal chiefs present in Kalat on permanent basis. The issues were debated and final decisions were taken on majority opinion.

The national language of the Khanate was Balochi, and the official language was Persian. The Khanate flag was partly red on the top with a green lower portion. Mir Naseer Khan I also introduced his *Naseer Shahi* currency (Ahmadzai, 1994).

The reign of Mir Naseer Khan I, which lasted for almost fifty years, was the golden age of the Khanate of Kalat; the Baluch state was at its peak during his reign. Balochistan, at that time, gained the status of a full-fledged sovereign state. He established a relatively stable alliance with Kandahar, allowing him to turn his attention to his southern borders. During the latter half of the eighteenth century, Kalat attained its maximum territorial expansion, conquering western parts of Makuran and various regions of Sistan, including Nemroz. He introduced land reforms and held the law and order in full control, boasting economic activities in the state. Regaining the

glories in a Baloch state of Mir Naseer Khan I era has become the cherished goal of every Baloch since then. Rediscovering the state with the historical boundaries during his reign became the founding pillar of the Baloch national resistance against colonial rule in the coming centuries.

## Chapter 12

# The Period of civil war and Decline

**A**fter the death of Mir Naseer Khan I, there began a process of decline in the Khanate. The period was characterized by a never-ending conflict between the Khan and the tribal chiefs. Many regions, eventually, declared their autonomy from the Khanate. The rule of incompetent Khans eroded the foundation of the Khanate, and the anarchic situation paved the way for foreign intervention.

### ciVil wAr And AnArChy under Mir MAhMud khAn

The decline of the Khanate began when Mir Mahmud Khan, the minor son of Mir Naseer Khan I—who also happened to be the eldest—became the Khan of the Baloch after his father's death in 1794 (Dehwar, 2007). He was only seven years old at the time of his coronation. Prime Minister Akhund Fateh Muhammad, as the regent, effectively ran the government of the Khanate. Majority of the tribal chiefs soon became disillusioned with the *de facto* ruler of the Baloch state and resented the idea to be ruled by a prime minister of non-Baloch origin. Exploiting the situation, the tribal chiefs began to encourage a possible claimant of the throne among the Ahmadzai clan. Soon, the new Khan was to face the rebellion of a pretender of the throne, Mir Bahram Khan, a grandson of Mir Mahabat Khan. To deal with the rebellion, the Khan was forced to ask for help from Shah Zaman, the Abdali king of Afghanistan (Naseer, 1979). This again initiated a pattern of foreign intervention

in the internal affairs of the Khanate. Extending support to any claimant to the throne of Kalat by Afghanistan was also against the terms of the Treaty of Kalat signed by Ahmad Shah Abdali and Mir Naseer Khan I.

The loss of Karachi was among the important events during the reign of Mir Mahmud Khan. While the Khanate was engulfed in a protracted civil war, the Talpur rulers of Sindh found the situation in their favor, and they occupied Karachi in 1795 without any resistance from the Khanate (Dehwar, 2007).

Several events took place in Las Bela during the reign of Mir Mahmud Khan. It declared its autonomy by refusing to pay the tribute to the Khanate, and the Jam of Las Bela made an unfortunate move by attacking the Muscat possession of Gwadar. It had adverse results. This misadventure by Jam of Las Bela invited an unwarranted attack by a foreign force. After expelling the administrator of the Sultan of Muscat from Gwadar, the Jam had appointed his own officials for tax collection. Balochistan was attacked from the sea by a force of Muscat and Oman to retake the possession of Gwadar. The formidable force sent by the ruler of Muscat defeated the Baloch forces and repossessed Gwadar. The Muscat forces also burned the port town of Sonmiani after plundering it (Ahmadzai, 1994).

Another important event during this period was the turmoil in Jhalawan. Jhalawan erupted into open rebellion and ignored complying any order from Kalat. The disgruntled tribes of Jhalawan were reluctant to follow the orders of the central government in Kalat under the effective control of a prime minister whom they considered to be exercising the powers of the puppet Khan by clever manipulation of his age and lack of experience. Powerful Mengal and Bizenjo tribes of Jhalawan began to levy their own taxes on the trade caravans passing through their territory from Central Asia that were destined to various parts of India and port cities along the Indian coast. The Afghan Government protested on the ground that levying of taxes on Afghan traders was against the understanding

reached between the Khanate and the Afghan Government during the reign of Mir Naseer Khan I. Under pressure from the Afghan Government, a strong force was sent from Kalat, and a bloody battle ensued between the Khanate Army and the rebellious tribes of Jhalawan in 1797. The chief of Bizenjo tribe was killed, and the Mengal chief submitted to the central rule of the Khanate (Dehwar, 2007; Naseer, 1979).

During the early phase of Mir Mahmud Khan's rule, there appeared to be a diarchic system of governance in Balochistan. According to Naseer (1979), the Khanate became effectively divided between Mir Mahmud Khan and his brother, Mir Mustafa Khan, who became *de facto* ruler of Kachchi and other eastern regions of Balochistan. Mir Mustafa Khan had established a strong cavalry force and made several raids in Zhob, Loralai, and Sindh territories. He managed to firmly control Arund, Dajal, and Derajat regions and maintain a semblance of law and order in his controlled areas. In 1810, the Khanate forces, under the command of Mir Mustafa Khan, became engaged in a protracted and bloody expedition against rebellious Bugti chief Mir Ali Sher Kalpar (Ahmadzai, 1994). After a prolonged campaign and much bloodshed, the Bugti chief, under the mediation of the chief of Sarawan, made submission to the Khanate authority.

The Khanate also lost its control over Makuran and Kharan during the reign of Mir Mahmud Khan. The ruler of Kech, Mir Abdullah Gichki, expelled the Khanate officials from his area and began acting independently from the central authority of Kalat. The ruler of Kharan, Mir Abbas Noshervani, also encroached on the territory of Punjgur and other dependencies of Kalat and openly declared his disobedience vis-à-vis the Khan.

To strengthen his weakened control over the Khanate and in order to eliminate threats to his rule, Mir Mahmud Khan played his two brothers against each other successfully. He instigated his half brother Mir Muhammad Rahim against Mir Mustafa Khan, and Mir Mustafa Khan was treacherously killed by Mir Muhammad Rahim (Naseer, 1979). The followers of Mir Mustafa Khan, under the

command of his sister Bibi Zainab, attacked the camp of Mir Muhammad Rahim and killed him along with his all associates.

Accusing the Khan of involvement in the murder of Mir Mustafa Khan, Bibi Zainab occupied Kachchi and openly revolted against the authority of Mir Mahmud Khan. However, the Khan successfully dealt with the issue, and Bibi Zainab abandoned Kachchi without a fight and fled to Kabul in 1813 (Ahmadzai, 1994).

## **ciVil wAr under Mir MehrAB khAn ii**

The decline of the Baloch state, which began during the reign of Mir Mahmud Khan, continued, and many actions of his successor, Mir Mehrab Khan II, accelerated the process of alienation of the Baloch tribal chiefs and general populace vis-à-vis the Khanate. A painful state of anarchy and civil war prevailed. The period of Mir Mehrab Khan II is characterized by rebellions of the Baloch tribes. This period is also characterized of various killings and murders of not only the members of Ahmadzai clan but also of many tribal and bureaucratic personalities. Court intrigues were at all-time peaks in this period. The Khan was surrounded by a group of advisors who were foreigners and had their own personal ambitions detrimental to the interests of the Baloch state. They were also unable to comprehend fully the complexities of the Baloch society. The way the Khan tackled various tribal issues, apparently on the suggestions and recommendations of his influential foreign advisors, infuriated the Baloch tribes. They became alienated, and a perpetual state of civil strife prevailed in the Khanate.

**Figure 24: Map Showing Balochistan during the reign of  
Mir Mehrab Khan II**

*Source:* <http://www.davidrumsey.com/maps2887.html>



Mir Mehrab Khan II was to confront the rebellion of Mir Ahmad Yar—his cousin from the lineage of Mir Mahabat Khan. He was supported by the powerful Magsi tribe of Kachchi. The matter was settled without any blood being shed, and Mir Ahmad Yar made his submission and was pardoned by the Khan. In 1818, Mir Ahmad Yar again rebelled but was defeated by the Khanate Army (Naseer, 1979). However, Khan Mehrab Khan II succeeded in killing Mir Ahmad Yar and his cousin Mir Sarfaraz Khan by treachery, upon the instigation of his advisors.

Mir Mehrab Khan II, however, took some bold steps to weave the disintegrated fabric of the Baloch state. To force the Gichki rulers of Kech into submission, the Khan at the head of a strong force marched into Makuran, and the Gichki chiefs submitted without a fight. However, the new Khan also faced a major rebellion of Zehri tribe of Jhalawan. The Zehri tribe rebelled to protest against the murder of Sardar Qadir Bux Zarakzai on the orders of the Khan, in a dishonorable way.

Internal intrigues within the court of the Khan were in full swing, and after some realization, the Khan attempted to curb the influences



of his foreign advisors whose influences reached beyond control. The Khan is believed to have ordered the murder of his powerful prime minister (Dehwar, 2007).

The relationship of the Khanate with neighboring Afghanistan turned ugly during the reign of Mir Mehrab Khan II. In 1819, the Khan gave asylum to fugitive Shah Shujah of Afghanistan, which nearly brought the forces of Afghanistan and the Khanate into conflict; however, the conflict was averted, and the Afghan forces dispatched by the Afghan king to attack Kalat returned from Mangocher without any confrontation (Naseer, 1979).

Various tribes formed a union and challenged the authority of the Khan in Kachchi. They were involved in open conspiracies against the Khan. In 1822, the Khan went to Kachchi to quell this emerging rebellion (Ahmadzai, 1994). The tribal chiefs submitted to the Khan because of the huge force, which the Khan was able to amass, but after pardoning the chiefs, he treacherously arrested the chiefs of Raisani, Shahwani, Rind, and all other tribes who were involved in the conspiracy. The Khan pardoned and released all chiefs of the tribes except Raisani chief who was killed upon the orders of the Khan. He was considered to have been the chief of the conspirators.

The Bugti tribe was in revolt, and the law and order situation was appalling in Kachchi and the surrounding regions with the marauding acts of Bugti robbers. In an operation, the Khan subdued the Bugti resistance and arrested Mir Ali Sher Bugti but in an act of reconciliation, pardoned him later.

The Baloch state lost important and valuable regions in the East. The Khanate province of Arund and Dajal were occupied by the forces of the Punjab ruler Ranjeet Singh in collaboration with the Khanate governor of the region Syed Muhammad Shareef (Naseer, 1979).

Makuran was in revolt, and the ruler of Kech Shey Qasim Gichki declared his autonomy in 1831 (Dehwar, 2007). The Khan sent a force under the command of Bizenjo chief, Sardar Faqir Muhammad

Bizenjo, who forced the surrender of Shey Qasim Gichki and then administered the province on behalf of the Khan.

An important event with far-reaching consequences upon the sovereignty of the Baloch state in the coming years was the decision of a group of Baloch tribes to seek help from Afghanistan against their ruler. After the murder of Raisani chief, the chiefs of Raisani, Shahwani, and Mengal tribes went to Kandahar to seek assistance against the Khan from Sher Dil Khan, the governor of Kandahar. The Kandahar forces then launched a campaign to overthrow Mir Mehrab Khan. However, the Khan was able to assemble a powerful army to confront the army of Kandahar, and Sher Dil Khan returned from Pishin abandoning his plan of invading Kalat without causing any damage to the authority of the Khan. The attack on Kalat was averted, but the Khanate lost vital and strategically important territories of Shal and Mastung in 1835, which were occupied by Kandahar with the collaboration of rebellious Baloch tribes of Sarawan (Dehwar, 2007). In an act of reprisal, the Khan violently and brutally suppressed the followers of rebel tribal chiefs by burning their settlements and confiscating their properties in Sarawan.

While the Khan was busy in controlling various rebellions and countering external threat from Afghanistan, the situation at the court was unstable as usual and his foreign advisors were engaged in intrigues of various kinds. Related to one such activity, Prime Minister Daud Muhammad, in 1833, lost his life under the orders of the Khan; however, as observed by Naseer (1979), Mullah Muhammad Hassan—the person nominated as the new prime minister—was of a dubious character which contributed a lot in the final downfall of the Khanate by conspiring with the British invaders.

The period of Mir Mahmud Khan, who died in 1817 after a twentythree-year ineffective rule, was characterized by the weakening grip of Khanate on its various dependencies. Under his rule, the Khanate was in effective control of Prime Minister Akhund Fateh Muhammad who initiated a new chapter of court intrigues.

These intrigues were characterized by the elimination of potential rivals of the Khan which included his brothers also. Karachi was lost to Talpurs of Sindh. Makuran, Las Bela, and Kharan were being run on their own without an effective control from Kalat. Kachchi and Derajat were engulfed in lawlessness. For the first time, the Baloch territories were attacked by Muscat and Oman. This was the beginning of a painful process of decline and fall of the Baloch state.

Continued civil war, struggle for the throne of the Khanate among the various members of Ahmadzai clan, intrigues of court officials which were mostly of foreign origin, and loss of important territories to Punjab, Afghanistan, and Sindh were events that caused the prestige, power, and finances of the Khanate at a very lower ebb. Although Mir Mehrab Khan II was a man of great personal qualities, the way he dealt with the issues relating to the relationship of the state with powerful tribes was not exemplary. His inability to curb the nefarious activities of his foreign advisors was the main factor responsible for the final downfall of his rule and the occupation of the Baloch land by the British. Having alienated the majority of the powerful tribes, he was unable to muster a formidable force to engage the invading British forces in a meaningful way. This will be described in the coming sections.

## **The British occupation of Balochistan**

**D**uring the nineteenth century, India, Iran, and Central Asia witnessed far-reaching geopolitical upheavals. After the loss of America, India, under East India Company, became the most precious of the colonial possession of Imperial Britain. Securing India from any threat was the prime concern of the British administrators in Calcutta and London. The British from the expansionist ambitions of Russia perceived the eminent threat to India. The Czarist Russia was advancing in Central Asia, and reaching the warm waters of the Indian Ocean was believed to be the final goal of Imperial Russia posing direct threat to British interests in India and the Middle East. Maintenance of Afghanistan as a viable state acting as a buffer between the advancing Russians and British India became the pillar of the British policy in Asia. Balochistan was facing a prolonged state of civil unrest, and many regions of the Khanate had declared their autonomy from the central authority of Kalat. A weakened Balochistan engulfed in internal strife became the victim of the rivalry of the two great powers of that era. The British forces, in 1839, attacked and occupied the Baloch state. This was one of the tragic events in the tortuous history of the Baloch with far-reaching consequences on their social and political life. The advent of the British in Balochistan and the subsequent occupation of the Baloch state can be analyzed, keeping in mind the regional and international polity of the period and the internal dynamics of the Khanate during the reign of Mir Mehrab Khan II.

## EXTERNAL SITUATION SURROUNDING BALUCHISTAN

Dark clouds engulfed the Baluch state from “The Great Game” being played in Central Asia by Russia, France, and England—a treacherous game which had begun in the eighteenth century. Since the time of Peter the Great, the Russians were desperately looking for access to warm waters, which they considered fundamental in the fulfillment of their colonial ambitions. After many abortive attempts to reach the warm waters from its western borders, the Russians concentrated on the Central Asian steppes in order to find a route to the Persian Gulf. This would be the gateway to the Indian Ocean. The Russians, after having occupied the Central Asian steppes, had started sending diplomatic missions to Iran, Afghanistan, Sindh, and Punjab. This caused much alarm among the strategists of the British colonial administrators in India. The British perceived the Russian advances in Central Asia as a threat to their Indian possession—the backbone of the British financial prosperity and the base of their colonial power in Asia.

France under Napoleon Bonaparte was in fierce competition with Britain for colonial hegemony over Africa and Asia. The developments in Central Asia were complicated by Napoleon’s invasion of Egypt in 1798 (Dupree, 1973). The French had lost their Indian territories and keen to make up for the lost French prestige in India. After his initial successes in Egypt and Syria, Napoleon sent missions to the Qajar Shah of Iran, Fateh Ali Shah. A military mission was also sent to train the Iranian Army. The French concentration on Iran was a compensating act after their failure to assist Tipu Sultan practically in his struggle to oust the British from Southern India during 1799.

In 1807, the Russians defeated the Iranians at Arpach, and under the humiliating Treaty of Fars, Iran lost more territory to Russia (Dupree, 1973). This caused among the Persians the loss of faith in the French pledges of help against the Russians. The British immediately took advantage of the changed situation. After the Treaty of Fars, the British Resident in Basra offered the Persian king the much-needed financial help to fight the Russians. In another strategic move, in 1809,

the British also managed to extract from Shah Shujah, the ruler of Afghanistan, a treaty of mutual defense between the British and the Afghans (Sykes, 1940).

After the downfall of Napoleon Bonaparte, France lost its prestige and power in the European theater. Although the battle of Waterloo in 1815 put an end to the French threat to British India, the Russian presence remained effective in the region (Raverty, 1978). Indeed, they emerged as the major rivals of the British in Asia in acquiring colonial possession. The Iranians tried to recover their lost territories from the Russians but invariably ended up losing even more. When Shah Abbas Mirza tried to recover part of the Caucasus in 1826-1827 with the help of the British, it resulted in a disastrous defeat (Sykes, 1940). By the Treaty of Turkmanchai in 1828, the Russians not only gained full control of the South Caucasus but also received a heavy indemnity from the Iranians along with external territorial rights and commercial advantages.

During the first decade of the nineteenth century, Afghanistan was engulfed in a power struggle. In 1809, Shah Shujah was replaced on the throne of Kabul, and after unsuccessful attempts to seek help from different rulers of the region, he fled to Lahore in 1813 to seek help from East India Company (Malleon, 1878). For five years, he lived under the British protection. By now, the Sikhs in Punjab, under Ranjeet Singh, had become a leading power, and the British sought his help in reinstating Shah Shujah to the throne of Kabul. However, after many years of civil war, the Afghans acknowledged Amir Dost Muhammad Khan as the ruler of Afghanistan. During the turmoil and uncertainty in Afghanistan, the Sikhs had occupied Peshawar in 1834, which resulted in a war between Afghanistan and Punjab. In 1836, Amir Dost Muhammad Khan defeated the Sikh ruler of Punjab and almost recovered Peshawar, but instead of occupying the city, he sought British approval (Malleon, 1878). Amir Dost Muhammad Khan wanted British help in legitimately recovering Peshawar, only to realize soon that the British would do nothing at the expense of their relationship with the ruler of Punjab. Disappointed and frustrated,

Amir Dost Muhammad Khan entered into negotiations with the Russian representative.

The initiatives of Amir Dost Muhammad Khan with the Russians were unacceptable to the British, and they began to undermine the authority of the Afghan king. In June 1838, a treaty was signed between the British governor-general, the Sikh ruler (Ranjeet Singh), and Shah Shujah (Raverty, 1978). The treaty stipulated that with the help of the Sikh ruler of Punjab and the British, Shah Shujah would rule Kabul and Kandahar. The Persian territory of Herat would remain to be treated as an independent region. In return, Shah Shujah would recognize the sovereignty of the Sikh Government in Punjab and in Northwest Frontier, including Peshawar and Kashmir. Consequent to the treaty, the British raised a large military force known as the "Army of Indus," initially based at Ferozpur in Punjab to attack Afghanistan and install Shah Shujah on the throne of Kabul. It was the beginning of the First Afghan War, which started in 1839 (Tate, 1973).

In that year, the failure of a British diplomatic mission to Kabul and the arrival there of a Russian envoy led to the British viceroy's decision to speed up the effort to invade Afghanistan and to reinstall Shah Shujah. The disastrous aftermath of the First Afghan War proved to be even more disastrous for Baluchistan than for Afghanistan. The British had, of course, realized the importance of Sindh and Baluchistan for their Afghan and Central Asia policy. For the invasion of southern Afghanistan, safe passage through Baluchistan was essential. The logistic importance of the area, especially the coastal areas of Baluchistan, attracted them for pursuance of their forward policy westward. They wanted to capture a suitable port, that is, Jiwani that was only a few days' cruise from their stronghold, Bombay. They had already acquired Karachi port facilities in the 1820s from the rulers of Sindh (Raverty, 1978). Thus, they began to send many delegations to Kalat in order to secure from the Khan of Kalat various treaties to help reinforce their position in this area. But in this, the attempts of Lt. Leech—the first Englishman formally dispatched to conclude an agreement with the Khan—failed. The hesitation of the Khan to reach an agreement was based on the foundations of

longstanding friendship between Afghanistan and Balochistan stipulated under the treaty of friendship signed between Mir Naseer Khan I and Ahmad Shah Abdali. However, the Khan being in a very weak position had no choice but to finally agree with the British. Later, Sir Alexander Burnes was sent, and an agreement was arrived at in March 1839, which guaranteed the sovereignty and borders of the Khanate of Kalat and made the Khan responsible for the safe passage and provisioning of the British troops in return for 15,000 rupees annually, in addition to the cost of provisions (Aitchison, XI, p. 209). This agreement was the beginning of a process, which ultimately ended in making the independent Baloch state a vassal of the British Government in India.

Articles of the treaty between the British Government and Khan Mehrab Khan II signed at Kalat on March 28, 1839 are as follows (Aitchison, 1865, vii, pp. 71-72):

*Article 1*

*As Naseer Khan and his descendants, as well as his tribe and sons, held possession of the country of Khelat, Kutchee, Khurasan, Mekran, Kedge, Bela, and the port of Soumeeanee in the time of the lamented Ahmad Shah Dooranee, they will in future be masters of their country in the same manner.*

*Article 2*

*The English Government will never interfere between the Khan, his dependants and subjects, particularly lend no assistance to Shah Newaz, Futteh Khan and the descendants of the Mahabutzye branch of the family, but always exert itself to put away evil from his house. In case of His Majesty the Shah's displeasure with the Khan of Khelat, the English Government will exert itself to the utmost to remove the same in a manner which may be agreeable to the Shah and according to the rights of the Khan.*

*Article 3*



## THE BRITISH OCCUPATION OF BALUCHISTAN

*As long as the British army continues in the country of Khurasan, the British Government agrees to pay to Mehrab Khan the sum of one and a half lakh of Company's Rupees from the date of this engagement, by half-yearly installment.*

### Article 4

*In return for this sum the Khan, while he pays homage to the Shah and continues in friendship with the British nation, agrees to use his best endeavors to procure supplies, carriage, and guards to protect provisions and stores going and coming from Shikarpore by the route of Bozan, Dadur, the Pass of Bolan, through Shamal, to Koochlak from one frontier to another.*

### Article 5

*All provisions and carriage which may be obtained through the means of the Khan, the price of the same is to be paid without hesitation.*

### Article 6

*As much as Mehrab shows his friendship to the British Government by service and fidelity to the Suddozye family, so much the friendship will be increased between him and the British Government, and on this he should have the fullest reliance and confidence.*

The fundamental objective of the British to enter into a treaty agreement with the Khanate of Kalat was to provide a passage and supplies to the "Army of Indus" on its way to Kandahar through Shikarpur, Jacobabad (Khangadh), Dhadar, Bolan Pass, Quetta, and Khojak Pass. It is interesting to note that the British imperialist interests in Balochistan were not primarily economic as was the case with other regions of India. Rather, it was of a military and geopolitical nature. Their basic objective in their advent in Balochistan was to station garrisons so as to defend the frontiers of British India from any threat coming from Iran and Afghanistan and to make Balochistan a

first line of defense in case of a Russian thrust toward India in order to create a sort of buffer zone between themselves and rival colonial expansionism emanating from the French and Russians and to find safe passage through the area in case of military eventualities. In this process, the Baloch state became the eventual victim.

## **inTernAl siTuATion of kAlAT AT The TiMe of The BriTish AdVenT**

The external situation arising from the “Great Game” discussed above was among the factors, which led to the occupation of the Baloch state; however, it was the internal dynamics of the Khanate at the time, which paved the way for an easy British assault on the Baloch state.

Mir Mehrab Khan II was trying to be a very strict administrator. In his zeal to discipline the unruly tribal chiefs, he antagonized the chiefs of Sarawan and Jhalawan, leading to open rebellion. The tribal chiefs, in return, conspired with other members of the royal family to overthrow his government. Failing to replace the Khan, they looked toward the neighboring powers for external support and thus the Afghan Government was finally able to occupy the vital regions of Shal and Mastung in this process. The Afghan Government was already hostile to Mir Mehrab Khan II because of him giving asylum to fugitive Shah Shujah. The irony is that the same Shah Shujah later became the enemy of the Khan and facilitated British attempts of invading Balochistan (Naseer, 1979).

The court of Khan Mehrab Khan II was a center of intrigues and conspiracies against the tribal chiefs and members of the royal family. Beginning with the ineffective and untraditional rule of Mir Mahmud Khan, the offices of the royal court were filled by the people having no loyalty with the Baloch state. Majority of the highly placed courtiers, including the prime ministers, were Afghans who had no knowledge of cultural and social values of the Baloch and their tribal setup. Although the conscious Baloch elements in the power structure of the Khanate were worried on the developments around the Khan,

they were unable to assert themselves. As observed by Naseer (1979), although the tribal chiefs rose against these policies, their actions were focused on their personal interests and not on the advancement of the Baloch state. In fact, the foreigners who were hired by the Khan to run his state pitted the tribes and tribal chiefs against each other and against the Khan simultaneously in order to perpetuate their grip on the Khan and the state. The ringleader of these Afghans was Akhund Fateh Muhammad who was the prime minister. The others included Mullah Abdurrahman, an advisor to the Khan; he had the ambition of replacing Akhund Fateh Muhammad as the prime minister (Dehwar, 2007). Another opponent of the prime minister was Daud Muhammad Gilzai who was also an advisor to the Khan. Another new comer from Kandahar, Akhund Muhammad Siddique, became very influential in Kalat and played a pivotal role in the British invasion of Balochistan. Two other personalities, Mullah Muhammad Hassan and Syed Muhammad Sharif were also instrumental to lure the British officials to invade Kalat (Naseer, 1979).

Two events were fundamental in causing total isolation of the Khan from the tribes. First was the murder of the powerful chief of Zehri tribe Sardar Qadir Bux Zarakzai on the instigation of Prime Minister Akhund Fateh Muhammad. Second was the murder of Akhund Fateh Muhammad himself (Naseer, 1979). These events caused utter confusion not only among the tribal chiefs of the main tribes but also in the royal court at Kalat. Mir Mehrab Khan II made the strategic blunder of making Daud Muhammad Gilzai his prime minister. This person caused the humiliation, imprisonment, and murder of revered tribal chiefs and the close relatives of the Khan by making the Khan believe, on false pretexts, that they are conspiring against his rule.

Due to consecutive administrative and sociocultural blunders, and because of the intrigues of the royal court, Mir Mehrab Khan II was forced to be engaged in a fruitless and, sometimes, bloody struggle against the tribal chiefs of Sarawan and Jhalawan. The centralized control was eroded in many regions of the Khanate. The only region which was in the total control of the Khan through his administrator Sardar of Bizenjo tribe was the volatile region of Makuran (Naseer,

1979). Sarawan, Jhalawan, Kachchi, and Las Bela were factually not under the Khanate administrative control. Ranjeet Singh, the powerful ruler of Punjab, already had occupied Derajat. The regions of western Makuran and Sarhad were not accepting the central authority of the Khan and were being ruled by local chieftains (*Hakoms*). The prime minister and the royal advisors were conspiring with the British, and some of them were on the payroll of the East India Company. Compelled by the events in Afghanistan and the surrounding regions and inspired by total chaotic situation in Balochistan, the British found it very easy in 1839 to occupy Kalat and end the independent status of the Baloch state.

## **eVenTs leAding To The occuPATion of kAlAT**

The Army of Indus began the march toward Afghanistan in order to replace the Afghan king Amir Dost Muhammad with Shah Shujah. However, it faced logistic problems while in Kachchi, and when passing through Bolan Pass, they were attacked by the Baloch tribes of Kachchi (Masson, 1974). Later, it was proved that these attacks were instigated by Khanate Minister Akhund Muhammad Hassan to create mistrust between the British and the Khan (who was treatybound to protect the British line of communication). The British held Mir Mehrab Khan II responsible for this “violation” of the treaty (Masson, 1974). The British commander Alexander Burnes and Shah Shujah wrote to the Khan about the difficulties the Army of Indus was facing while traveling through his territory and accused the Khan with harsh words about his complacency in the matter. The Khan tried to diffuse the situation by sending Mullah Muhammad Hassan to British camp in Shikarpur. Instead of defending the Khan, Mullah Muhammad Hassan tried to incite the British against the Khan. He made the British officials and Shah Shujah believe that the Khan was secretly asking the tribes to make hurdles for the Army of the Indus. He also assured the British his full support if they took any action against the Khan, and according to Naseer (1979) and Dehwar (2007), it was to avenge the murder of his father and brother (who had been killed on the orders of the Khan). While returning to Kalat, he reported to the Khan that the British were planning to install Mir Shahnawaz Khan, a contender of the throne, replacing him as the ruler of the

Khanate. He advised the Khan that the best way of dealing with them was to confront the British forces while they were passing through Bolan Pass. In the meantime, he circulated orders with the official stamps to various tribal chiefs to stop the British advance toward Quetta. This was done without the knowledge and information of the Khan.

The Khan, despite the provocations of his prime minister, decided to visit Quetta to meet the British officials and Shah Shujah in order to diffuse the situation arising after the attacks on the British convoys in Kachchi and Bolan areas. However, to subvert any reconciliation effort, the conspirators headed by Mullah Muhammad Hassan, meanwhile, arranged an attack on the camp of Alexander Burnes while he was returning to Quetta from Kalat. This event was the watershed vis-à-vis the relationship between the British and the Khan as the conspirators assured the British that this act of vandalism was on the orders of the Khan. Reacting to this event, the British unilaterally annulled their agreement with the Khan (Dehwar, 2007).

After the defeat of Afghan ruler Amir Dost Muhammad Khan and the installation of Shah Shujah as the new ruler of Afghanistan, a part of the British Army returned to Quetta. The British were now able to concentrate their attention toward Kalat and to punish the Khan for not acting according to the treaty which they had already unilaterally abolished without even bothering to inform the Khan. According to Naseer (1979), the subsequent action against the Baloch state was taken, blaming the Khan of Kalat:

- He ordered the looting of provisions stored for the British Army of Indus
- He ordered the looting of Alexander Burnes' camp while he was returning to Quetta after signing a treaty with the Khan
- He incited the tribes to make troubles for the Army of Indus while passing through Bolan Pass

- He ordered the shopkeepers in his area not to trade with the British for provisions
- He demanded the return of Karachi port to Balochistan

## occuPATion of kAlAT And MArTyrdoM of MehrAB khAn ii

Under the orders of Lord Auckland, governor-general of India, an English detachment under the command of General Wilshire proceeded toward Kalat on November 3, 1839 (Masson, 1974). Before reaching Kalat, the British demanded the surrender of the Khan in a humiliating letter, which was rejected by the Khan immediately (Dehwar, 2007; Naseer, 1979). The Khan tried to mobilize, but as the tribal chiefs were already antagonized, he could not assemble sufficient troops to defend the city. Instead, some of the tribal chiefs in Sarawan welcomed the invading army and supplied the British forces with provisions. Some of the tribes from Jhalawan and Kharan indeed mobilized in support of the Khan, but it was too late.

On November 5, 1839, the British Army assaulted the Miri Fort in capital Kalat after intensive bombardment. Mir Mehrab Khan II and his limited force offered stubborn resistance against the invaders. The Khan embraced death with typical “Balochi Way” by walking in full view toward the enemy firing lines. Every member of his besieged force perished under heavy shelling and hand-to-hand fight with the British forces (Masson, 1974).

By defending his country and sacrificing his life in a heroic way and not surrendering to the enemy when death was inevitable, Mir Mehrab Khan II became one of the revered personalities in the Baloch history. The Baloch forgot all his mistakes and rallied around his son to revenge his death. However, with the martyrdom of Mir Mehrab Khan II and occupation of Kalat by the British, drastic changes occurred not

only in the Baluch politics but the long colonial rule changed the fabrics of a tribal society beyond recognition.

## **Causes of The fall of Kalat**

The external causes of the occupation of the Khanate can be traced in the emerging rivalry of the British and the Russians, which have been discussed in detail earlier. Internally, many factors were responsible for a weakened state of the Khanate. The mistrust between the Khan and powerful tribal chiefs, rivalries between various contenders for the throne of Kalat, the intrigues of the court officials, failure to develop a functional administrative system, and failure to establish an organized revenue generating apparatus for the state were the main causes of the weakening of the Baluch state. With such weaknesses, the Khan was unable to offer a meaningful resistance to the onslaught of one of the mightiest powers of the time.

Mir Naseer Khan I had established the grandeur of the Khanate with the support of the tribes of Jhalawan and Sarawan by not only giving them land and other financial assistance but also consulting them on every major policy-making decisions. The tribes, in return, were bound to produce the required number of fighting men and take the responsibilities of the actions taken with their consultation. Beginning with Mir Mahmud Khan, the Khans were unable to integrate the tribes with the affairs of the Khanate. Ignoring the opinions of major tribes on the matters of vital internal and external importance loosened the fraternal bond between the Khan and the tribal chiefs, making their relationship more fragile. The disgruntled chiefs, in their short-sightedness, approached foreign powers for assistance and in the process not only weakened the position of the Khan but also caused the loss of vital northern territories to Afghanistan.

With continued internal warfare, the Khan was unable to establish a uniform administrative setup in the Baluch state. Different tribes were acting on their own, and the concept of a centralized state eroded in time. Tribal values functioned as modification devices that maintained

a sense of familiarity and continuity in a society undergoing change. The attempts for the creation of formal state institutions were not successful for various reasons, and the institution of tribe and its values continued to play important roles in the Khanate. Tribal values limited and substituted the state institutions. In administrative and political spheres, tribal values compensated both for the creation of a formal bureaucracy and for the absence of any other social or political institutions.

Inability to deal with the problem arising from the ambitions of various contenders for the throne caused further fractures in the unity of the ruling family. This made possible for tribal chiefs to play one contender against another. One of the contenders of the throne, Mir Shah Nawaz Khan, sought support from the British and Shah Shujah, exposing the vulnerability of the Khan. The confrontation between the members of Ahmadzai clan strengthened the positions of foreign advisors with the resultant weakening of the authority and prestige of the Khan.

Long drawn-out internal conflicts put heavy burdens on the Khanate treasury. The Khan was unable to establish a workable revenue generating system. With limited resources, it became impossible to maintain a standing army as was in the time of Mir Naseer Khan I. Without a standing army, the Khan became paralyzed, and it gave the tribal chiefs a walkover on their anti-Khan activities. The absence of a standing army was among the responsible factors in the immediate collapse of the Baloch state when it was invaded by the British detachment in 1839.



## Balochistan after occupation

**A**fter the occupation of Kalat, the British took many measures to strengthen the grip over Balochistan. Such measures included installation of a puppet Khan, Mir Shah Nawaz Khan, on the throne of Kalat, the appointment of a British officer in Kalat as regent, and signing of a treaty, legitimizing various actions. The Baloch recovered from the initial shock of the murder of their Khan and occupation of their land, and then regrouped and rallied under the leadership of the son of the slain Khan—known in the Baloch history as Mir Naseer Khan II—to oppose the British rule. Many tribes began insurrections against the British in many parts of Balochistan, and the tribes of Sarawan and Jhalawan refused to recognize the British-appointed Mir Shah Nawaz Khan as the Khan of the Baloch. The Baloch forces liberated Kalat and the British officials in order to bring a semblance of normality in their newly occupied territory and recognized Mir Naseer Khan II as the Khan. With the signing of two treaties between Mir Naseer Khan II and the British, the Baloch state formally became a British protectorate.

### **instAllATion of shAh nAwAZ And The hunt for nAseer khAn ii (1839-1840)**

After the occupation of Kalat, the British installed Mir Shah Nawaz Khan, the grandson of Mir Mahabat Khan, as the new Khan of the Baloch state and Lt. Love Day as the regent with actual powers to run the territory. Under the nominal Khan, the dismemberment of the Khanate soon began. In one of the agreements signed by Mir Shah Nawaz Khan with the British and Afghanistan, the Khanate territories of Kachchi and Mastung were given under the direct control of newly installed government of Shah Shujah in Kabul, and

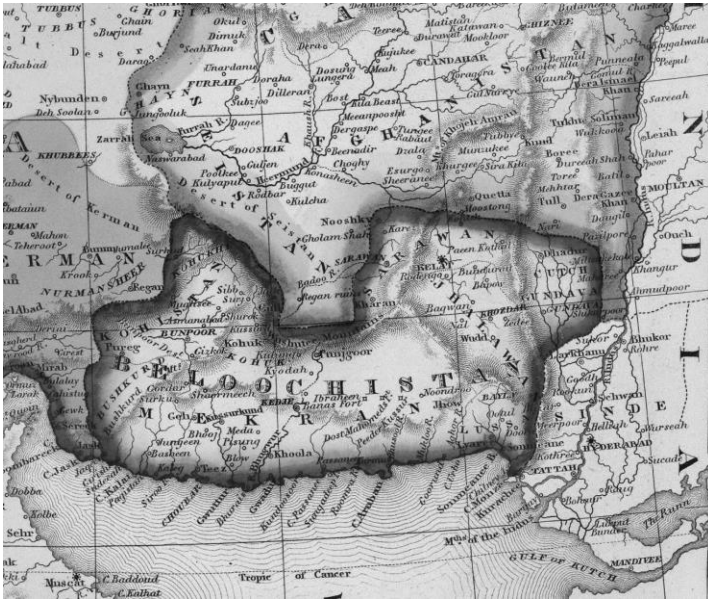
the Khanate itself came under the sovereignty of the British-installed government of Afghanistan.

At the time of the British invasion of Kalat, the heir to the throne, Mir Naseer Khan II was away in Noshki. On hearing the news of the British advance on Kalat, he tried to reach Kalat with his assembled force; however, Kalat was occupied before his arrival. Finding it futile to engage the British at this stage, he went into hiding and began organizing the Baloch tribes for a showdown with the British in a protracted struggle (Naseer, 1979).

The British were conscious of the fact that the Baloch considered Mir Naseer Khan II, the son of the martyred Khan Mehrab Khan II, as the legitimate heir of the throne in Kalat and that no self-respecting Baloch tribal chief would ever accept the teenager Mir Shah Nawaz Khan as their Khan. To eliminate the challenger, they made several attempts to arrest or kill Mir Naseer Khan II. For finding the exact whereabouts of the fugitive heir of the throne, they hired the services of some of the Baloch tribes. The British forces, with the help of Rakhshani tribe, attacked the Mengal chief Sardar Fazul Khan Mengal who was protecting Mir Naseer Khan II and his family. Mir Naseer Khan II escaped, but several of the Mengal fighters were killed and their chief arrested. The British forces devastated the area and burned Miranzai village near Noshki (Naseer, 1979). Following the trails of Mir Naseer Khan II, the British forces attacked Punjgur and made such lootings and devastation that was even loathed by some of the British officials (Masson, 1974). Although the British officials made frantic efforts to apprehend the legitimate heir to the throne of Kalat and his close associates, they were unable to inflict any harm on him. The fugitive leader remained free to mobilize the Baloch forces against the British, and after wandering in Noshki, Punjgur, and Makuran, he finally established his camp in Mastung and began preparation for a final assault on Kalat.

Figure 25: **Map of Balochistan after the British occupation**

*Source:* <http://www.davidrumsey.com/maps2887.html>



## general uprising Against The British

Beginning from 1840, there began a general insurrection against the British rule throughout Balochistan. The Baloch were not ready to accept their country as part of an occupied Afghanistan and to be ruled under a puppet Khan. The powerful Mari tribe rose in total revolt. The British retaliated with excessive force, and a British contingent under the command of Major Brown on May 11, 1840 attacked the Mari headquarter of Kahan and occupied Kahan Fort and the surrounding areas (Masson, 1974). The Mari forces withdrew from the area, regrouped, and in an ambush wiped out a whole convoy of British troops near Filiji, killing more than hundred British troops.

The Mari fighters surrounded the British force under the command of Major Brown in Kahan Fort. For the relief of the besieged forces at Kahan, a huge contingent was sent with much provision from Sukkur. The Mari fighters under the command of Mir Din

Muhammad Mari engaged the British troops near Nafsuk Pass in Filiji on August 31, 1840 and caused heavy casualties to the British; however, the Baloch suffered badly as majority of their able men and commanders were killed by the British artillery bombardment. Despite the heavy casualties suffered by the Baloch and the use of heavy artillery, the British were unable to gain an outright victory over the Mari forces. After two days of continuous fighting, the British also sustained heavy losses; the expeditionary force found it impossible to proceed further toward Kahan and retreated back to Filiji.

Meanwhile, the commander of the British forces in Kahan began negotiating with the Mari chiefs for the safe return of British troops to Filiji. The Mari chief, realizing the weakness of his fighting strength after the debacle of Nafsuk Pass, agreed to let the British forces vacate the fort and leave the area peacefully. The besieged British unit returned to their base camp at Filiji without any interruptions from the Baloch (Naseer, 1979).

In Kachchi, the Dombiki tribe was involved in an insurrection against the invading British forces. The Dombiki fighters, in their various hit-and-run actions and night raids on the British outposts scattered around Kachchi, made the law and order situation in the occupied territory untenable. Mir Bijjar Dombiki was leading the uprising, which caused many casualties on the British forces in several skirmishes. Being unable to control the activities of the Dombiki tribe, the British began a process of negotiation. They treacherously arrested Mir Bijjar Dombiki and other elders of the tribe when they were invited for peace talks in Lehdi village (Naseer, 1979). After the arrest of their leaders, the Dombiki scattered and ceased to be a formidable opposition to the British forces in Kachchi.

Because of the role of some of their tribal chiefs in the occupation of Kalat (by extending help toward the invaders), the people of Sarawan felt ashamed and humiliated. Emboldened by the Mari insurrection, the people of Sarawan mobilized themselves against

the occupation forces. The people of Mastung attacked a convoy of the British troops and killed all the soldiers while it was marching toward Quetta from Kalat. In another development, the Kakad tribes unsuccessfully tried to occupy Shal Fort in Quetta. On July 9, 1840, a joint tribal force from Sarawan came to the aid of Kakads and surrounded the Shal Fort. However, nothing materialized of this mobilization as it was unorganized and was not under a single command. The Baloch and Kakad forces withdrew from Quetta without achieving their objective (Naseer, 1979).

## **liberATion of kAlAT And sTruggle AgAinst The BriTish**

Alarmed by a general state of unrest among the Baloch tribes and mobilization of the Baloch forces under Mir Naseer Khan II, the British regent Love Day organized the city defenses in capital Kalat with the help of the Baloch forces who were still loyal to Mir Shah Nawaz Khan. On July 25, 1840, the Baloch forces under the command of Mir Naseer Khan II attacked Kalat, and after three days of fierce fighting, the British regent, seeing no option, surrendered the Fort. Mir Shah Nawaz Khan was allowed to go south, and Love Day and an English traveler, Charles Masson, were arrested (Masson, 1974). The same day, Mir Naseer Khan II (1840-1857) was formally proclaimed the Khan of the Baloch by the chiefs of the Baloch tribes in a ceremony in Miri Fort.

On the news of an eminent attack, the British officials in Quetta tried to reinforce the defenses of Kalat. A British force under the command of Lt. Hamersley marched from Quetta toward Kalat to help Mir Shah Nawaz Khan and Lt. Love Day. The Baloch forces in Moobi unsuccessfully intercepted this force, but it caused much delay for the force to reach Kalat in time. After suppressing the resistance of the Baloch forces, in which many of the Baloch fighters were killed, the British force occupied Mastung; but after hearing the news of the fall of Kalat, they returned to Quetta (Masson, 1974).

Mir Naseer Khan II, after the liberation of Kalat, planned to attack the British garrison in Quetta to terminate completely the British presence in Balochistan. However, as the tribal chiefs of Sarawan were not ready for such a bold action, the Khan tried to enter into negotiation with the British official for a peaceful coexistence. In response to the peace gestures of the Khan, according to Masson (1974), the British put forward the following conditions (which were rejected by the Khan):

1. Kalat city should be handed over to the British
2. The Khan of the Baloch should go to Kandahar to show subordination to Shah Shujah of Afghanistan
3. The annexation of some of the Khanate areas with Afghanistan should be recognized as legitimate

The peace initiatives could not progress as the conditions put forward by the British officials in Quetta were not acceptable to the Khan. On the failure of peace initiative, the Khan tried to consolidate his position. As the Kachchi was vital for the viability of his government, the Khan camped himself at Mastung and began preparation to recapture Kachchi. His army was attacked by the English detachment “Kasi Irregular” while it was on its way to Bolan Pass. However, the English were defeated, and they fled back to Quetta, leaving many dead.

The Baloch Army under the command of the Khan crossed Bolan Pass on October 28, 1840 and attacked the British cantonment in Dhadar (Masson, 1974). However, the attack was repulsed, and after a strong counterattack from the British forces, the Baloch Army retreated to nearby mountains in disarray. Next day, the British also repulsed a night attack by the Khanate forces, and the Baloch retreated after sustaining many casualties.

The British forces in Dhadar, after receiving help from the nearby cantonments, marched against the Khanate forces and forced the Baloch Army to be scattered in various directions in Kachchi region without having any communication between different sections.

Major Love Day was being held in a Baloch camp as a prisoner. He was killed by his guards because of the lack of communication between the Khan and his scattered forces (Naseer, 1979).

In the coming weeks, several inconclusive battles were fought between various sections of the Baloch Army and the British in Kachchi region. A section of Khanate forces under the command of Mir Kamal Khan Altazai and Rahim Dad Mengal attacked Gandava and forced the British forces to flee toward Bhag. However, near Bhag, the Baloch Army was defeated when confronted by a combined and much bigger British force. In a bloody battle, 130 fighters among the Khanate forces were killed, and the surviving force fled toward Jhalawan (Naseer, 1979).

The confrontation between the Baloch forces and the British ended in a no-win stalemate with no one having the upper hand. Another round of peace talks was initiated—this time by the British. However, it was not a serious effort and meant to detract the attention of the Khan who was busy in mobilizing the Baloch tribes and regrouping his scattered forces. While still engaging the Khan in negotiations, the British forces attacked the Khanate forces in a surprised move near Kunbi. The Khanate forces were caught unawares and became encircled. According to Naseer (1979), the Baloch suffered one of the heaviest casualties in the long drawn-out struggle against the British. The Khan managed to escape toward Jhalawan, but the elite commanders of his forces, along with 700 hundred fighters, were killed in this treacherous attack.

## **The second occuPATion of kALAT And Beginning of PeAce TALKs**

While the Khan was engaging the British forces in Kachchi, a British force marched from Quetta toward Kalat and occupied it on November 3, 1840 without any resistance from the Khanate forces, and Colonel Stacey was appointed as the political agent in Kalat. The Khan, after hearing the news of the fall of Kalat, remained

encamped in Jhalawan and made frantic efforts to reorganize and mobilize the Baloch Army. After realizing that without a settlement Balochistan will remain in turmoil for long, in January 1841, Colonel Stacey began a peace process with the Khan. After a series of meetings and exchanges of emissaries between the Khan and Colonel Stacey, the Khan agreed to accept the British sovereignty over Balochistan. The British agreed to allow him to return and regain his position in Kalat. Colonel Stacey received him in Kalat as Khan of the Baloch on January 25, 1841 (Naseer, 1979). It was decided between the Khan and Colonel Stacey that the Khan should visit Quetta in order to finalize a peace treaty between the British and the Khanate. On September 3, 1841, the Khan visited Quetta, and it was decided that a formal agreement should be signed in Kalat.

- I. On October 6, 1841, the Khan signed a treaty with the representative of the East India Company in Kalat. According to Naseer (1979), this was, in fact, an agreement of total submission to the British and their protégé Shah Shujah of Afghanistan. It was agreed that—the Company will recognize Mir Naseer Khan II as the Khan of the Baloch,
- II. Kachchi and Khanate areas in Sarawan, which were annexed with Afghanistan, will be given back to the Khanate sovereignty,
- III. Sibi will be retained by the East India Company, and the British Government would station troops in Kalat, control its foreign relations, and rule the state with the help of a British resident.

With the signing of the treaty, the Baloch state came under the direct rule of the East India Company, and the rule of the Khan became nominal as the authority to take major decisions remained with the representative of the Company in Kalat.

After settling the issues with the British, the Khan took some initiatives to strengthen his authority over the Khanate and made



efforts to normalize the law and order situation in the state. Perhaps, on the initiative of the British, he began to reconcile the rebellious Mari tribe. He visited Kachchi to meet the Mari chief who pledged to respect the Khanate regulations and assist the Khan militarily in case it was asked to do so.

The deposed Khan, Mir Shah Nawaz Khan, had been busy mustering support among the Baloch tribes and from the rulers of Sindh. However, he failed to assemble enough force to challenge Mir Naseer Khan II in a meaningful way. He was arrested and later killed in prison on the orders of the Khan.

The Noshervani chief of Kharan annoyed the Khan by giving refuge to Rakhshani tribe who collaborated with the British in his wandering days after the British invasion of Balochistan. After the resumption of rule by Mir Naseer Khan II, the Kharan chief failed to realize the reality. He was busy in undermining the authority of the Khan by clandestinely instigating some members of Ahmadzai clan to rebel against the Khan. The Khan tackled the rebellion of the Noshervani chief by sending a force to Punjgur. The force under the command of Darugha Gul Muhammad and Sardar Taj Muhammad Zarakzai attacked the Noshervani possessions in Punjgur and dismantled the fortifications at Khudabadan. However, after the submission of Noshervani chief to the authority of the Khan, his possessions were given back.

On May 14, 1854, the Khan was compelled to sign a new treaty with the British, further reducing the authority of the Khan. Under the treaty, which was signed by General John Jacob and Mir Naseer Khan II, the British were allowed to station forces anywhere in the Khanate territory. The new treaty, which abrogated the treaty of 1841, recognized the Khan as an independent ruler while he was expected to oppose the enemies of British and to be friendly with their supporters (Aitchison, 1865). Their foes and friends were not named; however, it was clear that the Khan would act as a close ally of the British in every circumstance. In return, the British promised

to pay an annual subsidy of 50,000 rupees and provide military help in case of a foreign invasion into Balochistan.

The treaty between the British Government and Khan Naseer Khan II signed in Mastung on May 14, 1954 stated that (Aitchison, 1865, vii, pp. 76-77)—

*“Whereas the course of events has made it expedient that a new agreement should be concluded between the British Government and Meer Nusseer Khan, Chief of Khelat, the following Articles have been agreed on between the said government and His Highness:*

*Article 1*

*The Treaty concluded by Major Outram between the British Government and Meer Nusseer Khan, Chief of Khelat, on the October 6, 1841, is hereby annulled.*

*Article 2*

*There shall be perpetual friendship between the British Government and Meer Nusseer Khan, Chief of Khelat, his heirs and successors.*

*Article 3*

*Meer Nusseer Khan binds himself, his heirs and successors, to oppose to the utmost all the enemies of the British Government, in all cases to act in subordinate co-operation with that government, and to enter into no negotiation with other States without its consent, the usual friendly correspondence with neighbors being continued as before.*

*Article 4*

*Should it be deemed necessary to station British troops in any part of the territory of Khelat, they shall occupy such positions as may be thought advisable by the British Authorities.*

Article 5

*Meer Nusseer Khan binds himself, his heirs and successors, to prevent any plundering or other outrage by his subjects within or near British territory; to protect the passage of merchants to and from between the British dominions and Afghanistan, whether by way of Sindh or by the sea-port of Soumeeanee, or other sea-ports of Mekran, and to permit No. xvn. no exactions to be made beyond an equitable duty to be fixed by the British Government and Meer Nusseer Khan, and the amount to be shown in the Schedule annexed to this Treaty.*

Article 6

*To aid Meer Nusseer Khan, his heirs and successors, in the fulfillment of these obligations, and on the condition of faithful performance of them year by year, the British Government binds itself to pay to Meer Nusseer Khan, his heirs and successors, an annual subsidy of fifty thousand (50,000) Company's Rupees.*

Article 7

*If during any year the conditions above mentioned shall not be faithfully performed by the Said Nusseer Khan, his heirs and successors, then the annual subsidy of fifty thousand (50,000) Company's Rupees will not be paid by the British Government."*

Immediately taking advantage of the treaty, the British established a cantonment in Khan Ghad, renaming it Jacobabad; the Khanate lost the territory forever.

Mir Naseer Khan II died in 1857, and it is believed that his death was caused by poisoning (Aitchison, 1865). Although he was fully dependent on the British for his rule in Balochistan, under given circumstances, he tried to present a semblance of autonomy. His important move was to recruit and train a permanent army. This became the cause of disagreement between the later Khans and tribal chiefs as British political agents stationed in Kalat exploited this issue to create schism between the Khan and the tribes.

The period between 1839 and 1857 saw drastic changes in the Khanate of Kalat. The Baloch state had been occupied, the Khan of the Baloch killed, and the Khanate had come under the rule of the British East India Company. The Baloch resisted the nomination of a puppet Khan, and the British were forced to accept Mir Naseer Khan II as the legitimate ruler of Balochistan. Under subsequent treaties, Balochistan lost its sovereignty.

# Conflicts between the Khan and sardars

**A**fter the death of Mir Naseer Khan II, his half brother Mir Khudadad Khan was proclaimed the Khan of the Baloch in 1857. During his nominal rule, the British further strengthened their grip on Balochistan, and the Baloch land was divided into three parts. Throughout Balochistan, a state of anarchy prevailed because of unending disputes between the tribal chiefs and the Khan. In this period, several Baloch tribes raised the flag of rebellion against the British and its protégé, the Khan.

## Struggle for The Throne of Kalat

Mir Khudadad Khan faced several conspiracies from pretenders to the throne among his family members. Many attempts were also made on his life. Soon after his inauguration as the Khan, Sardar Azad Khan Noshervani, the ruler of Kharan, in collaboration with the rulers of Makuran, attempted to install Mir Fateh Muhammad, brother of the deposed Khan, Mir Shah Nawaz Khan, on the throne of Kalat. In 1858, the Khan sent a force to Kharan and Makuran to

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deal with the problem (Dehwar, 2007). The Khanate Army met with no real resistance, and many suspected sympathizers of Mir Fateh Khan were arrested from Kharan, Punjgur, and Kech. The pretender to the throne and Sardar Azad Khan Noshervani fled to Kandahar. The Khan demanded the handover of the fugitives from the Afghan Government, which was refused by the Afghans, and this created a

lot of tensions between the Khan and the Afghan king after the exchange of some heated correspondence.

At the time of inauguration of Mir Khudadad Khan as the Khan of the Baloch, there were two other contenders to the throne from his immediate family. Since the days of Mir Naseer Khan II, his uncle (brother of Khan Mehrab Khan II) Mir Azam Khan had been claiming the throne. With the death of Mir Naseer Khan II, he put forward his claim but failed to gain much support among the Ahmadzai family and the tribal chiefs. To forestall or prevent any future problem, Mir Khudadad Khan put Mir Azam Khan and his son Mir Sher Dil Khan under house arrest in Kalat. However, in 1859, the new prime minister ordered their release from house arrest (Dehwar, 2007). On being free from detention, they began mobilizing support against the Khan. Mir Sher Dil Khan gained the support of chief of Sarawan Mullah Muhammad Raisani and chief of Jhalawan Mir Taj Muhammad Zarakzai for his cause. According to Naseer (1979), these tribal chiefs had the covert blessings of the British regent in Kalat, Sir John Malcolm. On the part of the British official, this move, perhaps, was to curtail the ambitions of Mir Khudadad Khan who was nurturing the hopes of overthrowing the British yoke. However, later reactions of the British officials—ignoring the calls for recognizing Mir Sher Dil Khan as the Khan of the Baloch—did not substantiate this perception.

While the Khan, along with tribal chiefs, was encamped at Gandava in Kachchi, an attempt was made on his life. On March 16, 1863, while on a horse ride, he was attacked by the contender to the throne of Kalat, Mir Sher Dil Khan (Dehwar, 2007). The Khan was critically injured by taking several stab wounds all over his body. While the Khan was recuperating in Gandava, Sardars recognized Mir Sher Dil Khan as the Khan of the Baloch, left Kachchi, and mobilized their forces to capture Kalat. The forces loyal to the Khan vacated Kalat, and Mir Sher Dil Khan occupied Kalat without a fight in 1863.

After the occupation of Kalat and declaring Mir Sher Dil Khan as the Khan (1863-1864), attempts were made by the rebellious tribal

chiefs to gain recognition for the new Khan from the British. The rebel Sardars wrote to the British authorities in Jacobabad to accept Mir Sher Dil Khan as the legitimate Khan; however, in an unexplainable reaction on the events in Balochistan, the British authorities refused to recognize Mir Sher Dil Khan as the Khan (Naseer, 1979). The British further undermined his position by withdrawing the British representative from Kalat. To this, the chiefs of rebel tribes sought recognition and support for Mir Sher Dil from Afghanistan. They even offered the Khanate territory of Shal (Quetta) to the governor of Kandahar Sardar Muhammad Amin in return for recognizing and helping Mir Sher Dil Khan as the Khan of the Baloch. However, it could not materialize as the Kandahar governor demanded also the territories of Mastung and Dhadar in return for such recognition.

Mir Sher Dil, after failing to gain recognition from the British, began to openly express his anti-British and anticolonial opinions. This further alarmed the British officials in Jacobabad, and they abandoned their former neutral stance vis-à-vis the conflict between Mir Khudadad Khan and Mir Sher Dil Khan. Realizing the shift of the British officials toward Mir Khudadad Khan, the tribal chiefs also began to shift their allegiance toward him. After a patch-up with Mir Khudadad Khan, the chief of Sarawan and chief of Jhalawan not only deserted their own appointed Khan but also pledged to eliminate Mir Sher Dil Khan physically. After more than two years of struggle for the throne of Kalat, Mir Sher Dil was killed while he was on his way to Kalat from Kachchi in May 1864 (Dehwar, 2007). After his death, Mir Khudadad Khan regained the rulership of the state.

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## **conflicTs BeTween TriBes And The khaN**

During the reign of Mir Khudadad Khan, Balochistan was engulfed in a series of bloody conflicts between various tribes and the Khanate forces. This created a state of anarchy throughout the Baloch land. This situation continued until Mir Khudadad Khan was deposed in 1893 (Dehwar, 2007). The causes of this prolong conflict

were multifaceted. Sardars were struggling for greater powers, the British were playing Sardars against the Khan in order to weaken both, and there was a general hatred against foreign occupation of the land of Baloch. Many tribal chiefs used the general hatred prevailing among the Baloch masses to rise against the British rule by targeting the Khan who was believed to be the protégé of the colonial power. However, the conflict between the Khan and powerful chiefs of Jhalawan Sardar Taj Muhammad Zarakzai and Sardar Murad Khan Mosiani had a personal element, and it is believed to be developed on a petty matrimonial affair.

Soon after assuming the charge of the Khanate, the tribal chiefs from Jhalawan and Sarawan accompanied by Jam of Las Bela presented a charter of demand to Mir Khudadad Khan. According to Naseer (1979) , the charter of demand included the following clauses :

There should be no deviation from the unwritten constitution (*Rawaj*) of Khan Naseer Khan I in the governance of the Khanate.

The standing army of the Khanate should be disbanded.

The authority to appoint ministers should rest on the council of Sardars.

The present prime minister Darugha Gul Muhammad should be removed from the post.

In all-important decisions on civil and military matters, Sardars must be consulted.

Sardars also demanded the release of some of the prisoners. These prisoners were held because of their treacherous role and treasonous activities in helping the British during the reign of Mir Naseer Khan II. The main contentious affair was the standing army. In continuation of the policy adopted by his brother, Mir Khudadad Khan continued to recruit and train a standing army of 1,500 under the direct command of the Khan. Sardars saw the standing army as a direct threat to their manipulative powers, and they were afraid that this army could be used to crush any dissent.



Perceiving that Mr. John Malcolm, the British regent in Kalat, was instigating the tribal chiefs, the Khan immediately rejected their charter of demand. This rejection prompted an armed conflict between the supporters of the new Khan and armed men from various tribes in which dozens from both sides were killed. With the intervention of spiritual leaders, Sardars removed their camp from Kalat; however, the mutinous men ransacked the stores and other government properties in Khuzdar.

Sardars began correspondence with the British officials in Jacobabad, asking to pressurize the Khan for the acceptance of their demand. The British did not try to intervene directly in the dispute between the Khan and the tribal chiefs; however, the Khan tried to defuse the situation to some extent by conceding to some of the demands made by them and by releasing some of the detainees. In 1858, the British, on the demand of Sardars, forced the Khan to sack his loyal prime minister Darugha Gul Muhammad and appoint Shah Ghasi Wali Muhammad as the prime minister (Dehwar, 2007). On the demand of Sardars, the Khan also exiled his most competent advisor Dewan Ganga Ram from the Khanate territory.

## **MAri And BugTi uPrisings**

The Mari tribes were in revolt and created law and order situation for the British administration in Kachchi and Bolan. Under treaty obligation, the Khan was responsible to secure the communication routes for the British forces—these were critical for the British as the

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situation in Afghanistan was unstable. In 1859, a joint expeditionary force led by the Khan and accompanied by a detachment of the British forces occupied Mari headquarters at Kahan (Naseer, 1979). The Mari tribe did not try to engage the joint British and Khanate Army in any battle and scattered in the surrounding hills. The British forces brought much havoc to crops and properties of the Mari tribe,

which forced the Mari chief Mir Noor Muhammad Mari into submission.

The Bugti tribes under the leadership of their charismatic chief Mir Ghulam Hussain Masori were a constant threat to the British administrators in the surrounding regions of Sindh and Punjab. Other Baloch tribes joined him in creating various law and order problems for the British. On January 22, 1867, a combined Baloch force of various tribes under the leadership of Mir Ghulam Hussain Masori occupied Arund and surrounding areas. The British forces crushed the uprising, and on January 26, 1867, in a major battle, Mir Ghulam Hussain Masori, along with 257 of his fighters, was killed near Chacher. The British forces proudly took the head of Mir Ghulam Hussain Masori to British administrator Sir Robert Sandeman in Jacobabad where it was displayed publicly.

## **The conflict with Mengal Tribe And Jam of Las Bela**

After the murder of Mir Sher Dil Khan and after resuming the charge of the Khanate, Mir Khudadad Khan came into conflict with Mengal chief and Jam of Las Bela. The conflict—based on the ownership of a piece of land—converted into a prolonged and bloody dispute. In June 1864, the ruler of Las Bela, Jam Mir Khan, and chief of Mengal tribe, Sardar Noordin Mengal, assembled a force and marched toward Khuzdar in their bid to resolve forcefully the dispute over the ownership of an estate between the ruler of Las Bela and the Khan. After a bloody clash, the Mengal and Bela forces were defeated, and Jam Mir Khan and Sardar Noordin Mengal were arrested but released soon. According to Naseer (1979), Sardar Noordin Mengal used the issue of estate to convert it into a general law and order situation for the occupying forces, and it was an expression of deep hatred of Sardar Noordin Mengal against the British.

Again, in 1868, Jam of Las Bela supported by Mengal chief assembled a sizeable force to settle the dispute. After an indecisive battle near Chukkoh, which lasted for a week, the embattled forces were disengaged with the intervention of British officials in Kalat, and it was decided that the matter would be resolved with the mediation of the British official in a later stage.

The British officials, realizing the growing anti-British activities of Mengal chief, asked the Khan for appropriate actions against Sardar Noordin Mengal. In October 1869, to preempt an emerging rebellion by Mengal chief and Jam of Las Bela, the Khan ordered a surprise attack on Mengal headquarters at Wadh (Dehwar, 2007). The Khanate forces ransacked the whole Mengal area, destroying the chief's township and robbing the population indiscriminately. The combined forces of Bela and Mengal tribe regrouped near Purali River where, in a bloody battle, hundreds of the Baloch from both sides were killed. Jam Mir Khan was later arrested by the British in Karachi, and Sardar Noordin Mengal fled to Kandahar and remained there in exile for three years.

Another embarrassing situation was created for the Khan in Las Bela in 1872. Jam Mir Aali, son of Jam Mir Khan, escaped from Hyderabad where he was kept under detention since 1869 (Naseer, 1979). Through his *Shah Ghasi*—Ghulam Jan—the Khan was directly ruling Bela. Meanwhile, Sardar Noordin Mengal had also returned from Kandahar. Jam Mir Aali and Sardar Noordin Mengal joined hands, assembled a force, and attacked Bela. The Khanate officials were forced to flee, and Mir Aali became the ruler of Las Bela.

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The British once again asked for the Khanate intervention in Bela under the pretext of maintaining law and order. In 1875, on the insistence of the British officials in Karachi, the Khanate forces were sent to Las Bela to improve the worsening law and order situation and to arrest the robbers who were wanted by the Sindh Government. The robbers were led and assisted by Chatta tribes of Las Bela. A violent operation was launched, many alleged brigands

were apprehended, and the Khanate forces in Las Bela maintained a semblance of law and order.

Sardar Noordin Mengal continued his anti-Khan and anti-British activities in Jhalawan. In 1872, a combined move of Mengal and Noshervani tribes failed to achieve the objective of liberating Jhalawan (Dehwar, 2007). Sardar Noordin Mengal occupied Khuzdar but could not retain it because the support from Sardar Azad Khan Noshervani did not materialize in time. The Mengal forces withdrew to Wadh before the arrival of the British and Khanate force under the command of Shahgasi Wali Muhammad and Major Harrison. On hearing the news of the British advance toward Khuzdar and the withdrawal of Sardar Noordin Mengal, Sardar Azad Khan Noshervani, who was marching toward Khuzdar, withdrew from Baghbana. The Khan began a process of negotiation with Sardar Noordin Mengal, and after lengthy talks, Sardar Noordin Mengal promised to suspend his violent activities and pledged his support for the Khan in an understanding reached between him and Shahgasi Wali Muhammad in Ferozabad (Naseer, 1979).

## **disTurBances in khArAn And MAkurAn**

The ruler of Kharan, Mir Azad Khan Noshervani, after returning from Afghanistan, resumed his anti-Khan and anti-British activities. In 1867, the Khan sent a strong contingent to force him into submission. The Khanate forces occupied the property of Mir Azad Khan Noshervani in Punjgur region. After some bloody skirmishes, Mir Azad Khan Noshervani submitted to the demand of the Khan to stop all his activities in return for releasing his confiscated properties. However, after the return of Khanate forces from Kharan, Mir Azad Khan Noshervani, instead of living a subordinate life in the Khanate, fled to Sistan. His nominated representative continued harassing the British and Khanate administrators. In 1867, Baloch Khan Noshervani, who was acting on behalf of Mir Azad Khan Noshervani, attacked and ransacked Surab (Naseer, 1979).

Makuran was also in turmoil, and Noshervani and Gichki chiefs were challenging the Khanate authority. A Khanate force under the command of Darugha Ata Muhammad in December 1869 suppressed an uprising of Noshervani chiefs in Makuran by occupying their forts in Bulaida (Dehwar, 2007). In May 1872, the Gichki chief of Kech, with the help of Mullah Rehmat Zigri, revolted against the Khanate administrator Darugha Ata Muhammad. The rebels surrounded Turbat Fort where the Khanate forces became besieged. As the Khanate forces were engaged in suppressing revolts in Jhalawan and Kachchi, the Khan was unable to help the besieged forces in Turbat Fort. The Khan ordered his forces to withdraw from Makuran and accepted Sardar Baiyan Gichki as the chief of Kech.

## **conflictS wiTh TriBes of sArAwAn And jhAlAwAn**

The powerful chiefs of Sarawan and Jhalawan were disgruntled against the Khan from the very beginning for different reasons. In 1866, Mir Khudadad Khan escaped an attempt on his life (Dehwar, 2007), in which chief of Sarawan Sardar Mullah Muhammad Raisani and chief of Jhalawan Sardar Taj Muhammad Zarakzai were among the alleged plotters. After the failure of the plot, Sardar Raisani fled to Afghanistan while Sardar Zarakzai was arrested after a bloody skirmish between his supporters and the Khanate forces. Later, he died in the prison in suspicious circumstances.

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While living in exile in Kandahar, the Raisani chief continued to be involved in subversive activities against the Khan. In 1867, the Khanate forces crushed an uprising from a section of Raisani tribe led by Sardar Habib Khan Rustumzai on the instigation of Mullah Muhammad Raisani (Naseer, 1979). In the battle of Kanak, Sardar Rustumzai, along with many of his associates, was killed. After his murder, the tribes of Sarawan under the leadership of Mullah Muhammad Raisani, who was back from Kandahar, rose into full

revolt. However, the Khanate forces crushed the rebel forces near Narmak and Kundalan, and Sardar Raisani fled to Kachchi. There, with the intervention of the British officials, a provisional truce was reached between the Khan and the Raisani chief. The British officials' intervention in the dispute between the Khan and chief of Sarawan showed the collaboration between the two. According to Naseer (1979), there was a strong perception among the conscious element in Balochistan at the time that the Raisani chief is acting in tacit agreement of the British, and the purpose of his anti-Khan activities was to weaken the position of the Khan so that the British could easily extract concessions from the Khan.

In 1869, Captain Harrison was deputed to mediate between the tribes and the Khan in order to maintain peaceful conditions in Balochistan. The tribal chiefs presented their demands to Captain Harrison—these were the repetition of their earlier demands presented to the Khan at the time of his enthronement in 1857. To force their demands, they assembled a huge army, marched toward Kalat, and occupied the surrounding hilltops around Kalat. Captain Harrison arranged a meeting between the Khan and Chief of Sarawan Mullah Muhammad Raisani who was acting as the leader of the rebel chiefs. The meeting was inconclusive, and the tribal force scattered without achieving their objectives under the persuasion of Captain Harrison.

In 1871, the Sarawan tribes under the command of Sardar Mir Jehangir Khan Lehdi and Mir Mubarak Shahwani expelled Khanate officials from Mastung and Shal in a general uprising (Dehwar, 2007). After hearing the news, the Khanate forces under Shahgasi Wali Muhammad advanced toward Mustung. Near Kad Koocha, in a night raid, the rebels inflicted heavy losses to the advance guard of the Khanate forces, forcing them to retreat toward Mangocher. Next day, on October 9, 1871, the Khanate forces and the rebels engaged in a bloody battle near Sarkaman. In one of the bloodiest and disastrous encounters of the civil war during the reign of Mir Khudadad Khan, hundreds of the Baloch were killed and among them were several of the prominent tribal chiefs and elites. The weakened rebel forces, after engaging the Khanate forces in some

minor encounters, scattered and fled toward Kachchi where they regrouped and occupied Gandava, Dhadar, Bhag, and other areas of Kachchi, expelling or killing Khanate officials. Soon the rebels were joined by chief of Sarawan Mullah Muhammad Raisani.

The Khan retaliated by dispatching a strong force to Kachchi in December 1871 under the command of Muhammad Khan Wakeel to crush the rebellion (Naseer, 1979). After defeating the rebels in initial encounters, Muhammad Khan Wakeel and rebel leader, chief of Sarawan, Mullah Muhammad, tried to reach a negotiated settlement. However, neither Khan nor the British authorities in Jacobabad were enthusiastic about the agreement, and they rejected the proposed agreement outrightly, demanding total and unconditional submissions from the rebel chiefs. On the rejection of peace proposals by the Khan, the Khanate forces began a broadrange campaign, and after bloody encounters with the rebel forces near Hajji Shahr and Mithadi, they dealt heavy blows on the rebels. The rebels were forced to scatter in various directions.

To prevent another uprising by the rebel tribes, the British officials intervened and arranged a conference of tribal chiefs of Sarawan with the Khanate representative on March 17, 1872 in Jacobabad (Dehwar, 2007). The conference was headed by Commissioner of Sindh Sir Merewether, and after three days of parleys, both parties agreed on an agreement. Under the agreement, the Khan agreed to return the tribal chief's properties, allowances, and other privileges, which were bestowed upon them by Khan Naseer Khan II. The

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British officials assured Sardars that in future they would work on the development of a working relationship between Sardars and the Khan.

The Khan also extended the hand of friendship and reconciliation toward other tribes in Jhalawan. He was also able to extend a hand of reconciliation with the rebellious Mengal chief Sardar Noordin Mengal. The Mengal chief, reciprocating the friendly gesture of the

Khan, returned some of the artillery pieces, which his forces captured during various campaigns against the Khanate Army.

Despite the truce between Mengal chief and the Khan, and the agreement that reached the Sarawan tribes, the situation in Balochistan was far from normal. In August 1872, the Khanate Army crushed an uprising of Badini tribes of Noshki, looting and burning Badini settlements. In Kachchi, there developed a serious anarchic situation, and nobody was safe in the hands of brigands and robbers. The Rind and Laashaar tribes began a civil disobedience campaign after their chiefs were arrested and insulted by the Khan. They were forced to leave their settlement and become refugees in Sindh. Bolan region was unsafe because of the activities of the Mari tribe. A Khanate force under the command of Muhammad Khan Wakeel sent to control the activities of the Mari tribe was defeated by the Mari fighters. Somalani tribe began an insurrection in Kachchi, which converted into a tribal war between Mari and Somalani tribe. With the help of the Khanate forces, the Mari defeated Somalani, and their chief was arrested by the Khan and died in prison.

The relations of Zehri tribe and the Khan remained tense, and Jhalawan was in turmoil after the death of Sardar Taj Muhammad Zarakzai in prison in 1867 (Naseer, 1979). In 1871, the Khanate Army crushed the revolt of Mir Gauhar Khan Zarakzai who fled toward Wadh to seek help from Sardar Noor Din Mengal who had recently returned from Afghanistan. In 1874, the Zehri and other tribes of Jhalawan formally recognized Mir Gauhar Khan as the Sardar of Zehri tribe and chief of Jhalawan, rejecting the nominee of the Khan Mir Saadat Khan for the position. This initiated a series of campaigns by the Khanate forces against Mir Gauhar Khan Zarakzai who was being helped by Sardar Noordin Mengal.

Despite the agreement between the Khan and Mullah Muhammad Raisani in 1872, the Raisani chief secretly concluded an agreement with Mari elders to begin another round of insurgency against the Khan. In Sarawan and Kachchi, there occurred again a breakdown in law and order where the Bungulzai and Kurd tribes were making



plundering raids. Meanwhile, Mullah Muhammad Raisani, in order to gain the support of the British, wrote to the British Commissioner for frontier affairs in Sindh, informing him about the violation of the Jacobabad agreement by the Khan.

Due to increased disturbances in Kachchi and Bolan region, the British line of communication from Sindh to Kandahar became vulnerable. The Khan was treaty-bound to take measures and protect trade and communication routes but was unable to curb the activities of various tribes. In order to exert pressure on the Khan, the British Government stopped the annual allowance of 50,000 rupees to the Khan and in April 1873, withdrew Major Harrison from Kalat. This further weakened the position of the Khan who was facing tremendous difficulties in paying the salaries of his regular army. The non-Baloch mercenaries recruited by the Khan began deserting and sustaining the military prowess of the Khanate that became untenable.

The British had been observing their so-called policy of noninterference in the affairs of Kalat. On the one hand, they had been fuelling the civil war by using many overt and covert tactics by manipulating the weaknesses and ambitions of both the Khan and Sardars; on the other hand, they were emphasizing that the Khan should seek a working relationship with his tribal chiefs. They had been stressing to the Khan about the maintenance of law and order, which had been affecting trade activities as the highways became increasingly unsafe for trade caravans passing through various

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regions of the Khanate. Mir Khudadad Khan tried to assert some kind of authority, which annoyed the British authorities and the tribal chiefs at the same time. The British began to find ways for replacing Mir Khudadad Khan. On a manufactured case of murder, the new agent to the governor-general, General James Brown, arrested and deposed the Khan of the Baloch in 1893 and appointed his son Mir Mahmud Khan as the new puppet Khan of the Baloch (Naseer, 1979). Mir Khudadad Khan was kept in captivity at Pishin where he died in 1909.

The reign of Mir Khudadad Khan had been marked by a state of anarchy and warfare between the Khan and tribes on one hand and the Baloch insurgents and the British and Khanate forces on the other hand. Although he managed to escape various attempts on his life and eliminated contenders of the throne successfully, he was unable to assert his authority over the tribal chiefs. He was also unable to gain the full support of the British to whom he was a protégé.

## **Balochistan under the British rule**

**F**rom the occupation of Kalat in 1839, the British ruled Balochistan through proxy. With signing of various agreements between the Khan of the Baloch and the British, the Khan acted as the puppet ruler of the Baloch State. The British officials were apparently following specific policy guidelines vis-à-vis the British attitude toward the Khanate of Kalat. According to the guidelines, the Khan should be acknowledged as the sovereign of the Khanate, the British should not deal with the tribal chiefs directly but through the office of the Khan, and the benefits, which the tribal chiefs are receiving from the British Government, should be supervised by the Khan (Thornton, 1895). As the situation in Balochistan worsened during the reign of Mir Khudadad Khan, the policy of indirect rule was replaced by direct British intervention. By now, the British had realized that for the Khan to be an effective and successful ruler, it was essential that he should have the best of relations with Sardars of different tribes in his domain. If this relationship were good and friendly, the Khan would feel secure. If there were mistrust or enmity between the Khan and Sardars, the former would either look for help from the British or from the neighboring rulers. However, a working relationship between the Khan and Sardars could not develop, and the situation in Balochistan remained anarchic. Therefore, it was stipulated that it would be better if direct British rule were imposed on the Khanate. A British administrative officer was given the task of ruling the Khanate and introducing administrative and social changes necessary for the proper administering of the region.

## The Treaty of Kalat (1876)

In 1875, Robert Sandeman, in-charge of the affairs of the Baloch tribes bordering Punjab, was directed to take control of the affairs in Balochistan also. Before that, the Khanate affairs had been dealt by the officials of the Sindh Government. On December 8, 1875, Robert Sandeman visited Kalat in a bid to reconcile the hostile tribes with the Khan; however, the meeting remained inconclusive (Naseer, 1979). Sandeman visited Kalat in April 1876 in order to seek another treaty with the Khan. He persuaded the Khan to reach an agreement with the British; however, in order to make the treaty fully legitimate, he sought the approval of the tribal chiefs for the proposed treaty. In July 1876, a convention was held in Mastung, in which the consent of Sardars was taken on the fundamentals of the agreement. According to Naseer (1979), although, it was to end the continuing civil war, it was also to recognize and acknowledge the direct rule of the British on the Khanate of Kalat. The Khan surrendered his status of sovereign ruler of an independent state and accepted to be the head of a tribal confederacy with Robert Sandeman as the chief referee in any dispute between him and his confederating units or subject tribes.

The treaty was later signed between the Khan and the Viceroy of India, Lord Lytton, at Jacobabad in July 1876 (Bruce, 1932). It stated that—

*Whereas it has become expedient to renew the Treaty of 1854, between the British Government and Nasseer Khan, Khan of Khelat, and to supplement the same by certain additional provisions calculated to draw closer the bonds of friendship and amity between the two Governments, the following additional Articles are herewith agreed upon between the Right Honourable Edward Robert Bulwer Lytton, Baron Lytton of Knebworth, in the County of Hertford, and a Baronet of the United Kingdom, Viceroy and Governor-General of India, and Grand Master of the Most Exalted Order of the Star of India, on behalf of the British Government on the*

*one hand, and His Highness Meer Khodadad Khan, Khan of Khelat, on the other:*

#### *Article 1*

*The Treaty concluded between the British Government and Meer Naseer Khan, Khan of Khelat, on the 14 Kay 1854, is hereby renewed and reaffirmed.*

#### *Article 2*

*There shall be perpetual friendship between the British Government and Meer Khodadad Khan, Khan of Khelat, his heirs, and successors.*

#### *Article 3*

*Whilst on his part, Meer Khodadad Khan, Khan of Khelat, binds himself, his heirs, successors, and Sirdars, to observe faithfully the provisions of Article 3 of the Treaty of 1854, the British Government on its part engages to respect the independence of Khelat, and to aid the Khan, in case of need, in the maintenance of a just authority and the protection of his territories from external attack, by such means as the British Government may at the moment deem expedient.*

#### *Article 4*

*For the further consolidation of the friendship herewith renewed and re affirmed between the two Governments, it is agreed on the one hand that British Agents with suitable escorts shall be duly accredited by the British Government to reside permanently at the Court of the Khan and elsewhere in His Highness dominions; and on the other hand, that a suitable representative shall be duly accredited by His Highness to the Government of India.*

#### *Article 5*

*It is hereby agreed that should any disputes, calculated to disturb the peace of the country, arise hereafter between the Khan and the Sirdars of Khelat, the British Agent at the Court of His Highness shall in the first place use his good offices with both parties to effect by friendly advice an amicable arrangement between them, failing which the Khan will, with the consent of the British Government, submit such dispute to its arbitration, and accept and faithfully execute its award.*

Article 6

*Whereas the Khan of Khelat has expressed a desire on the part of himself and his Sirdars, for the presence in his country of a detachment of British troops, the British Government, in accordance with the provisions of Article 4 of the Treaty of 1854, and in recognition of the intimate relations existing between the two countries, hereby assents to the request of His Highness, on condition that the troops shall be stationed in such positions as the British Government may deem expedient, and be withdrawn at the pleasure of that Government.*

Article 7

*It is also agreed that such lines of telegraph or railways as may be beneficial to the interests of the two Governments shall be from time to time constructed by the British Government in the territories of the Khan, provided that the conditions of such construction be a matter of previous arrangement between that Government and the Government of His Highness.*

Article 8

*There shall be entire freedom of trade between the State of Khelat and the territories of the British Government, subject to such conditions as the British Government may, at any time, in concert with the Khan of Khelat, deem necessary for the protection of fiscal interests.*

Article 9

*To aid Meer Khodadad Khan, his heirs, and successors, in the efficient fulfillment of the obligations contracted by them under the Treaty of 1854, and the present supplementary engagement, the British Government hereby undertakes to pay to the said Khan, his heirs, and successors an annual sum of one lakh of rupees, so long as they shall faithfully adhere to the engagements heretofore and hereby contracted.*

*Article 10*

*“The British Government further undertakes to contribute Rupees twenty thousand five hundred annually toward the establishment of posts and development of traffic along the trade routes in His Highness’ territories provided such money is expended by the Khan in the manner approved of by the British Government.”*

The agreement, although, recognized the Khan of Kalat as an independent ruler but was subordinate to the British on external affairs. The Khan also agreed to allow stationing of the British troops in Balochistan. The treaty was between the British and the Khanate of Kalat, yet Sardars were mentioned with the Khan as parties (Thornton, 1895). The agreement paved the way for the total control of Balochistan. In the subsequent years, the treaty known as the Treaty of Kalat, which was literally imposed on the Khan by the special representative of the governor-general, Sir Robert Sandeman, changed the social and political setup of Balochistan beyond recognition.

The treaty led to the construction of telegraph and railway lines through the Khanate territory. A permanent British military garrison at Quetta was stationed. The subsidy of the Khan was increased to 30,000 rupees per annum with the appointment of Robert Sandeman as Agent to the governor-general with his headquarters at Quetta. On February 21, 1877, the foundation of the Balochistan Agency was laid, which later became British Balochistan (Thornton, 1895). The British

extended their influence around Quetta, and the Bolan Pass and the Khan's control was reduced to be nominal. By 1877, the British practically divided Khanate into four parts:

- A. The British Balochistan, which included Shahrag, Sibi, Duki, Pishin, and Chaman
- B. Agency territories, including Mari- Bugti areas
- C. The Khanate territories of Arund and Dajal, which were incorporated into Punjab
- D. Khanate proper with its dependencies of Kharan, Makuran, and Las Bela

## The direct British rule in context

From the first Afghan war, among the policy makers of colonial administration in New Delhi and in London, a heated debate was going on about the policy toward the areas westward beyond the Indus River. Some of the officials opposed extending direct administration or defense beyond the Indus River, while others favored a more aggressive and assertive posture. This assertive posture, which was finally adopted by the policy planners, later became famous as the British "Forward Policy." It was felt to be necessary in the context of Russian advances in Central Asia. Appointment of Robert Sandeman in Balochistan and subsequent gaining of direct control over the Baloch territory by the conclusion of a treaty in 1876 with the Khan of Kalat was among the actions taken after the adoption of the forward policy. The second Anglo-Afghan War was another step in the forward policy, which forced Afghanistan to accept Britain's control of its foreign affairs and to cede the various frontier areas of the British.

For the British to hold on their influence in Afghanistan and Iran was among the main strategies of the "Great Game"—this was being orchestrated in Central Asia between Russia and Britain. The declared policy of the British in Afghanistan since the outbreak of the Crimean War (1853-1856) was to build up a strong, friendly, and united



Afghanistan, which should serve as a buffer between the British and the Russian areas of influence in Asia (Roberts, 2003). The forward policy can be analyzed in this context.

Since Balochistan provided easy access to Kandahar and Herat, developments in Afghanistan and Central Asia shaped the British policy toward Balochistan. The British perceived any development in politics and geography of Balochistan in the context of their interests in Afghanistan. A loyal and friendly Balochistan definitely meant a safe and reliable launching pad for the necessary interventions in Afghanistan and Iran.

The Russians were advancing in Central Asia speedily, and by 1872, they had subdued Khiva, Bukhara, Samarkand, and Eastern Turkistan (Roberts, 2003). The Viceroy of India, Lord Lytton, in order to watch any friendly move from Afghans toward Russia, demanded that the Amir of Kabul should accept a British resident at his court. On Amir's refusal, the Second Afghan War began with the British invasion of Afghanistan in 1878. The Second Afghan War, like the First Afghan War, was started on the pretext of keeping the Russians away from India.

The Second Afghan War ended with the defeat of Afghanistan and signing of the Gandamak Treaty that was concluded on May 26, 1879. This treaty added to the British-controlled territories the districts of Kurram, Pishin, Sibi, Loralai, and the Pashtun territories lying to the north and east of Quetta. Now the British frontier stood across the Khojak Range to Chaman near Kandahar. Within the next decade, a broad gauge railway line was constructed up to Chaman, and Balochistan thus became the first point of advance in the pursuit of the British Forward Policy (Baloch, 1987).

Apart from administrative changes in the Khanate, Robert Sandeman finalized the division of Balochistan which was initiated with the establishment of Goldsmid Line between the Khanate and Persia. A Balochistan Agency was created, in which the northeastern part of

Balochistan, inhabited mostly by the Pashtuns, also came under the direct administration of the Agency.

In 1893, Sir Mortimer Durand negotiated an agreement with Amir Abdurrahman Khan of Afghanistan for demarcating the boundaries of the British India with Afghanistan, which is known as the Durand Line running from Chitral to Balochistan. In order to finalize the demarcation of the border between Balochistan and Afghanistan, a “Baloch-Afghan Boundary Commission” was instituted in 1895. Colonel McMahon brought to a successful conclusion the demarcation of Durand Line from Gomal to Koh-e-Mulk Siah. The latter is trijunction of British-controlled Balochistan, Afghanistan, and Iran.

Quetta, Noshki, Bolan Pass, and Nasirabad were taken on “lease” from the Khan for a paltry compensation. The districts of Loralai, Pishin, Chaman, and Sibi, which were acquired from Afghanistan under the Treaty of Gandamak in 1879 and the Mari-Bugti tribal zone were constituted into what was called “British Balochistan.” All the above-named areas were placed under the direct administrative control of the British through British political agents posted at Sibi and Quetta, respectively. Further division of Balochistan took place in 1877, whereby the Baloch regions of the Derajat were put under the Punjab administration. Jacobabad (then known as Khangadh) was incorporated into Sindh.

## The Balochistan of sAndeMAN

After the signing of 1876 treaty, for all practical purposes, the agent to the governor-general was the real head of the Baloch state. The glory of the Khan was confined only to rituals of his court where His Highness the Khan was still the head of the Khanate, where Sarawan and Jhalawan chiefs still sat on his right and left in the Durbars, and Sardars were invested still by the Khan with the robe of succession. With the passage of time, the AGG assumed the power of nominating Sardars, summoning of *Jirgas* for the settlement of inter-tribal disputes, and the general observation of law and order in the country.

The presence of five thousand British soldiers at the Quetta Cantonment further strengthened the position of the AGG. The British officials controlled local chiefs through either the Khan or received money from the AGG as pension compensation for custom dues or for rendering services in the levies. Whenever the Khan crossed his limits, in internal matters or in relation to the British interests, he was changed and replaced by a son or brother, whatever was deemed practical to assure the *status quo*.

The Khan functioned virtually like a dummy, and the British AGG, in the name of the Khan, passed practically all court and administrative orders. The British had established themselves as rulers of Balochistan without much opposition. They received enthusiastic support from the loyal Sardars. They kept the Khan under firm supervision, played the Khan and Sardars against each other, and kept a situation of confusion and complication between their relationships.

As Agent to Governor-General (AGG) and the factual ruler of the Baloch state, Sir Robert Sandeman introduced a new administrative and political system in Balochistan. This system is popularly known as the "Sandeman System." According to Naseer (1979) and Baloch (1987), the British based the fundamental of this system on bribing Sardars and other prominent personalities in Balochistan in order to crush the Baloch resistance against the occupation of their country. One of the basic principles of this policy was that the British officials respected and engaged Sardars in their decisions and disputes over tribal matters as long as these were not against the British interests in the region. Sardars were to be paid according to services they provided regarding law and order in their respective areas. They were made responsible for any action, which might create law and order situation in their areas. To check the influence of the Khan, the positions of chiefs of Sarawan and chiefs of Jhalawan were kept and maintained.

One of the towering personalities in the Baloch politics of the twentieth century, Mir Ghous Bux Bizenjo, summarized the position

of the British, Sardars, and the Khan during the British domination of Balochistan as follows (Bizenjo, 2009, p. 16):

*“The British intervened only when they apprehended a threat to their supremacy and colonial interests in the region. For instance, they intervened when armed clashes broke out between rival tribes endangering peace and security in a certain area or when a tribe rose in revolt to challenge British supremacy or in situations that threatened vital communication lines. If and when members of a tribe indulged in murder or loot in any part of Kalat state, officials of the state administration summoned them through their sardars, in whose presence they were tried and adjudged by the sardari jirga.*

*The Khan was ruler of Kalat state in name only. Whatever nominal suzerainty he exercised was confined to the so-called non-tribal areas. In most parts of the state, Sardars held complete sway over the land and the people. Even in areas where the Khan exercised nominal control, Sardars very often interfered in administrative matters.*

*The administration of justice in the tribal areas was the prerogative of Sardars. Sardars had the last word in the shahi jirga, sardari jirga and ilaqai jirga. They were undisputed masters in their respective fiefdoms. Nearly two-thirds of the territory and population of Baluchistan were under the total control of Sardars. Neither the Khan of Kalat nor the British rulers interfered in their domains.*

*No taxes as such were paid to the government. Traditions and customs allowed Sardars to collect certain levies in kind from their tribal territories and landholdings, such as:*

## Balochistan under The British rule

- *Rahdari (octroi/toll tax),*
- *One-fourth portion of compensation money paid to the aggrieved party in settlement of disputes,*
- *'phor' or 'mali' (one animal from each flock of fifty sheep or cattle, from the breeders),*
- *'bijjar' which the sardar collected from his tribesmen,*
- *'begar' (work extracted from the peasant without paying wages)."*

According to Baloch (1987), the most important among the reforms introduced was the introduction of "Jirga System." The *Jirga* was a council of elders selected from tribal notables, and the British authorities selected the members of council. However, the decisions of the *Jirga* were subject to the approval of the British administrative officer of the area, usually a Deputy Commissioner. The institution of *Shahi Jirga* was also introduced in the administrative reforms of Robert Sandeman. The Khan headed this *Jirga*, and its task was to settle the inter-tribal disputes. The British officials to settle uprisings of the tribes against the British rule also used this *Jirga*. Under Balochistan Penal Code and Frontier Crimes Regulations, Sardars of the tribes were also given some independent judicial powers. Under the article of Frontier Crimes Regulation, a system of collective responsibility and punishment at tribal and village level was introduced in Balochistan, and the pockets of the Baloch resistance against the British domination were successfully wiped out using these draconian laws. The *Jirga* was also used in 1893 to depose Mir Khudadad Khan.

Figure 26: **A map of Afghanistan and Balochistan (1893)** Source: Library of Congress.

<http://www.loc.gov/rr/geogmap/pub/afghanistan.html>



The main administrative tool in order to maintain law and order in favor of the British rule was the Levy System. In this system, Sardars were given a certain amount to recruit personnel from their tribes to crush antisocial element. This levy force was responsible for keeping peace in their area and apprehending and producing miscreants, criminals, and offenders to the British authorities.

Under the Sandeman system, the Baloch social and tribal setup was changed drastically. The tribal chiefs began to act like feudal chiefs, and the institution of Sardar became hereditary instead of being elective. Sardars returned this favor by agreeing to protect the British interests in the region. The system introduced by the British in Balochistan changed the status of the Khan of Kalat as well as the tribal chiefs to that of paid agents of the British Crown. The Khan of Kalat was allowed to nominally preside over the Baloch state; he had no direct power over the affairs of tribes and that power was taken over by the British directly and was exercised by their political agent who also had the power to arbitrate disputes between the Khan and Sardars as well as among Sardars themselves.

The introduction of *Jirga* system gave the British a powerful weapon to control rebellions against the British rule, broke the last remaining institution of a typically purely Baloch character, and gave Sardars immeasurable powers over the lives and belongings of the Baloch masses.

These developments created a gulf between Sardars, who were allied mercenaries of British Imperialism, and the Baloch masses that were directly exploited by these mercenaries. This was manifested in the Baloch political struggle in the later periods of the British rule. It was fundamentally against Sardars and perceived as the agents of the colonial power. The Baloch nationalist leaders believed that an antiimperialist struggle, which was not simultaneously an anti-Sardari struggle as well, could only strengthen the hands of Sardars and could not possibly achieve the goal of national liberation.

By the end of the nineteenth century, the British had consolidated their hold on Balochistan, reduced the Khan of Kalat to the status of a vassal, and secured their borders with Iran and Afghanistan through rail and road links and cantonments. Officially, the British officials were proclaiming that the Khan is a sovereign prince, entirely independent of the British Government; however, practically, the Khan operated under British supremacy. The focus of the British policy in Balochistan was to ensure that the Khan would not emerge as a strong leader. The British wanted to keep for themselves the role of the final arbiter between the Khan and Sardars without committing their soldiers to strengthen the office of the Khan. The Khan's financial and administrative powers were further curtailed with successful manipulation of Robert Sandeman who ensured that the Khan had no right to a financial contribution from Sardars. The Khan was only allowed to generate a limited income only from crown lands and custom duties after paying the share to the local Sardars. Sardars remained supreme in their own tribes, whereas inter-tribal feuds were adjudicated by *Jirga* in which the Khan did not enjoy any special privileges.

With the signing of the 1876 treaty, the British assumed the direct control of Balochistan, which brought far-reaching social and political changes in the Baloch tribal polity. The British employed the policy of “divide and rule” by keeping the Khan under their supervision, curtailing his powers, and acting as intermediary between Sardars and the Khan. Instead of establishing a clearly demarcated role for the Khan and the tribal chiefs, they ensured that confusion and complications existed between them. Introduction of administrative reforms by Sir Robert Sandeman changed the basic fabrics of the Baloch society, and it helped the British to crush successfully the pockets of Baloch resistance against the occupation of their land.



# **The Baloch resistance against occupation**

**T**he Baloch were never reconciled the way the sovereignty of their land was violated by the British. Those Baloch tribal chiefs who were against the British rule, from time to time, rose in armed insurgencies. The Baloch expressed their displeasure toward the occupying forces, but there was no united effort to oust the British, and the resistance was confined to isolated pockets. It became easy for the British to crush these uprisings with the help of their loyal Sardars and the Khan.

## **The resistAnce By MAri, doMBiki, And BugTi TriBes**

The resistance to the British presence in Balochistan began before the occupation of Kalat. The British forces marching toward Kandahar had been facing disruptions in their communications and provision supply from the Mari tribes in Bolan and Kachchi regions even during the lifetime of Mir Mehrab Khan II. After the occupation of Kalat, the Mari tribes intensified their resistance against the British presence in Balochistan.

As already mentioned in the previous section, in May 1840, a British force under the command of Major Brown marched from their base camp at Filiji and captured Kahan Fort on May 11. In the subsequent guerilla warfare, organized by the Mari chiefs, both the British and the Baloch suffered heavy losses, with no one to be declared a clear

winner. The British, being unable to suppress completely the Baloch uprising, managed to escape from Kahan Fort by negotiating a peaceful retreat with the elders of the Mari tribe in December 1840.

In 1859, a British detachment under Major Green with the help of the Khanate Army began a campaign to force the Mari tribes into submission. The combined force caused much devastation to the area, and the Baloch lost greatly in material terms; however, there were not much causality as Mari tried to avoid head-on collision with the powerful force, which also included a large number of Baloch from the tribes whose chiefs were loyal to the British. The Mari elders, finding no chance of a successful resistance, submitted, and several of them were carried to the British-occupied Kalat as hostages.

Soon, the Mari tribes again rose in revolt. In 1880, a major campaign was launched against the Mari insurgency under the command of Brigadier MacGregor. The Mari were defeated in several battles, and the Mari chief submitted and agreed to pay a huge sum as fine and offered several of his relatives as hostages.

During the First World War, the British were recruiting from various regions of India and from other colonial possessions. The Mari chief Mir Khair Bux Mari refused to allow recruitment for the British forces among his tribesmen after which tension mounted between the British authorities and the Mari tribes. Early in 1918, the Mari and Khetrans rose in a major rebellion against the British. There occurred several attacks on the installations and camps of levy forces in the area. The Mari fighters burned the British administrative centers in Kohlu and Barkan and raided a number of posts and settlements in Sibi, Loralai, and Fort Munro (Axmann, 2009; Naseer, 1979). Trains were attacked and lines of communications were disturbed. On February 20, 1918, under the command of Mir Khudadad Mari, the Mari fighters attacked the fortification at Gumbud. The Mari fighters suffered 1,200 casualties in the battle from the heavy artillery bombardment from the Fort. After failing to occupy the Fort, the Mari resorted to hit-and-run

attacks. A massive operation was launched from all sides to counter the growing insurgency. In a scorch earth policy, the British forces, after occupying Kohlu region, burned the Baloch settlements along with crops and fruit trees. In another bloody encounter with a British force at Hadab, the Baloch suffered a heavy defeat, leaving behind a thousand killed and injured. The British forces were fast nearing the Mari headquarters at Kahan, and seeing no choice, the Mari chief Mir Khair Bux Mari surrendered. Several of the Mari elders were awarded harsh jail imprisonments, heavy fines were collected from the tribe, and heavy taxations were imposed on the landed property in Mari area. However, in 1919, these decisions were reversed, and the previous status was reestablished vis-à-vis Mari tribe.

The Dombiki tribe was also resisting the British presence by creating law and order situation in the British-controlled areas in Kachchi. Dombiki had been involved in various encounters against the British forces. Their hit-and-run operations, mentioned by the British authorities as “acts of robbery and looting,” were causing much causality among the British troops. The British authorities managed to arrest Dombiki chief Mir Bijjar Dombiki under the pretext of peace negotiations. This further fuelled the insurgency of Dombiki tribes in Kachchi for a while but soon the Dombiki insurrection subsided.

As mentioned in sections, during 1867, a joint force of the Bugti, Mari, and Kethran tribes under the command of Mir Ghulam Hussain Masori Bugti attacked and occupied Arund region. In the subsequent encounter with the British forces, the Baloch suffered a heavy defeat, and Mir Ghulam Hussain Bugti was among the hundreds of the Baloch killed in the battle near Chachar Pass. However, the resistance against the British continued in Derajat for a long time.

## resistance in Sarawan And Jhalawan

It was mentioned earlier that after feeling ashamed of their role in the fall of Kalat, various tribes in Sarawan revolted and made several attacks on British convey and military units which were leaving Kalat after its occupation in 1839. In June 1840, the Baloch forces from Sarawan, in a joint campaign with Kakad tribes, made unsuccessful attacks on Quetta. Although they were not able to occupy the Fort, they surrounded the fort for a long period.

As mentioned earlier, for a short period, a union of the Baloch tribal chiefs was able to remove the British-supported Mir Khudadad Khan and replaced him with Mir Sher Dil Khan as the Khan of the Baloch. They occupied Kalat, and from 1863 to 1864, Mir Sher Dil Khan acted as the Khan.

In 1897, the tribes of Sarawan, under the leadership of Raisani chief Mir Mehrullah Raisani rose in insurgency against the British rule (Naseer, 1979). The rebels attacked conveys, disrupted communication networks in Bolan, and destroyed the Brewery in Quetta. The British arrested Mir Mehrullah Raisani along with several tribal chiefs. Mir Jaffer Sarpara, who was leading the Baloch forces in battles against the British, fled to Kandahar. The insurgency in Sarawan ended by the declaration of a general amnesty by the British in 1899.

The resistance in Jhalawan against the British domination of Balochistan was led by Sardar Noordin Mengal who exploited every available situation to hit the British forces or the British supported Khan and its officials. In his efforts, he was on various occasions and on various pretexts, supported by Zarakzai chiefs, Jam of Las Bela, and Noshervani chief of Kharan. Mir Noordin Mengal and Jam Mir Khan of Las Bela were arrested near Sorgaz in June 1865 while they tried to occupy a disputed estate. Sardar Azad Khan Noshervani, who was rushing to the help of Sardar Noordin Mengal after hearing the defeat and arrest of Sardar Noordin Mengal, retreated and took refuge in Kandahar for a while.

Sardar Noordin Mengal, after returning from Kandahar, organized a general uprising with the help of the Zehri tribes, Jam Aali of Bela and Sardar Mullah Muhammad Raisani in 1871 (Naseer, 1979). In 1872, Sardar Noordin Mengal and Jam Aali occupied Bela. In 1872, forces of Sardar Noordin Mengal and Mir Azad Khan Noshervani attacked Khuzdar and caused much damage to properties of the Khanate. In 1874, Mir Gauhar Khan Zarakzai rebelled and began his subversive activities in Zehri area.

The Baloch resistance in Jhalawan got severe setback by elimination of the leaders of uprising. Sardar Noordin Mengal was treacherously murdered on the orders of Mir Khudadad Khan while he was in Kalat under a truce signed by him and the Khan on the pages of Koran. After encountering the British forces in several heroic battles, Mir Gauhar Khan Zarakzai was defeated and killed near Garmaap while fighting against a superior British force.

Resistance, however, continued after the martyrdom of Sardar Noordin Mengal and Sardar Gauhar Khan Zarakzai. The nephew of Sardar Gauhar Khan Zarakzai, Nawab Muhammad Khan Zarakzai, continued the resistance. After the martyrdom of Sardar Noordin Mengal, the Mengal resistance was led by his son Mir Shaker Khan Mengal and grandson Mir Noordin Mengal. In 1899, Mir Shaker Khan Mengal, with the help of Sardar Pahad Khan Sasoli, Sardar Mazar Khan Bajoi, and Sardar Baiyan Somalani, began activities against the British. This rebellion was short-lived, and the British political agent at Khuzdar Captain Knox dealt with the uprising, employing very harsh measures by burning and devastating the rebel strongholds. Ultimately, the uprising was contained, and a general amnesty was announced for the rebels. In 1908, the British political agent manipulated to replace Sardar Shaker Khan Mengal with Mir Ibrahim Mengal as the new Mengal chief. Sardar Shaker Khan Mengal and his son Mir Noordin Mengal were imprisoned in Quetta.

With the news of the arrest of Mengal chief reaching Wadh, the tribes rose in a general uprising. The British authorities, with the help of loyal tribes in Jhalawan, were able to defuse the situation by

fomenting division among the rebel leaders. However, in 1910, a clan leader of the Mengal tribe, Noor Muhammad Pahlawanzai, began a protracted guerilla war against the British authority and became a legendary and heroic figure in the Baloch history as Noora Mengal. By this time, the regions of Jhalawan and Las Bela were seriously afflicted with the hit-and-run attacks by Noora Mengal and his companions.

In 1910, Zehri and allied tribes under the leadership of Mir Khan Muhammad Zarakzai demanded the release of Mir Shaker Khan Mengal and recognition of his son Mir Noordin Mengal as the chief of Mengal tribe. Receiving no positive response from the British authorities, Mir Khan Muhammad Zarakzai gathered a huge force and began hostile activities in Jhalawan region. After two years of confrontation, the authorities defused the situation by making Mir Khan Muhammad as the chief of Zehri tribes and bestowing upon him the title of Nawab in 1911. With the mediation of Nawab Khan Muhammad Zarakzai, in 1912, the authorities acknowledged Mir Noordin Mengal as the new Mengal chief.

Nawab Khan Muhammad Zarakzai and Sardar Noordin Mengal, however, resumed their armed activities against the British administration in 1915 (Axmann, 2009). The Jhalawan area and Las Bela was engulfed in turmoil due to rebel activities. The British authorities immediately deposed Nawab Khan Muhammad Zarakzai as the Zehri chief. However, Nawab Khan Muhammad Zarakzai gained much support from the Baloch tribes, and thousands of fighters joined his rebel army. Emboldened by this in August 1915, he planned to march toward Kalat for a final assault on the capital. However, his brother Mir Noroz Khan Zarakzai killed him on his way to Kalat (Naseer, 1979). After the death of Nawab Khan Muhammad Zarakzai, his rebel force scattered, and the British authorities announced a general amnesty for the rebels.

In 1916, the Mengal tribes intensified their insurgency. Sardar Noordin Mengal and others who remained inactive for a while after the tragic death of Nawab Khan Muhammad Zarakzai began to

mobilize the Baloch forces. Sardar Noordin Mengal, along with few of his followers, went to Iranian Balochistan in order to seek external support for the Baloch resistance. In his absence, his followers, under the leadership of Mir Rasool Bux Mengal, increased their insurgent activities throughout Jhalawan. The British political agent in Kalat assembled a huge force to counter the rebellion and mobilized the loyal tribal chief for the purpose. On June 24, 1916, an all-out attack was launched by the British forces against the rebel hideouts in Wadh (Naseer, 1979). Dozens of fighters from both sides were killed, including two English officers who were commanding the force. The British force also attacked the camp of Mir Rasool Bux Mengal near Gaj, killing many Baloch fighters. The British forces, for many days, continued to loot the Baloch settlements in the area and devastated the whole region before withdrawing to Kalat.

The mission of Mengal chief in western Balochistan was without any success. Sardar Noordin Mengal, after finding no external support of any kind, returned to Jhalawan in August 1916 (Naseer, 1979). A British force entered Mengal areas in search of Sardar Noordin Mengal. For obvious reasons, Sardar Mengal was unable to find enough fighters to resist the British force. The British forces surrounded the party of Sardar Noordin Mengal. He was arrested and sentenced to twelve years rigorous imprisonment. His other followers were also awarded harsh sentences.

The legendary fighter Noora Mengal was arrested by the Noshervani chief Mir Habibullah Noshervani while he was on his intended journey into Afghanistan. He was handed over to the British authorities and sentenced to life imprisonment in 1919. Noora Mengal died in jail on August 30, 1921.

## resistance in sArhAd

Immediately after the martyrdom of Mir Mehrab Khan II and the occupation of Kalat, the Mengal tribes in Noshki rose in rebellion under the leadership of Sardar Fazul Khan Mengal. A British force

encountered the rebels, killing many of the Baloch. The British later burned the whole village of Miranzai before returning to their base camp. During the same period, a force was sent to Punjgur to preempt a rebellion led by Noshervani chief. Several Baloch were killed and villages were looted and devastated on the orders of British officer Love Day.

During First World War, the chief of Rakhshani tribe, Mir Rahim Khan Rakhshani, rebelled against the British, and from his base camp in Afghanistan, he made several successful raids on British convoys. Several British officials were killed in ambushes in Noshki, Mal, and Dalbandin areas. The British forces were unable to control the guerilla activities of the Baloch forces for many months. The British authorities, however, managed to contain the rebellion by arresting their leader Mir Rahim Khan Rakhshani with the help of Afghan officials in Kandahar.

In 1916, General Dyer was sent to overcome an anti-British uprising of the Baloch tribes led by Mir Khalil Khan Ghamshadzai and Mir Jiand Khan Yarahmadzai in Sarhad (Dyre, 1921). In a battle near Koh-e-Taftan, the British forces defeated Sardar Jiand, and he surrendered to the British in Morpish. After capturing the fort of Khwash, General Dyer announced a general amnesty and released Sardar Jiand Khan; nevertheless, the Baloch chief continued to be hostile toward the British and again arrested in July 1916 (Dyre, 1921).

The British suffered heavy losses in an ambush in Saindak region, and Sardar Jiand Yarahmadzai and other prisoners were freed by the rebels. On July 28, 1916, General Dyer assembled a huge force and attacked the hideout of the Baloch forces in Gasht. Sardar Khalil Khan Ghamshadzai rushed from Jalk in aid of Sardar Jiand Khan Yarahmadzai but was ambushed and killed by the British forces before he was able to join the besieged Baloch forces. Sardar Jiand Khan Yarahmadzai was forced to surrender. He was taken to Quetta, and the Baloch uprising in Sarhad ended in less than a year.



Mir Azad Khan Noshervani continued hit-and-run activities in Kharan, Punjgur, and Sarawan regions for a long time. After a month-long campaign during which Kallag was devastated by the British and Khanate forces and Noroz Fort was reduced, Mir Azad Khan Noshervani was forced to vacate the area and escape to Sistan region. Mir Baloch Khan Noshervani, a relative of Mir Azad Khan Noshervani, however, continued to harass the Khanate and the British forces. Robert Sandeman neutralized Mir Azad Khan Noshervani in 1890, and he agreed to stop his hostile activities.

## **resistance in eastern Makuran**

In Makuran, the resistance was led against the British protégé, the Khan, by Gichki chief Mir Baiyan and Zigri religious leader Mir Rehmat. There were several rebellious acts on behalf of Gichki chiefs in Makuran. The disturbances in Makuran were controlled when, in 1890, Sandeman visited Makuran. However, after the departure of Sandeman, Mir Shahdad Gichki attacked the camp of Major Meur, killing and injuring some of the camp fellows. However, he was soon arrested and imprisoned.

In 1898, Makuran erupted in a situation of general insurgency. On January 6, 1898, the chief of Kech, Mir Mehrab Khan Gichki, arrested the British administrator of Kech, Dewan Udhu Das. On January 9, 1898, Mir Baloch Khan Noshervani attacked the Camp of Major Burnes who was surveying the area for the telegraph line. Major Burnes managed to escape, but his sixteen camp followers were killed and the camp was looted.

From Karachi, an expeditionary force was immediately organized and sent to Makuran via Pasni under the command of Colonel Mayn. The Baloch forces, under the command of Mir Mehrab Khan Gichki and Mir Baloch Khan Noshervani, assembled at Gokprosh near Turbat to face the British expeditionary force. Mir Mehrab Khan Gichki, on January 31, 1898, deserted the field without a fight while Baloch Khan Noshervani, along with his 300 fighters, fought and died heroically (Janmahmad, 1982; Naseer, 1979). The British force

later destroyed various forts, including Turbat, Churbuk, Buleda, Shahrak, Nagsar, and Hour. The general insurgency in Makuran was contained by the brutal actions of the British forces; however, the law and order situation worsened by the rebellion of Mir Muhammad Omar Noshervani for several years. In 1901, the British forces attacked and destroyed Nodiz Fort (Naseer, 1979). The Baloch forces resisted valiantly under the command of Mir Muhammad Ali Noshervani; however, they fell to the overwhelming artillery power of the British forces. Several were killed and others were later sentenced to long-term imprisonments. Some of the Baloch commanders were sentenced to death, including Mir Sheran Dad Karim Goodi, who was identified as the main person behind the resistance offered from the fort.

The armed resistance by the Baloch against the domination of the British over their land did not bear fruit because of various reasons. The resistance was not under a joint command—every tribe was fighting in isolation, and the British easily managed to crush isolated pockets of resistance. The Baloch resistance was unable to gain support from any neighboring power. The immediate neighbors of Balochistan, Iran, and Afghanistan were under the influence of the British and were not in a position to antagonize the British by supporting the Baloch cause. Another cause of the collapse of the Baloch resistance was because the Baloch did not possess the necessary arms and immunization. The rivalries between various tribes and conflicts within the Baloch tribes were other important reasons, which prevented the Baloch resistance to bear fruit.

## **Persian encroachments in western Balochistan**

**T**he Baloch recognized the boundaries of Balochistan at the time of Mir Naseer Khan I as the Baloch homeland. The Khanate of Kalat under Mir Naseer Khan I extended to Hasanabad (Sistan) and the Helmand River near Rudbar in Afghanistan. The areas in the control of the Khan of the Baloch included Nimroz, south of Helmand and southwest of Farah of modern Afghanistan. Western Makuran up to Kerman and Sarhad (southern Sistan) up to great desert formed the western boundaries of the Baloch state. The areas of western Makuran and Sarhad came under the control of the Baloch state in its peak days when the Khanate forces made inroads into western Makuran up to Minaab. During the second half of the nineteenth century, while the Khanate of Kalat was in the firm grip of the British forces, the Baloch areas in western Balochistan were increasingly being encroached by a resurgent Persian state. With the introduction of Indo-European Telegraph Line, beginning from later part of the nineteenth century, the British also became deeply involved in the affairs of western Balochistan.

### **Persian inroads in western Balochistan**

The Persians had been increasing their penetrations in Balochistan from the establishment of the Safavid Dynasty in Iran. The Safavid established Persian control in Makuran, mainly from Bampur, Dezzak, and Sistan. In 1515, Shah Esmail Safavi was forced to accept the Portuguese occupation of Hormoz and concluded a treaty with Admiral Alfonso de Albuquerque. In the terms of the treaty, it was included that the Portuguese would assist the Shah of Persia in

suppressing a revolt in Makuran. At this time, the overland traffic in Makuran was still taxed by Saffarids ruler (Malik) of Kech, who also controlled Gwadur. During the reign of Shah Abbas, under the command of Ganj Ali Khan, a strong Persian force attacked Bampur. The Baloch forces under the command of Malik Shamsuddin Hakom (ruler) of Bampur were defeated, and Malik Shamsuddin was arrested and taken to Safavid capital of Ispahan along with several Baloch chiefs of Dezzak, Panouch, and Kasarkand. Later, Malik Mirza, son of Malik Shamsuddin, was reinstated as the ruler of Bampur by the Safavid king.

During the reign of Shah Hussain Safavi, various Baloch chiefs in a semiautonomous relationship with the Persian Government were ruling various regions of western Balochistan. Around 1620, Kech was taken over by the Buladai tribe, who dominated the whole of Makuran up to Jask until 1740 (Naseer, 1979). Malik Dinar was the ruler of Bampur, Purdil Khan was the ruler of Jalk, and Khusrow Bozorgzada was the ruler of Shustun while Shah Salim Noshervani was ruling the Kharan region. The Baloch fought intermittent battles against the Persian forces concentrated in Kerman, which were increasingly interfering with the affairs in the Baloch regions.

During 1691, a huge Baloch army under the joint command of Shah Salim Noshervani and Khusrow Bozorgzada invaded Kerman. The Persians, under the command of Reza Kuli Khan, confronted the Baloch forces near Bam and forced them to retreat. However, the Baloch reduced many surrounding settlements of Kerman before retreating. In 1700, Shah Salim Noshervani and Sardar Purdil Khan renewed their attacks on Kerman, and this time, they occupied Bam and retained it for many months. Gurgin Khan, who was appointed as the governor of Kandahar by the Safavid king, in 1701, tasked his brother Levan Mirza to check the emerging powers of the Baloch chiefs and to reestablish Persian authority in parts of Kerman and the surrounding regions. The chief of Sarhad Shah Salim Noshervani attacked Rudbar region in 1701. The Persian Army, under the command of Alexander and the nephew of Gurgin Khan, attacked Sarhad and devastated this vast area, killing hundreds of

the Baloch and burning their settlements. On hearing the invasion of the Persians on Sarhad, Shah Salim Noshervani rushed toward Kharan, but in an ambush by the Persian Army, he was captured along with his several chiefs and fighters. The captured Baloch were executed, and Alexander sent heads of sixty-six Baloch chiefs to Isfahan, including the head of Shah Salim Noshervani. After a year, Mir Shahdad Noshervani attacked and occupied Kerman for a while in revenge of the murder of Shah Salim Noshervani and the other Baloch chiefs.

During the reign of Nader Shah Afshar, the Persians carried out major inroads on Baloch territories. In 1737, a Persian contingent, under the command of Pir Muhammad, governor of Herat, marched toward Sarhad and western Makuran (Sykes, 1902). The Persian Army captured Bampur, Pahraj, Laashaar, and Tiz after bloody conflicts with Malik rulers of Makuran. Another force was sent to Sarhad region, and the Baloch tribes of Sanjarani and Nahrui were defeated heavily by the Persian forces in Kharan. A force from the province of Fars was ordered to occupy Kech and other places in Makuran.

The Baloch in Sistan were allied with the invading Afghans who ruled major parts of Persia for twenty-five years during the first quarter of the eighteenth century. The Baloch leader Muhammad Khan Baloch was sent as ambassador to the court of Ottoman Caliphate in Constantinople by Afghan ruler Ashraf in 1727 (Lockhart, 1938). However, after the end of Afghan occupation of Iran, Muhammad Khan Baloch was made the governor of Kuhgilu in 1729 by Shah Tahmasp after he pledged loyalty to the Safavid king. After Nader Shah Afshar's attempt to depose the Safavid king, Muhammad Khan Baloch was among the main supporters of Shah Tahmasp. In 1733, he collected a large force, which was also joined by the sympathizers of Safavid king and Arab tribe of Ahwaz to counter the advances of Nader Shah Afshar. In a bloody battle in Shulistan defile between the forces of Nader Shah Afshar and Muhammad Khan Baloch, the Baloch were heavily defeated with the loss of three thousand fighters. Near Fahliyan, the mound where

Muhammad Khan Baloch took his last stand against Nader Shah Afshar became known as Sangar-e-Muhammad Baloch. Muhammad Khan Baloch escaped to Shiraz, and from there, he made his way to the island of Qais. He was arrested from Qais and brought to Shiraz where he was blinded by the orders of Nader Shah Afshar and died in prison (Lockhart, 1938).

In 1739, Admiral Taqi Khan, commander of Nader Shah Afshar's naval forces, invaded Gwadar on his way to Sindh. In search of provisions for his starving forces, he ventured into Kech where the Baloch forces, under the leadership of Malik Dinar, heavily defeated the Persians, and they were forced to withdraw from Gwadar (Lockhart, 1938).

After the British occupation of Kalat, Qajar rulers of Persia increasingly became involved in western Balochistan. Beginning from 1838, western Balochistan became the battlefield of hostilities between the supporters of Ismaeli spiritual leader Agha Khan and his brother, and the Persian forces stationed at Kerman. The Baloch under the leadership of Muhammad Ali supported Agha Khan and his brother. In 1843, the governor of Kerman occupied Bampur (Watson, 1866). A strong military presence was established in Bampur, and military expeditions were mounted periodically into various regions of western Balochistan. In one of the tragic events of the Baloch—Persian conflict of that time, foreseeing an imminent defeat from the Persians under the command of Habibullah Shahsevan and in order to save their women folk coming into the hands of the Persians, the Baloch killed their women before charging toward the Persian artillery positions. In the ensuing battle, hundreds of the Baloch and Persians were killed (Watson, 1866). Later, the Persians arrested 3,700 Baloch from the surrounding regions of Bampur and sold them into slavery.

Sykes (1902) observed that the Persian officials effectively exploited the differences between various Baloch chiefs of Makuran and Sarhad regions. They successfully pursued a policy of encouraging the local Hakoms (rulers) to compete for formal titles

in return for the obligation to levy and remit annual taxes. One by one, the local rulers of Dezzak, Sarbaz, Geh, and Kasarkand acknowledged the obligation to pay taxes to the Persian governor. The resistance from the chief of Sib Mir Muhammad Ali was overcome by a strong Persian contingent sent from Kerman in 1856 and the relatively strong Sib Fort was occupied (Sykes, 1902). The Persian officials were steadily working on the strategy of playing local rulers one against another with the aim of reducing their authority and establishing its own as far as possible. They were able to exploit the differences of Mir Abdullah Khan Buladai of Geh who controlled the coast from Jask to Chahbahar, and Mir Din Muhammad Sardarzai in Bahau who, besides Dashtyari, controlled the coast from Chahbahar to Gwadar. In southern Sistan, the Persians occupied the Sarhad region by defeating Sardar Said Khan Kurd, chief of Sarhad in Khwash (Sykes, 1902).

The Baloch resistance against the Persian encroachment of their land was sporadic, disorganized, and without a central leadership. The Khanate of Kalat was facing a period of degeneration under the British domination, and the Khan was acting on behalf of the British, serving only the British interests in the region. There were only ineffective protests from the Khanate governor of Makuran Sardar Faqir Muhammad Bizenjo on the Persian aggression on the Baloch land. During 1888, a Persian force crushed the resistance of Yarahmadzai tribe of the Baloch in Sarhad. The Persian officials continued the harassment and humiliation of the Baloch, and in 1891, several Baloch leaders were seized and detained for several years (Sykes, 1902).

In the absence of any central leadership to lead the Baloch in western Balochistan, the Baloch resistance turned into a general uprising against the Persians. This resistance, later, also turned against the British who were establishing the British Indo-European Telegraph Line, which was to link Karachi and Basra. In 1897, the Acting Superintendent in the Indo-European Telegraph Department at Jask, Mr. Graves was robbed and murdered. In the same year, Sardar Hussain Khan attacked Fahraj (Sykes, 1902) and led a general

rebellion against the Persian Government in Sarhad, Sarawan, and Bampur, demanding reduction of taxes imposed by the Persian authorities. With the joining of several Baloch groups, the revolt spread to Sarbaz, Dezzak, Laashaar, and Bamposhth. Mir Hussain Khan occupied Bampur, Fahraj, and Bazman and other places, which had small Iranian garrisons, and controlled most of the northern part of the province. The Baloch forces defeated a large Persian army sent from Kerman to reestablish the Persian order in 1897 (Sykes, 1902). The uprising lasted about three years and ended with the agreement, recognizing Mir Hussain Khan as the ruler of the Baloch areas under the Persian sovereignty. In return, the Baloch leader acknowledged every claim made by Persians on the Baloch territories.

On the death of Mir Hussain Khan in 1907, his son Sardar Sayyad Khan and Baranzai (Barakzai ) chief Mir Bahram Khan tried to consolidate their power in western Balochistan by asserting their control on Geh, Bent, Kasarkand, Sarbaz, Bampur, and Fahraj (Sykes, 1902). Sardar Sayyad Khan later submitted to the Persian authorities by accepting the title of *Sardar-e-Nizam*. The Persians recognized him as the nominal ruler of the region. However, Mir Bahram Khan refused to submit, rallied the Baloch chiefs, and became the actual authority in western Balochistan. An army was sent from Kerman against the rising power of Mir Bahram Khan in 1910 (Spoonner, 1988). However, the Persians failed to overcome the Baloch resistance under Mir Bahram Khan and retreated without achieving any objective. This event paved the way for the establishment of the short-lived Barakzai chieftdom in western Balochistan.

Based in Bampur, the Barakzai Dynasty ruled the first Baloch chieftdom in western Balochistan with a semblance of a semiautonomous state for nearly three decades. Mir Bahram Khan in his efforts to fight the alliance of the Persians, and the British sought the help of a religious leader Khalifa Khair Muhammad of Karawan. Several of the Baloch fighters impressed by the speeches of Khalifa organized themselves into groups of *Mureeds* (followers)



and frequently harassed the staff of the British Indo-European Telegraph Line. Mir Bahram Khan also raided British-controlled Kech valley of eastern Makran. To neutralize the emerging threat of Mir Bahram Khan and in order to safeguard its growing interests in the region, the British recognized the authority of Mir Bahram Khan over the Baloch territories in western Balochistan by signing a treaty with him. It was mainly for the security of the Indo-European Telegraph Line. The British political agent Colonel Dew signed this agreement in 1916 (Sykes, 1902).

Mir Bahram Khan died in Bampur in 1921. Having no son, he was succeeded by his nephew, Mir Dost Muhammad Khan Barakzai, who ruled the Baloch areas as an independent ruler until 1928 (Sykes, 1902). Mir Dost Muhammad Barakzai tried to establish a primitive bureaucracy in his chieftdom by appointing administrators, revenue collectors, and *Hakoms* (rulers) for different regions of his chieftdom. He also tried to establish relations with the Khan of the Baloch at Kalat, Sultan of Muscat and Oman, and king of Afghanistan. He also attempted to establish contact with the Russian Government (Janmahmad, 1987). He also tried to establish a revenue system by collecting a portion of revenues from subordinate rulers (*Hakoms*) and directly extracting agricultural levy from farmers. For a time, Mir Dost Muhammad Barakzai managed to hold his firm grip on his chieftdom by forging alliances of various natures with powerful ruling families in different principalities of western Balochistan. However, in his bid to centralize the authority of his newborn chieftdom, he alienated majority of the powerful regional *Hakoms*. This became one of the factors in the final demise of the Baloch chieftdom in western Balochistan.

With the rise of Reza Khan Pahlavi as the ruler of Persia in 1921, the situation changed for the newly independent Baloch chieftdom. Reza Khan Pahlavi immediately began measures to subjugate various autonomous regions in order to bring them under the control of central government at Tehran. After subjugating Gilan in 1921, Kurdistan in 1922, Luristan in 1924, and Khuzistan in 1925, he began exploring the strategies to bring down the Baloch areas west

of Goldsmid line into firm Persian control (Baloch, 1987). With the annexation of various regions into his government by 1928, the Pahlavi government of Iran was sufficiently well established to turn its full attention to deal with the problem of an independent Baloch chiefdom based in Bampur.

In 1927, the Persian Government made an ultimatum on Mir Dost Muhammad Barakzai to accept the sovereignty of Persia (Sykes, 1902). He was promised that the king of Persia would consider his personal privileges in case he surrenders to the Persian demands. For the general Baloch population, it was proclaimed that extensive developmental works would be initiated in return of a pledge of loyalty to the Persian state. Mir Dost Muhammad Khan Barakzai refused to submit. Anticipating a Persian attack, he began to improve his fortifications and tried to build and strengthen the network of alliances he had built up over the whole of western Balochistan with ruling chiefs. He also activated religious leaders among the Baloch to mobilize them on religious and sectarian grounds. The Baloch followed the *Sunni* sectarian beliefs against the Persian who were the followers of *Shia* doctrine. It had been a new but useful tool of exploiting the religious sentiments of the Baloch for mobilizing them against the Persian hegemony.

After failing to gain the submission of Mir Dost Muhammad Khan Barakzai peacefully, the Persian Army, under the command of General Amir Amanullah Jahanbani, began the advance on Balochistan in 1928 (Sykes, 1902). The heroic resistance of the Baloch denied any immediate victory for the overwhelming Persian army, and fierce battles were fought between the Persians and the Baloch in different regions. The Persians had to fight for every Fort. The Baloch resistance, however, weakened considerably with the use of air power by the Persians.

Lack of any external support, desertion of many Baloch *Hakoms* to the Persian side, and lack of supply provisions for the besieged contingents in different forts forced Mir Dost Muhammad Khan Barakzai to surrender after a seven-month struggle to preserve the independence of the Baloch chiefdom. He was detained in Tehran.

After a year, he tried to escape from detention but was captured and hanged by the Persian authorities in 1931 (Naseer, 1979).

Various writers have highlighted several important factors that might have contributed to the defeat of the Baloch and the final incorporation of western Balochistan into Iran. According to Hosseinbor (2000), the first among the factors was the British approval and support for the Persian move against the Baloch. According to Baloch (1987), the reason for the British support of Persia was that there was an increased anti-British feeling among the Baloch as they perceived the Britain as colonial power who caused much miseries for the Baloch by occupying the Khanate of Kalat. The secret German endeavors to gain the support of the Baloch and Afghans during the First World War had already alarmed the British authorities considerably. Another reason for the British support of the Persians in crushing the emerging Baloch national resistance might have been the British beliefs that with the increased popularity of the Bolshevik revolution in Russia, small states like Balochistan ultimately will come under the influence of revolutionary Russian state. An independent Balochistan in the west can trigger similar sentiments, and the Baloch in the east can follow the example of their western brethren and could have risen against the British colonial domination. However, most important of the responsible factors for the final defeat of the Baloch resistance in western Balochistan was that the Baloch chiefdom lacked the structural and organizational capacity to withstand a modern army with limitless resources, artillery, and air power. Mir Dost Muhammad Khan Barakzai did not have enough time to consolidate his authority over an inherently divisive tribal society where local *Hakoms* were vulnerable in defecting to powerful forces.

After the fall of Kalat in 1839, the short-lived chiefdom in western Balochistan brought a hope of national resurgence among the Baloch nationalists. However, with the collapse of the Baloch resistance against the Persian domination in western Balochistan, there prevailed a period of general depression throughout the Baloch land. Since then, the Baloch under Iranian domination had been

suffering tremendously. Their culture, language, and national identity are being mortally threatened by increased cultural and religious invasion of the Persian state. The Persian grip became strong over the Baloch with the introduction of various administrative measures by subsequent Persian regimes. Apart from directly ruling Balochistan through Persian administrators and military officials, the Persians also incorporated in their governing strategies the installments of Baloch *Hakoms* of their choice as their protégés in different regions.

## **The BriTish inVolVeMenT in wesTern BALochisTAN**

The initial phases of Persian incursions in the Baloch region during the nineteenth century began in the reign of Qajar king, Nasir-al Din Shah. In the context of the “Great Game,” the British decided to adopt the policy of appeasement toward the Iranians to dissuade them from the Russian influence. However, soon, the British in India began to take a more serious interest in the region because of many of their concerns and interests that compelled them to increase their direct role in western Balochistan. In this process, the interests and territorial integrity of the Khanate of Kalat were seriously compromised.

One of the major concerns of the British was the establishment of a communication line between India and Europe. Drastic changes occurred in the British policy vis-à-vis western Balochistan with the plan of establishing an Indo-European Telegraph Line from Karachi to Basra. This project changed the geopolitical balance of relations in the area with far-reaching and devastating effects on the Baloch in the coming years.

The Indo-European telegraph project initiated a series of events, which became fundamental in the division of Balochistan. The line was to cross the areas controlled by the Khanate of Kalat, various Baloch chiefs, Sultanate of Oman, and Persia. It became necessary

to make agreements for the passage and protection of the line with concerned parties. The British authorities were to deal with the resurgent Baloch chiefs, the Sultan of Oman, and the Persian Government. From 1863, a British assistant political agent was stationed at Gwadar, and the British began to pay subsidies for the protection of the Indo-European Telegraph Line to local Baloch chiefs.

During initial phases of negotiations regarding the British plans of a telegraph line, the Persians initially claimed sovereignty over the whole of Makuran up to the British frontier in Sindh. This was intended to be in a better bargaining position and to get more concessions from the British authorities in return of the Persian approvals for the project. The Baloch chiefs also tried to assert themselves in order to gain better subsidies from the British for the protection of the Telegraph Line. Meanwhile, the Persian Government continued its policy of playing off the local rulers against each other with the aim of reducing their authority. The Khan of the Baloch as the nominal ruler of Balochistan, although ineffective to play a major role in increasingly unfolding situation in the region, nevertheless, tried to claim sovereignty on many regions where the Telegraph Line was passing. The Sultanate of Oman after losing the control of Chahbahar was only controlling the Gwadar region and immediately signed various treaties regarding the establishment and protection of the Line with the British authorities.

The Baloch resistance against Persians and the British manifested itself on sporadic raids on the camps of surveyors and other installments of the Telegraph Line. On several occasions, the British officials were attacked and killed by groups of the Baloch with the tacit approval of their chiefs. The British retaliation on the other hand was out of proportions. In 1898, in consequence of the murder of Mr. Graves and the generally unsettled state in western Balochistan, 150 rifles of the Bombay Marine Battalion were sent to western Balochistan from India, of whom a hundred were to be located at Chahbahar and fifty at Jask (Spooner, 1988). This was

with tacit approval of the Persian authorities. To punish the murderers of the telegraph officer Mr. Graves, a major campaign was launched, and hundreds of the Baloch were killed and many of their settlements were burnt during 1898 campaigns (Curzon, 1966). Another campaign against the Baloch in Magas and Erafshan areas caused huge destruction and casualties among the Baloch (Saldanha, 1905).

As the Persian Government was unable to protect the British trade, security, and communication interests, the British anxiety increased regarding the situation in western Balochistan. The British, therefore, tried to protect their interests unilaterally by increasing their political and military presence in the region. In 1901, they asked permission to set up a vice-consulate at Bampur for the protection of British subjects. The Persian Government rejected the proposal but allowed them to set one up in Bam (Kerman) instead (Spooner, 1988).

In Sarhad region, the Baloch tribes of Ghamshadzai, Yarahmadzai, and Esmailzai resisted the Persian encroachment. However, alarmed by increasing activities of the Baloch tribes, threatening their supply lines, and forestalling any German political advance in the region, the British sent a force under the command of General Dyer to deal with the problem. At this time, the Baloch tribe of Ghamshadzai under Sardar Khalil Khan Ghamshadzai held the area around Jalk and Safed Koh. West of them was the Baloch tribe of Yarahmadzai under Sardar Jiand Khan Yarahmadzai who was the nominal head of the confederacy of the Baloch tribes of Sarhad. West of Khwash was the Baloch tribe of Esmailzai under Sardar Juma Khan Esmailzai. For obvious reasons, General Dyer succeeded in his task by defeating the Baloch forces and crushing the Baloch resistance (see Dyre, 1921).

In 1924, the control of the Sarhad region was formally surrendered by the British to the Persian Government. The Baloch rose in rebellion in 1925, but it was overcome by the Persian authorities in 1926 (Aitchison, 1865). After the collapse of Barakzai Chieftdom of

Bampur in 1928, resistance against the Persians was manifested by intermittent outbreaks of disorder in this part of Balochistan until late 1930s. A rebellion of Sardar Juma Khan Esmailzai was crushed in 1931, and another uprising in Kuhak was defeated in 1938 with much bloodshed by the Persian Army under the command of General Alborz (Baloch, 1987).

The Persian incursions and the British interests in the region ultimately caused the division and permanent Persian occupation of western Balochistan. There began immediately a process of cultural imperialism by the Persian rulers. They embarked upon a campaign of assimilation of the Baloch into the Persian culture. The use of Balochi language was discouraged ruthlessly, and the Baloch were encouraged to adopt the Persian dress and public behavior. The Persians also created some new Baloch tribes, giving them names of their choice. The Balochi personal names were forcibly replaced in official documents. Although the attempts of the Persian rulers to persuade the Baloch to adopt the *Shia* doctrine of Islam failed, in reaction, however, it prompted some of the Baloch to become strict *Sunni* followers. In the coming years, this action and reaction phenomenon nearly changed the character of a secular Baloch society, and religion increasingly began its intrusion into the Baloch society in western Balochistan.

# The Division of Balochistan

During the nineteenth century, Balochistan became divided into different parts under the control of various powers of the region. After the occupation of Kalat in 1839, the British officials began a process of dividing the Khanate territories. Eastern regions of the Khanate Arund, Dajal, and Derajat had been taken away from the control of the Khan and were being administered directly by the British administrators in Punjab. Quetta, Chagai, Sibi, and Bolan Pass had been incorporated in British India on various pretexts. The 1879 Treaty of Gandamak with Afghanistan sanctioned the temporary occupation of Sibi to the Government of India. The Khan of Kalat leased out Quetta to Government of British India on April 1, 1883 with the signing of the Accord of Dasht Plain (Naseer, 1979). With the fall of Kalat, the Persian and Afghan governments claimed sovereignty on various regions of Balochistan, including Makuran, Sarhad, and Nemroz. In the context of the “Great Game,” the British, under various boundary commissions, granted western and northwestern regions of Balochistan to Persia and Afghanistan. Many factors were responsible for influencing the British decision to divide Balochistan ultimately. These include appeasement of Persia—to prevent her from going into Russian camp—stabilizing Afghanistan as a viable buffer state between Russia and British India, protecting the line of communication from India to Europe, and, finally, general security concerns of the British in the Middle East.



## diVision of BAlochisTAn: A cAsuAlTy of The greAT gAMe

Anglo-Russian rivalry in military and diplomatic arenas had been termed as the “Great Game” in the diplomatic circles of the nineteenth century. During the second half of the nineteenth century, the pace of Russian advance in Central Asia gained momentum with the occupation of Bukhara in 1866 and of Samarkand in 1869. From the British point of view, this advance was threatening its possession in India and Persian Gulf. The specter of a Russian threat to vital British interests in India was not only unnerving for the British authorities in India, but it also became the universal obsession among the British policy makers for a long time to come. The description of Brigadier-General Dickson (see Dickson, 1924, pp. 22-23) on the Russian options in South Asia is the summation of the British perceptions during the “Great Game.”

*“Russia is a great self-contained country, possessing within her own borders all the essentials for building up a prosperous nation with one exception—free outlets to open sea. Her ports are either ice-bound in winter, as in the case of those in the north, or commanded by territorial waters of another power, as in the case of the Black Sea ports. History has shown that access to the sea is an almost indispensable factor in building up prosperity, and to reach the ‘warm water’ has been a traditional ambition of Russia since the time of Peter the Great. There were obviously three directions in which this ambition could be satisfied without encroaching on the territory of powerful neighbors, viz, the Mediterranean via the Balkans, the Pacific via China, or the Indian Ocean via Persian Gulf . . . Britain having been regarded as the power chiefly responsible for shutting the door on this (the Mediterranean outlet), the Russian policy assumed that strongly anti-British bias*

*which was a familiar feature of the time. Every effort was made to push forward in Central Asia and to obtain a predominating influence in Persia, the former by its veiled threat to India giving Russia a lever against Britain, the latter as a means of reaching the warm sea in a region where Britain would not be likely to obtain continental help in thwarting her."*

Beginning from the eighteenth and continued in the nineteenth century, a high-profile diplomatic and espionage game played in Central Asia between Russia and Britain brought negative consequences for many small states and nationalities in the region. For a while, France was also an interested partner in this game; during the last decades of the eighteenth century, increased French diplomatic activities in Tehran caused much alarm among the British authorities in India and England. The British became much suspicious from the activities of the French representatives in seeking alliance with the Persian Government. The Russo-French Agreement of Tilsit signed in 1808 prompted the British authorities to increase their efforts for securing friendship with the Persians in order to dissuade them from joining the threatening alliance of France and Russia (Janmahmad, 1989). In the context of Anglo-Russian rivalry in Central Asia, Afghanistan, and Iran were viewed by the British as the vulnerable spots from where any Russian advance can be made toward warm waters, posing direct threat to the precious British possession of India. Dickson (1924) observed that according to British perceptions, a weak Persia in a lawless condition and with an empty treasury would not be a preferable obstacle across Russia's route to warm water. Among the countermeasures against Russian advances, the British extended financial and diplomatic support to a politically weak and financially bankrupt Persian Government. A policy of appeasement was adapted in dealings with the Persians in order to make the Persian border as the final defensive line against any further Russian advance.

Every effort was made to make Afghanistan viable geographically. Creation and stabilization of Afghanistan as a buffer state between Russia and the British India was designed by the planners in New Delhi and London. After a long drawn-out tussle, the recognition of Afghanistan as a buffer state was formalized between the Russians and the British with the signing of the Pamir Boundary Agreement between the two powers. Moreover, to strengthen Afghanistan by expanding its geographical landmass, the British decided to pressurize the weak Persian Government to cede the control of Herat and Sistan. From the British point of view, it was very important. An Afghanistan without the territories of Persian provinces of Herat and Sistan would have not been in a geographical position to serve as a buffer between the British India and the Russia. Meanwhile, demarcation of formal boundaries became imperative for the stabilization of Afghanistan, which was carved out from the amalgamation of geographically, culturally, and historically diverse ethnic groups. In this context, some of the Baloch territories were ceded to Afghanistan.

The architect of the division of Balochistan, Goldsmid (1873), justified the Persian incursions in western Balochistan. Supporting the Persian claims on the Baloch land on the ground that Persia had been losing territory to Russia in the north, to the Ottomans in the West, and to Afghanistan in the East, the only avenue left for her to expand was the southeast. He identified western Balochistan, where the constant feud between the tribal chiefs had made the land as an easy prey to the Persian design.

In the context of the “Great Game,” establishment of Afghanistan as a buffer state and strengthening of Persian state to withstand any Russian pressure became the cornerstone of the British foreign policy regarding Central and South Asia. By default, Balochistan became minced between the powerful jaws of two most powerful imperialist states of the nineteenth century. The ultimate loser in the “Great Game,” from a Baloch point of view was the Khanate of Kalat, which was not only occupied but became divided into different parts.

## The curse of The TelegrAPh line

Establishing communication link between India and Britain became one of the urgent goals in the context of the “Great Game.” By late 1860, the British authorities in India embarked upon an ambitious project of a telegraph line from Karachi to Basra passing through Southern Balochistan. The British telegraph project changed the geopolitical balance of relations in the area. To guarantee the security of the line, the British adopted the policy of respecting the authority of each wherever they found it in force. They made several agreements for the passage and protection of the line with all stakeholders. They had also to resolve the conflicts arising from territorial claims among the contenders.

One of the factors for the division of Southern Balochistan was securing the telegraph line by an official and internationally recognized demarcation of boundary between Persia and the Khanate. Semi-independent Baloch chiefs, the Khanate of Kalat, and Persia were claiming sovereignty on different regions of Balochistan. This was one of the contextual factors of claims and counterclaims that the British authorities decided to demarcate a clearly defined boundary between Persia and the British-controlled Balochistan, the prime objective being the security of the Telegraph Line.

After the completion of the Indo-European Telegraph Line, it was the security of the line which became the prime concern of the British authorities in India. From the British point of view, a strong administrative control over the unruly and independent seeking Baloch chiefs was necessary, who had been engaged periodically in disruptive activities, damaging installations and robbing British camps. The Baloch chiefs were also agitating against the increased Persian advances and aggressions upon the Baloch land. The Persians and the British forces had been carrying out long drawn-out and expensive joint punitive expeditions against the Baloch resistance groups in the region often ending in bloody clashes. In this context, it was felt prudent by the British to put these areas under

a firm controlling authority by formally delimiting the boundaries of the Khanate of Kalat and Persia.

## **diVision of BAlochisTAn under BoundAry coMMissions**

The British concerns for the security of Indo-European Telegraph Line was only one of the factors responsible for the division of Balochistan. In accordance with the British policy of appeasement toward the Persians to protect them from Russian influences, compensating geographical losses of the Persian state, which she suffered against the Ottomans and Russia, also became imperative. During 1871, the British agreed to the Persian proposal for the division of Balochistan by officially demarcating a boundary line separating the British and Persian areas of influence in Balochistan (Goldsmid, 1873). The border between the Khanate of Kalat and Persia was demarcated under Makuran Boundary Commission (1870/1871) and Perso-Baloch Boundary Commission (1896). The Baloch areas of Sistan were allocated to Persia and Afghanistan under two Sistan arbitration commissions (1872, 1903). The final demarcation of Sistan took place in 1904 by the British Commissioner, Sir Henry McMahon. The line approved by Sir Henry McMahon was the extension of Durand Line, and it demarcated the Baloch—Afghan border. McMahon Line covers an area from Chaman to the Perso—Baloch border. From the arbitrary announcement of boundary lines, without taking into consideration the Baloch interests, it appears that a division of influence between the British, Afghanistan, and Persia had already been worked out and was only legitimized by recommendations of boundary commissions.

## The MAKURAN BoundARy coMMission And Perso-BALoch deliMiTATion coMMission

Major General Goldsmith was appointed as the chief commissioner of the Makuran Boundary Commission in 1870. The boundary, which was subsequently drawn on the recommendations of the commission, became known as Goldsmid Line. Mirza Masum Ansari was representing the Persian Government, and Sardar Faqir Muhammad Bizenjo was representing the Khanate of Kalat. From the very beginning, the Persians objected to the presence of Khanate representative in the Commission, and the proceedings of the commissions dragged on with the insistence of concerned parties to stand firm with their claims on various regions. As no consensus agreement was reached between the parties, Major General Goldsmid gave his unilateral decision, delimiting the boundary from a point east of Guattar up to Kuhak (Mojtahed-Zadeh, 1995). On September 1, 1871, the British minister at Tehran conveyed the details of Perso—Baloch boundaries to the Persian authorities for acceptance in a memorandum, which partly read that (Mojtahed-Zadeh, 1995, p. 78)—

*“The undersigned, Her Britannic Majesty’s Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary at the Court of Persia, acting on the part of his Government, has the honor to submit, for the approval of His Majesty the Shah, a map in which the boundary line between the territories possessed in Belochistan by Persia, and the territories forming the exclusive property of the independent State of Khelat, is delineated.”*

*“This line may be thus described: Commencing from the northernmost point, or that which is furthest from the sea, the territory of Khelat is bounded to the west by the large Persian District of Dizzuk, which is composed of many Dehs or minor Districts, those on the frontier being Jalk and*

## The division of Balochistan

*Kallegan. Below these two last-named is the small District of Kohuk, which, together with Punjgur, comprising Parum and other dependencies, is on the Khelat side of the frontier, while on the Persian side is Bampusht."*

*"Below Punjgur, the frontier, possessions of Khelat to the sea are Boleida, including Zamiran and other dependencies, Mund and Dusht. Withing the Persian line of frontier are the villages or tracts belonging to Sirbaz and Bahu Dustyari. The boundary of Dusht is marked by a long line drawn through the Drabol hill situated between the Rivers Bahu and Dusht, to the sea in the Bay of Gwuttur."*

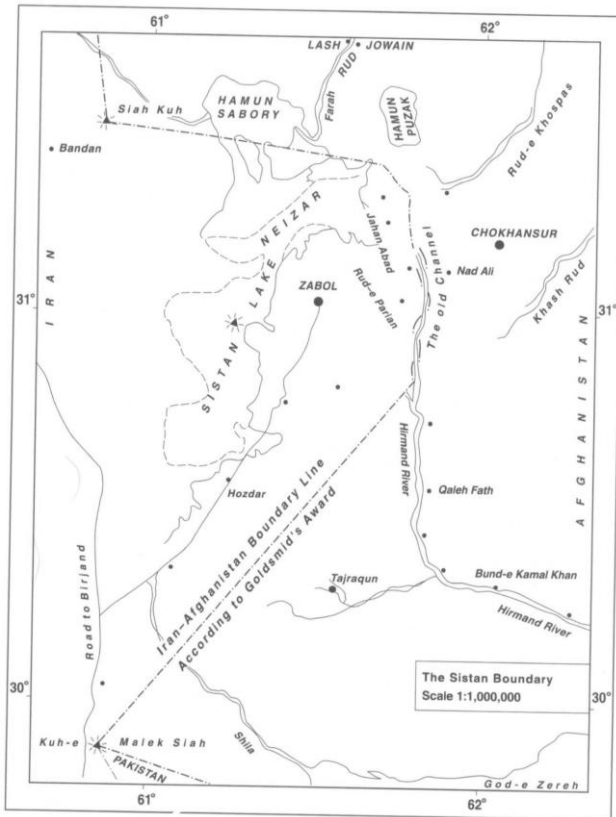
*"to summarise: Punjgur and Parum and other dependencies with Kohuk; Boleida, including Zamiran and other dependencies; Mund, including Tump, Nasserabad, Kedj, and all Districts, dehs and dependencies to the eastward; Dusht with its dependencies as far as the sea: these names exhibit the line of actual possession of Khelat, that is to say, all tracts to the east of the frontier of actual Persian possession, which frontier comprises Dizzuk and Bampusht, Sirbaz, Pishin, Bahu and Dustyari."*

The Goldsmid line was accepted by Persia while the Khanate officials mutely protested on the division of their land. This was the beginning of the division of the Baloch land under subsequent commissions listed above and described below. However, immediately after the delineation of the border was completed and Major General Goldsmid departed from Iran, the Persian forces occupied Khanate regions of Kohuk and parts of Mashkel Valley. To settle the new dispute, the Perso-Baloch Frontier Delimitation Commission was formed in 1895, and Sir Thomas Holdich was appointed as the chief commissioner. This commission in 1896

## The Baloch and Balochistan

formally awarded Kuhak, Kenarbasteh, Esfandak, and areas to the west of Mashkhel River to the Persians (Baloch, 1987).

Figure 27: **Map showing division of Sistan** (from Mojtahed-Zadeh, 2004)



## diVIsion of siSTAn under ArBiTrATion coMMIssions

The Sistan Arbitration Commission (1872) was formed as Major General Goldsmid being the chief commissioner. It was to demarcate the boundaries of Persia and Afghanistan in Sistan region. In his award, Goldsmid distinguished between Sistan proper



and outer Sistan. The former he defined as running from the Neizar, or reed beds, on the north to the main canal on the south, the district being bounded at that period by the Helmand River on the east. This area, estimated at nine hundred and fifty square miles, with a population of 45,000, was awarded to Persia (Goldsmid, 1873). Outer Sistan, or the district on the right bank of the Helmand River, was awarded to Afghanistan.

Boundary lines dividing Sistan proper were drawn in the following manner (Goldsmid, 1873):

- From Siah Kuh near Bandan, which is the beginning of the Qaenat district, a line to be drawn to the southern limit of the Neizar toward Lash-Jowain. Thence the line continues to a point named Shahi, which is the end of Helmand's main waterbed.
- From Shahi, the boundary takes a more northwest to southeast direction to Korki.
- From Korki, the boundary follows Helmand River's main channel upstream as far as Kuhak.
- From Kohuk, the boundary takes a northeast to southwest direction in a straight line across desert as far as Kuh-eMalek Siah, where the boundaries of Balochistan, Persia, and Afghanistan meet.

## **deMARcATion of BALoch-AfghAn fronTiers**

The boundaries of Afghanistan and the British India were already demarcated under the agreement reached between the British India and Afghanistan in 1893. The boundary line, which is still a cause of conflict between Afghanistan and Pakistan, became famous as Durand Line after the name of the British architect of the line Sir Mortimer Durand (Roberts, 2003). In order to finalize the demarcation of the border between Balochistan and Afghanistan, a "Baloch-Afghan Boundary Commission," was instituted in 1895. Under Sir Henry McMahon, the commission also finalized the boundaries of Persia and Afghanistan. The boundary agreed upon by this commission is known as McMahon line. The Baloch—

## The Baloch and Balochistan

Afghan border or McMahon Line covers an area from Chaman to the Perso—Baloch border and was demarcated in 1896 (Baloch, 1987).

Figure 28: **Map showing division of Balochistan** ( from Mojtabeh-Zadeh, 2004)



Figure 29: **Map showing Durand and McMahon Line** ( s )

*Source: [www.google.co.uk/maps](http://www.google.co.uk/maps)*

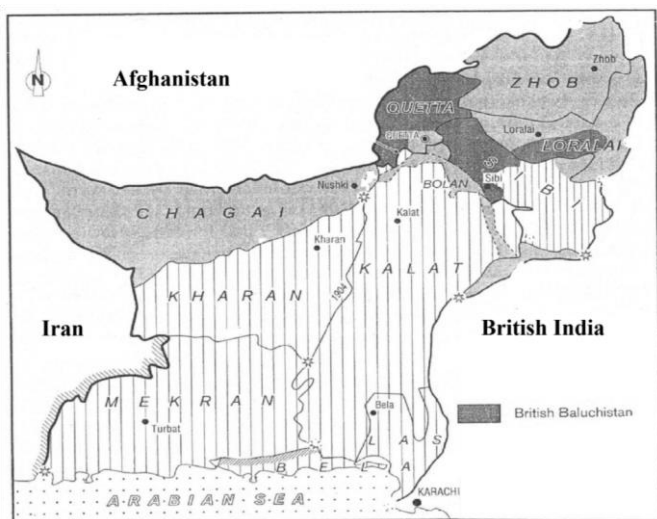
## The division of Balochistan



These arbitrary boundary lines completed the division of Balochistan into Persian and Afghan parts. Under the boundary commissions, some of the Khanate territories in Sistan were handed over to Persia and Afghanistan. Western Makuran and many parts of Sarhad became parts of Iran. The Baloch areas of Nemroz, and southern Helmand were given to Afghanistan. Outer Sistan and Registan were incorporated into Afghanistan. A large portion of Sistan, which was traditionally the Baloch region of the Khanate, was allocated to the Persians. In the east, Jacobabad, Derajat, including Arund and Dajal, had already been surrendered. Sibi had been included in British Balochistan.

Figure 30: **Map showing British Balochistan at the time of creation of Pakistan in 1947** Source: [www.mapsofindia.com](http://www.mapsofindia.com)

## The Baloch and Balochistan



In practical terms, the Baloch resistance against the division of their land was nonexistent. The resistance in Sistan from Sanjarani and Nahrui chiefs were pacified with the use of excessive force by Persian and Afghan authorities. Unfortunately, the Khanate was not in a position to exert any influence on the events leading to the permanent division of the Baloch land. The Khan was so helpless and incompetent that he even withdrew his representative Sardar Faqir Muhammad Bizenjo from the commission headed by Major General Goldsmid under Persian protestations.

The British policy of appeasement toward Persia against Russian advances, their obsession of establishing Afghanistan as a viable buffer state, and the protection of Indo-European Telegraph Line were the immediate causative factors in the division of Balochistan. The most important and from a Baloch point of view the most destructive act was to allocate nearly half of the Baloch land to Persia while incorporating a small portion of the Baloch land into Afghanistan. Khanate was under the British domination, the Baloch resistance was leaderless and decentralized, and the occupation of the Baloch lands by the neighboring countries became permanent,

## The division of Balochistan

dividing arbitrarily the cultural, social, and economic unity of the Baloch people.

## **Political mobilization of the Baloch**

**E**arly decades of the twentieth century was the period when the Baloch horizons were engulfed in the dark shadows of despair, frustration, and a growing sense of total defeat and helplessness. It was the period when the Baloch resistance against the British and its ally, the Persians, had been ruthlessly crushed. It was the period when—under different boundary commissions—the body of the Baloch land had been dissected, and it had been divided into various parts controlled by the Persians, the British, and the Afghans. After the finalizations of various boundary commissions, the British were able to strangle the Baloch state in violation of their treaty obligations with the Baloch state. The first quarter of the twentieth century also witnessed the beginning of political initiatives by a group of Baloch youth. They began to mobilize the Baloch masses by forming clandestine and formal political organizations, a phenomenon which was unprecedented in the history of the Baloch. These political organizations became nuclei of a long-drawn Baloch national struggle against subjugation and exploitation.

### **The collapse of The Baloch Armed resistance**

During the early decades of the twentieth century in Sistan, the Baloch resistance, led by Nahrui and Sanjarani tribes, had been crushed jointly by the British, Afghans, and the Persians. General Dyer with his master spy among the Baloch—Ido Reiki—was successful in bringing a reign of terror in Sarhad. Sardar Jiand Khan Yarahmadzai and Sardar Khalil Khan Ghamshadzai had been eliminated from the scene, and General Dyer and his successor

General Tanner were successful in getting rid of the trouble created by the armed uprisings of the Baluch tribes. Khwash, the headquarters of the Baluch resistance in Sarhad, had been occupied by the British troops, and a strong military outpost had been established to keep a strict eye on any future rebellion. In western Makuran, the emerging Baluch chieftdom led by Mir Bahram Khan and Mir Dost Muhammad Barakzai failed to gain firm roots, and the Persians ultimately occupied Bampur, the capital of short-lived autonomous Baluch chieftdom of the Barakzai Dynasty in 1928. The Khanate of Kalat, under the firm grip of the British, was being ruled by a degenerate and ineffective Mir Mahmud Khan. The majority of the Baluch Sardars had now become protégés of the occupying forces. As the pawns of the British administration, they were being used to undermine any remaining authority of the Baluch state.

As has been observed earlier, beginning from the occupation of Kalat in 1839, the resistance of the Baluch against foreign domination was led and controlled by tribal chiefs. One of the reasons why the Baluch resistance could not achieve its objectives was because tribal chiefs were divided along tribal lines and their personal and familial interests sometimes caused major impediment in the Baluch resistance against foreign domination. They were unable to form a united front or establish a cohesive or united force. Some of them were actively collaborating with the aggressors. Among the masses, there developed a sense of distrust about the abilities of tribal chiefs to continue the Baluch resistance toward a meaningful end.

## **Beginning of Political consciousness**

As observed by Baluch (1987) and Janmahmad (1989), a growing need was felt among the Baluch conscious elements that if the national resistance is to be meaningful, then the masses must be organized along scientific lines. During the first quarter of the twentieth century, some of the Baluch educated personalities began to organize the Baluch resistance by establishing clandestine political bodies. These clandestine groups later merged and formed

the first Baloch political party in the name of Kalat State National Party (KSNP).

In essence, the Baloch political activism for national liberation was greatly influenced by the Indian national struggle and rise in power of socialist revolutionaries in Russia. Earlier, influenced by the *Khilafat* Movement in India, some of the religious elements among the Baloch joined the *Hijrat* Movement and migrated to Afghanistan as a mark of protest against the colonial rule in India (Baloch, 1987). Another group of the Baloch was influenced by the anti-imperialist policy of the revolutionary Russia. As observed by Baloch (1987) and Janmahmad (1989), these Baloch were attracted by the Bolshevik declaration of support for the struggle of the people of the East against colonialism. In hopes of getting support for the Baloch cause, Mir Misri Khan Baloch and Sobhdar Khan Mari traveled to Soviet Union in early days of Bolshevik revolution.

Beginning from the second decade of the twentieth century, Russia was emerging from the long-drawn civil war, and the revolutionary government was holding firm in Moscow. On the international front, the new government was striving to gain support from its neighbors and extending support to nations struggling against imperialism. An ambassador, Mr. Surits, was appointed by the Soviet Government to seek and maintain diplomatic relations with the peoples of independent Afghanistan, independent tribes of Balochistan, and the people of India fighting for their liberation (Bondarevski, 1977). To consolidate the efforts of the anti-imperialist movements in the East, the newly established communist government of Soviet Union organized a conference in Baku in 1920. The conference was named as the "Congress of Peoples," and records of the congress noted the participation of a delegate from Balochistan among the list of participants. The congress adopted a resolution, calling for the unity of toiling masses of the East with the proletariat revolution in Russia. The Congress called for waging a joint holy war with the people of India, Turkey, Persia, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaidzhan, Egypt, Afghanistan, Balochistan, Kashghar, China, Indochina,



Japan, Korea, Daghestan, Northern Caucasia, Arabia, Mesopotamia, Syria,

Palestine, Khiva, Bukhara, Turkestan, Ferghana, Tataria, Bashkaria, Kirghizia, and so on, against imperialism in the East. According to Baluch (1987), the Baluch delegation was headed by Mir Misri Khan Baluch who after the congress came to Afghanistan in search of material support for the Baluch struggle against colonialism. Janmahmad (1989) observed that although the Baluch never got any support from the revolutionary government of Soviet Union or Afghanistan, these endeavors, nevertheless, greatly influenced further political developments in Baluchistan in the coming years and decades.

## **AnjuMAN-e-iTehAd-e-BALUCH-wA-BALUCHISTAN**

A small group of educated Baluch serving in the bureaucracy of the Khanate of Kalat had been politically active clandestinely. This was because open political activities were strictly forbidden, particularly for government employees in the state. This secret organization under the name of “Young Baluch” was led by Mir Abdul Aziz Kurd (Naseer, 1979). This underground movement came to the surface when in 1928, Mir Yusuf Magsi, son of the powerful Magsi tribal chief, joined the political struggle for the Baluch national cause (Baluch, 1987; Bizenjo, 2009). Magsi began to mobilize opinion against the British colonial rule in Baluchistan and called for the unity of the Baluch in the struggle for national liberation. In his writings and other activities, he exploited the grievances of the Baluch masses under the despotic rule of prime minister of the Khanate of Kalat, Mir Shams Shah, a British-nominated civil servant from the Indian bureaucracy. His article in a Lahore journal *Hamdard* on November 17, 1929, became the rallying point for the future Baluch nationalist politics in the Khanate (Naseer, 1979).

After returning from India, Mir Yusuf Magsi was arrested on July 17, 1930 by the British authorities, tried by a *Jirga* in Mastung, fined, and sentenced for one year on the charges of inciting the

public against the British and the Khanate administration (Bizenjo, 2008). After the release of Magsi, the first organized party in the name of Anjuman-e-Itehad-e-Baloch wa-Balochistan was formed under his leadership. Many personalities who became prominent names in the Baloch national struggle in later years joined the party; these included Mir Abdul Aziz Kurd, Malik Faiz Muhammad Yusufzai, Muhammad Hussain Unqa, Naseem Talvi, Abdul Karim Shorish, and Mir Muhammad Azam Shahwani among others (Naseer, 1979).

Soon, the government of the Khanate began a crackdown on the newly established party, and in 1931, the leader of the *Anjuman*, Mir Abdul Aziz Kurd, was arrested and imprisoned for three years (Naseer, 1979). However, the *Anjuman* activities continued under the leadership of Mir Yusuf Magsi, and the party began publishing documents, pamphlets, and newspapers outside the Khanate territory, especially from Karachi where the Baloch activists had organized themselves by forming a political organization called “The Baloch League.” The Baloch League was espousing the cause of Baloch nationalism among the Baloch population of Sindh.

According to Janmahmad (1989), the objective of *Anjuman* was to unite the Baloch masses under a common platform. Major political demands of *Anjuman* presented to the British authorities as put forward in their publications included the following:

- A. an elected assembly to transact legislative work for the state of Kalat,
- B. a responsible government to govern the state, and
- C. the reintegration of Bolan, Quetta, Noshki, and Nasirabad into Kalat state.

Among the major achievements of the *Anjuman* was the convening of the First All India Baloch Conference in Jacobabad from December 27-29, 1932 (Naseer, 1979). The conference reiterated the *Anjuman* demands for democratic and social reforms in Balochistan and reunifications of the Baloch regions into the

Khanate of Kalat. Next year, this conference was followed by a similar conference named as “All India Baluch and Baluchistan Conference” in Hyderabad (Sindh). This conference also reaffirmed the resolutions of establishing a constitutional government in Baluchistan and the unification of the Baluch land (Baluch, 1987).

The formation of the *Anjuman* as an organized political party marked the beginning of a secular, non-tribal nationalist movement in Baluchistan. As observed by Bizenjo (2008), the tremendous success of two Baluch conferences and gathering momentum of the Baluch politics for national liberation not only unnerved the government circles in Kalat but also caused serious concern to the British administration in Quetta. As the nature of the movement was progressive and democratic, Sardars, as the representatives of the British power in Baluchistan, felt uneasy at the emerging new political awakening of the Baluch masses. As they perceived it a growing threat against their power over the masses, pressures of various nature began to be exerted from all sides on the leaders, activists, and sympathizers of the emerging Baluch national struggle.

The Baluch national struggle received a major blow in 1935—this time not from the British or Khanate authorities but from nature itself. On the night of May 30-31, 1935, a devastating earthquake struck the city of Quetta and reduced it to rubble, causing the death of thousands of lives (Naseer, 1979). Among the dead was the founder of *Anjuman-e-Itehad-e-Baluch-wa-Baluchistan* and charismatic leader of the Baluch nationalist movement Mir Yusuf Magsi. At the time, it appeared that the death of Mir Magsi was a mortal blow for the Baluch cause; however, the political mobilization was carried relentlessly by his comrades. Mir Abdul Aziz Kurd, Muhammad Hussain Unqa, and Muhammad Naseem Talvi were among the political activists who worked tirelessly to keep the movement alive.

## kAlAT sTATe nATionAl PARTy

As has already been mentioned, alarmed by the growing nationalist mobilization, the British administration had clamped a total ban on all kinds of political activities in British Balochistan and the Khanate of Kalat. However, soon limited political activities were granted under the Government of India Act of 1935. The Baloch nationalist seized the opportunity and organized themselves in a formal political party. In a convention held in Sibi on February 5, 1937, Mir Abdul Aziz Kurd and his comrades formed the Kalat State National Party (KSNP), with Mir Abdul Aziz Kurd as president and Malik Faiz Muhammad as general secretary (Baloch, 1987). The objectives of the party were, on broader front, struggle against colonialism and imperialism, and on the internal front, against the oppressive hegemony of tribal chiefs (Sardars). The expulsion of the British from Balochistan was their primary goal, and believing that Sardars are the vanguards of the colonial power in Balochistan, the Kalat State National Party was equally emphatic on the replacement of Sardari system with a democratic alternative. The manifesto of KSNP published on April 1, 1937 (see Bizenjo, 2008, p. 89) contained the following salient points, manifesting the Baloch national aspirations:

*All the Baloch should be united by eliminating the differences among them;*

*We, the Baloch, have a glorious past with excellent traditions but are deprived of our national rights;*

*The Central Government of Baluchistan should be a responsible government consisting of the elected representatives of the people, with the Khan of Kalat as a "Constitutional Head";*

*The Central Government should be the custodian of the Baloch traditional heritage;*

*The Central Government should adopt a nationalist approach;*

*The state should be strengthened enough to play its significant role in the family of nations;*

*Baluchistan is not the slave of the British Government; rather, the British have acquired facilities through friendly agreements, and hence, our national integrity should not be destroyed;*

*Baluchistan is as much a separate land as is Iran and Afghanistan.*

Despite the crackdowns from the British, the Khanate administration, and Sardars upon its leaders and sympathizers, KSNP emerged as a potent political force and was able to place itself as the representative of the Baluch masses within a short period. In the coming years, KSNP played an important role in the struggle for the establishment of an independent Baluchistan in the wake of planned British withdrawal from India.

The ambitious but incompetent Khan of the Baluch, Mir Ahmad Yar Khan, in order to strengthen his position vis-à-vis Sardars and the British, extended his hand of cooperation toward the Baluch nationalist politics led by KSNP. However, as observed by Bizenjo (2008), it was simply a kind of flirtation. The purpose of flirting with KSNP by the Khan was mainly to counter the overriding influence of Sardars on the running of the Khanate affairs. Backed by the British administration, Sardars had been able to reduce the manipulative powers of the Khan considerably. Bizenjo observed that the Khan might have seen in it his best chance to undercut both these rival centers of power and recover some of his already eroded authority. By allowing the KSNP to strengthen and consolidate its position, he would, on the one hand, achieve that objective, and, on the other hand, win some popularity among his people. But in general, the Khan was not prepared to give an open hand to the party.

The Working Committee of KSNP in its Sibi meeting on March 15, 1939 drew up a charter of demands. It included the demand for employing locals as department heads, ministers, deputy ministers, and on all other important posts, including the prime minister. It called for the abolition of *Bijjar* tax, which was a most coercive levy on the public. Later, the party organized a massive public rally in

Dhadar, which alarmed the Khan concerning the growing power of the party. A harsh crackdown on the office bearers of KSNP followed, and a number of leading members were arrested (Naseer, 1979). But faced with growing discontent among the masses, the Khan again extended a friendly hand toward the party and yielded to some of its demands, replaced the prime minister, and took some of the party activists into important administrative positions in his bureaucracy.

The British political agents were rattled by the pace and sweep of these new developments, and plans were made to give a crushing blow to the Party. The KSNP organized their annual conference in Mastung on July 7, 1939 (Naseer, 1979). Armed hooligans—with the covert blessings of the Kalat administration and the British Political Agent—attacked the nationalist meeting, and an official ban was imposed on the conference. On July 20, 1939, KSNP was declared illegal, and orders were issued to expel all the prominent leaders of the Party from the state. Most of the KSNP members and sympathizers working in government departments either resigned in protest or were forced to quit. Entry of newspapers into Kalat was prohibited. Dar-ul-Uloom Mastung, the only educational institution run by nationalists, was ordered to be closed. However, taking advantage of the relatively less restrictive conditions in British Balochistan as compared to Kalat state, KSNP continued its activities from Quetta until the ending of the ban in 1942 (Bizenjo, 2008).

The KSNP, which led the political mobilization of the Baloch masses for national liberation, functioned in very unfavorable sociopolitical conditions prevailing in the Khanate. As observed by Janmahmad (1987), the party worked in a society which was not acquainted with mass politics of any kind. But in a strict tribal society, KSNP not only received tremendous support from the masses but also from some of the Sardars and tribal elites. Although KSNP failed to achieve its aim of establishing a sovereign Balochistan after the British withdrawal due to various reasons, it established a firm base on which the future Baloch national struggle was founded. The Dhadar speech, by the leader of KSNP, Mir Ghous Bux Bizenjo, on December 14, 1947 in the newly elected

“House of Commons” created during the shortlived independence of Balochistan, became the political guideline for the Baluch national resistance against the later occupation by Pakistan.

By all accounts, the tribal chief led Baluch resistance virtually to an end in the first quarter of the twentieth century. However, the group of the Baluch youth continued the political mobilization against the colonial domination under the banner of *Anjuman-e-Itehad-e-Baluch-wa-Baluchistan*. The Anjuman was a unique phenomenon in the Baluch tribal society, played a fundamental role in the political awareness of the Baluch masses, and became the seed of many nationalist political organizations in coming decades. Kalat State National Party was the first Baluch political party in the history of the Baluch. Its role was pivotal in various socioeconomic reforms introduced by the last Khan of the Baluch, and it was the guiding force in the struggle to regain the sovereignty of the Baluch state in the wake of British withdrawal from India.

## **The creation of Pakistan in context**

**T**he creation of Pakistan was one of the phenomena in the history of the region, which collaterally caused the end of nearly three hundred years of independent and semi-independent status of the Baloch. The power and prestige of the colonial Britain, which had been controlling India and surrounding regions from the late eighteenth century, received severe and irreparable damages due to two world wars fought in the twentieth century. With the weakening of colonial power, the struggle for national liberation gained momentum all over the colonized world, and in India, the Indian National Congress, under the leadership of Mohan Das Karamchand Gandhi, stepped up the struggle for the overthrowing of colonial yoke. The British authorities, perceiving an immediate retreat from India inevitable, began to look for their long-term strategic interests in the region. Taking into account the hostile attitudes of Indian leadership toward their British colonial masters, it became imperative for them to look toward their longstanding plan of dividing India on religious grounds and carving out a state subservient to their dictates. The seeds of division had already been sown, and from 1857, the colonial administration in India had been fomenting religious divisions by encouraging the theory of Muslim being a separate national entity in India. The concept of “Islamic Nationhood,” originally conceived in the nineteenth century to counter the Russian thrust toward South Asia, was used to politically mobilize the Muslim public opinion in India in order to muster political and moral support for an eventual division of India and creation of Pakistan. The creation of Pakistan was to safeguard short-term and long-term interests in a post-



colonial world in general and in the region in particular. As a consequence of the partition of British India in 1947, which created two independent states of India and Pakistan, the fate of the Baloch Khanate of Kalat was also sealed.

## The BriTish dileMMA in india

India had been a multiethnic, multilingual, multireligious, and multicultural country for the previous 1,400 years. Beginning with the Arab invasion of India during the seventh century, India had been frequently invaded and ruled by people from north and west. Although it belonged to different national entities, the common thing among them was the religion of Islam. But before the advent of the British power in India, religious faith was not an important factor in the political sphere of the Indian society.

After gaining total domination over India in the nineteenth century, maintaining the British rule over the vast and populous nation became of foremost importance for the colonial administrators. The main instruments of British rule in India were the army and the civil service. The institutions of army and civil service were the means of coercion, and through these, the British collected and allocated resources. The Indian Army, being recruited from different regions of India and from different communities, was vital for both internal and external security. After the rebellion of 1857 (where the followers of different religions joined against the rule of East India Company), concerted efforts were made to prevent the communal unity as seen in 1857. Perhaps, for the colonial planners of the day, exploiting religious diversity of India was thought to be the most feasible way to foment internal turmoil in case of any generalized resistance against the British rule.

To establish the religious differences of Indians as the basis of “two-nation theory,” writers were commissioned to present Indian history, pointing to the religious beliefs of dynastic rulers of India. In this way, ground was prepared for a historical logic in the “divide and

rule” policy of the colonial administration in India. After the induction of Indians in colonial setup, attempts were made to create and sustain certain loyal groups among the bureaucracy, setting some groups against others. In following the divide-and-rule policy on religious grounds, the British helped establish various religious schools in different parts of India. In 1888, Syed Ahmad, a retired spy of the East India Company, was financed to open the famous religious school in Aligarh, and he was officially portrayed as a great Muslim intellectual (Janmahmad, 1989). Later, he was bestowed with the title of “Sir.” The colonial administration also helped in the convening of an “All India Muslim Conference.” The religious schools and the All India Muslim Conference were the institutions from where the ideology of Pakistan (ideology of Pakistan is the official doctrine of Pakistani state, which states that followers of Islamic faith in India form a separate nation, so they have the right of having a separate state) was propagated. From these institutions, the future activists and leaders of the religious party, the Muslim League, were recruited.

The British authorities had long before employed the strategy of using religious sentiments of Central Asian people to gain support in their tussle against the Czarist Russia for the dominance of that region. This strategy later became helpful in finalizing the scheme of dividing India on religious grounds. From the eighteenth century, the Czarist Russia was encroaching fast into Central Asia. The region was divided into petty Khanates, and the rulers were at war among themselves. The situation was favorable for any Russian ambition for territorial gains, and the Czarist authorities exploited the situation and began to occupy the Khanates one by one. Alarmed by the fastreaching Russians toward the Indian borders, plans were made to stop the menace before it reached near the precious British possession. As the population of Central Asian Khanates was Muslim by religion, it was thought by the policy planners in London and New Delhi to use the religious sentiments in order to prepare the population against the Russians or to find support for the British cause. Thus, for nearly a century, religion was included among the strategies in the famous “Great Game” played by the Russians and the British spies and diplomats for the control of Central Asia.

## The PhenoMenon of PAn-islAMisM: eMergence of PoliTiCal islAM

The slogan of “Pan-Islamism” and the terminology of “Islamic Nation” were manufactured to create a transnational Islamic movement, which would be allied with the British and could be used against Russians. Writers from different parts of Asia were commissioned for that purpose, and political activists were hired from India, Turkey, and Egypt for the propagation of Pan-Islamism. They were handsomely financed by the colonial administration in India and Egypt. One of the British agents, who became as famous as the twentieth century British military intelligence officer, T. E. Lawrence, in the political developments of the nineteenth century, was Jamaluddin Afghani. There is much controversy regarding the origin of Afghani. He was born in a Jewish family of Kabul according to Dreyfuss (1981), or born in Asadabad in 1838 and adopted the name of Afghani to conceal the fact that he was of Persian Shi’ite origin according to Keddie (1972). Whatever is the origin of Afghani, he became the powerful tool for spreading Islamic fundamentalism, and in many ways was the founder of political Islam of contemporary world.

Controlled by two British experts on the affairs of East—Wilfrid Scawen Blunt and Edward G. Browne—Jamaluddin Afghani was given various tasks and appointed on different positions in different countries of the region. He was installed as the prime minister of Afghanistan in 1866 (Dreyfuss, 1981). In 1869, he was sent to India to coordinate the intellectual efforts on the two-nation theory front with other British agents like Syed Ahmad (Kia, 1996). For a short period, Jamaluddin Afghani became a member of Board of Education in Istanbul in 1870 (Landau, 1990), and according to Dreyfuss, it became possible by active manipulations in the Istanbul court circles by the British. However, soon, the Turkish authorities discovered his true nature, and he was expelled from Turkey. Now he was based in Cairo and was directed to intensify his efforts in the formation of a network of activists and to unite them under the slogan of “Pan-Islamism” or Muslims being “one nation” theory. Under the patronage of the British, the prime minister of Egypt, who

was a known protégé of the British, Jamaluddin Afghani was given an important position in Al Azhar University. Here using his position, he was able to recruit young students for his cause and his followers—Muhammad Abduh and Hasan al-Banna—later founded the Ikhwan Movement or Muslim Brotherhood. In 1879, Jamaluddin Afghani was sent to India and then was installed in Paris where he established a French language journal and an Arabic journal called *Al-Urwah al-Wuthkah* (Landau, 1990). Among the Pan-Islamist circle of Jamaluddin Afghani in Paris were Egyptians, Indians, Turks, Syrians, and North African propagandists mostly recruited by the British military establishment in Egypt. In 1885, under the British manipulations, the weak Qajar king of Persia, Nasir ad-Din appointed Afghani as the prime minister of Iran for a year (Dreyfuss, 1981). After being expelled from Iran within a year, he was installed in London in 1886, and from there, he was instrumental in the destabilization of the Qajar Dynasty by employing and financing religious leaders in Iran. Here he portrayed himself as a descendent of Prophet Muhammad in order to gain wider access in the community of *Shia* religious leaders. His endeavors—and the British finances—helped in the buildup of an uprising by the religious movement of Iran to blackmail and further weaken the Qajar Dynasty in order to gain commercial favors and to compel Persian rulers to bow to the British demands of strategic importance. Afghani was implicated in the murder of Qajar king Shah Nasir alDin in 1896 (Keddie, 1972).

Another target, which was given to Jamaluddin Afghani in London, was to champion vigorously the cause of formation of a military pact between Britain, Turkey, Persia, and Afghanistan against Russia.

Although Afghani's efforts did not produce tangible results in Central Asia and there occurred no real resistance on religious basis against the Russian occupation, his clandestine web of the writers and religious leaders played important role in the consolidation of the British efforts to divide India on religious grounds. The "Pan-Islamic Movement" and the terminology of "Nation of Islam"—introduced by Afghani—were effectively used by strategic planners

in London and New Delhi. The so-called demand of creating a religious state out of India got its ideological foundation from the Pan-Islamic movement of Jamaluddin Afghani.

## The PAKisTAn PhenoMenon

As was observed by Moon (1964), the emergence of India as a free self-governing country had been foreseen more than a hundred years before the final withdrawal of Britain from India in 1947. By the beginning of the twentieth century, with Indian independence being the avowed object of Indian nationalists, and by the end of World War I, such emergence was recognized by British statesmen as the inevitable outcome of the British Raj. The withdrawal already in mind a century before, the colonialist administration in New Delhi and London formulated a very workable plan for the division of India in case of an eventuality.

To pave the way for a future political division of India, in 1905, the British had already announced the partition of Bengal province. As observed by Azad (1988), although the immediate objective was to weaken the nationalist forces, the partition became the model for future division of India. Britain was forced to rescind the partition of the province in 1911, but it did not abandon its overall strategy of “divide and rule.” The true picture of British policies of dividing Muslims from Hindus came into open when the colonial establishment created Muslim League in 1906, a political party composed of loyalist Muslims, spies of the British administration in India, and personalities whose families had been on the payroll of East India Company for a long time. Azad (1988) observed that the immediate objectives of forming the party (Muslim League) included promoting loyalty to the British Government. Some of the East India Company’s sponsored Muslim intellectuals were also directed to join the party in order to give it intellectual support. The Muslim League began declaring that the partition of Bengal was beneficial to Muslims; it condemned agitation against the colonial rule, and it stressed the contribution it could offer in the defense of the British Empire. To bolster the image of the League, the British,

in 1909, introduced separate electorates for Muslims and Hindus at the provincial level. Communal Award of 1932 was the next step, which enhanced the communal divides (Azad, 1988).

Leaders of Indian National Congress launched the Quit India Movement in August 1942. The Movement lasted until March 1943, and it was only defeated by the exercise of massive repressive measures by the colonial administration (Bizenjo, 2008). The open rebellion on the part of Indian National Congress enhanced the position of the Muslim League in the eyes of the British authorities enormously because of its compliant stance during the “Quit India Movement.” While Congress leaders were imprisoned, the Muslim League offered Britain its open support. When Congress resigned from provinces it was governing since the elections of 1937, the Muslim League was invited to form governments in these provinces. The British authorities, however, failed to muster enough support for the Muslim League party among the Muslims of India. The league had never been accepted as the representative political party of the majority of the Muslims in India. It is also noteworthy that important anti-imperialist Muslim leaders were against any division of India on religious grounds. In the elections held in 1937, the League failed to secure Muslim majority votes in any of the Muslim majority provinces of India (Azad, 1988).

## **The PARTITION PLAN**

After World War II, the British imperialists hurriedly put into action their well chalked-out plan of dividing India and then quitting. Early in 1939, the Indian National Congress had firmly told the British that they would not join the war efforts until they were guaranteed freedom in return. Perhaps it was the turning point where the British finally decided to create a state for their loyalists in India before quitting. The British prime minister Winston Churchill, in 1940, had been quoted by many Indian politician, including G. M. Sayyad from Sindh, as having assured the pro-British Sir Skindar in Cairo of creating a country for the loyalist of the British administration in

India (see Janmahmad, 1987). During the same period in 1940, the leader of Muslim League, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, came up with the demand for Pakistan at Lahore Muslim League convention. A resolution was passed in the 1940 Lahore meeting of the Muslim League, demanding the partition of India and creation of a religious state. Mr. Mohammed Ali Jinnah was asked to arrange for the approval of the resolution in the meeting after getting the approval of Lord Zetland, then secretary of state for India. Lord Zetland fully discussed and endorsed the resolution when the Muslim League leader Choudhary Khaliquzaman met him in London (Sarila, 2006).

With the weakened position of the British Imperial power after the Second World War, the British colonial presence in India became untenable. The fundamental concern of the British, however, was to safeguard their long-term interests in the region on the face of an emerging Soviet Russia as a major power. With its mighty army, it was perceived by the authorities in White Hall that Russia would be able to resume her southward march toward Indian Ocean, which was interrupted in nineteenth century by successful British manipulations. As there were no indications that the dominant nationalist leaders in the Indian National Congress will cooperate with their former colonial rulers in matters of strategic and other vital interests in the region, the division of India and carving out an obedient state became imperative for safeguarding of British interests. The Muslim League under the leadership of Mr. Muhammad Ali Jinnah and a host of other leaders who had been on the payroll of the British authorities from generations was ready to serve the purpose of safeguarding the British interests. The eventual creation of Pakistan was to establish a British base in the region after the withdrawal.

The British objectives in the creation of Pakistan were summarized in a memorandum for the prime minister by the military establishment of the Great Britain as follows (Sarila, 2006, p. 26):

- I. *We will obtain important strategic facilities [such as] the port of Karachi and air bases in North West India and the support of Muslim manpower.*
- II. *We should be able to ensure the continued independence and integrity [of] Afghanistan.*
- III. *We should increase our prestige and improve our position throughout the Muslim world, and demonstrate, by the assistance Pakistan would receive, the advantages of links with the British Commonwealth.*
- IV. *Our links with Pakistan might have a stabilizing effect on India as a whole, since an attack by Hindustan on Pakistan would involve Hindustan in war, not with Pakistan alone, but[also] with the British Commonwealth.*
- V. *The position on the Frontier might well become more settled since relations between the tribes and Pakistan would be easier than they could be with a united India.*

Lord Mountbatten, the last Viceroy of India, in an unsigned memorandum summarized the crux of the British view for the creation of Pakistan (Sarila, 2006, p. 28):

*The Indus Valley, western Punjab and Baluchistan[the northwest] are vital to any strategic plans for the defense of [the] all important Muslim belt . . . the oil supplies of the Middle East. If one looks upon this area as a strategic wall (against Soviet expansionism) the five most important bricks in the wall are: Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan.*

*Only through the open ocean port of Karachi could the opponents of the Soviet Union take immediate and effective countermeasures. The sea approaches to all other countries will entail navigation in enclosed waters directly menaced by Russian air fleets . . . not only of the sea lanes of approach, but also the ports of disembarkation.*



*If the British Commonwealth and the United States of America are to be in a position to defend their vital interests in the Middle East, then the best and most stable area from which to conduct this defense is from Pakistan territory.*

*Pakistan is the keystone of the strategic arch of the wide and vulnerable waters of the Indian ocean.*

After the end of Second World War, the British authorities hastily planned to divide and quit the Indian subcontinent. On February 26, 1947, the British Government made the important policy announcement regarding India. It declared its intention to quit India by June 1948 and transfer the authority from British to Indian hands. On June 3, 1947, Viscount Louis Mountbatten, the last British governor-general of India, announced the partitioning of British India into India and Pakistan. With the speedy passage through the British Parliament of the Indian Independence Act 1947, on August 14, 1947, two provinces of Punjab and Bengal were divided, and with the merger of Sindh and Northwestern Frontier Province, the religious state of Pakistan was created.

“Divide and rule” had been employed by imperialist powers throughout history. Division of the people being ruled was considered one of the most practical strategies for the safeguarding of the interests of rulers. In the contemporary world, this policy has caused divisions of nations, tribes, and families in artificially created countries in various regions of the world. Pakistan was created to safeguard multifaceted strategic interests of the British Empire who was, at that time, the guardian of Western Imperial interests in the region. However, the genesis of Pakistan is a unique experience in the history of political science; in that, it was the first country created on the ground that people of one religious faith cannot live with the people of another religious faith. It is also unique in that, according to the “two nation” theory which was used as the ideological base for the division of India, people of different cultural, historical, and

linguistic background can form a nation only upon the basis of their religious faith.

Another unique aspect of the creation of Pakistan was the speed in which a country was established. In 1940, a resolution was passed in a meeting of a party, demanding the division of their country on religious grounds, and within six years, they got what they were demanding. However, taking into consideration the contextual factors discussed above (creation of Pakistan was a must for safeguarding the British interests in the region after its formal withdrawal), the rush to its creation was not surprising.

It is also unique in the history of political science that a country was created without any movement on behalf of the general population and without even one nose being bled in the struggle to create a country. Pakistan became the only country in the world whose national leadership was exported from elsewhere, its ideology was created by the colonial power, its national language was not the language of any national entity of the country, and the population of the areas, which now comprised Pakistan, was overwhelmingly against the creation of Pakistan. For the people of regions, which now comprised Pakistan, it came out of the blue; however, the British decision of partitioning India and creation of a religious state was the culmination of a long-standing and persistently pursued policy of the British colonial administration in India and the policy planners in London for Middle East and Central Asia.

The essence of Pakistan phenomenon has its origin in the occupation of India, the rivalry of the Czarist Russia and the Britain in Central Asia and the emergence of Soviet Union on the horizons of world politics. As will be discussed in the following sections, the creation of religious state of Pakistan was among the happenings of the history, which ultimately caused the demise of the Baloch state of Kalat. By default, it caused one of the most tragic events in the history of the Baloch, where they lost not only their 300 years independent or semi-independent status as a nation in Central Asia, but the new domination of the religious state caused major changes in the society and polity of the Baloch.

# **independence and Demise of the Baloch state**

**I**n the wake of British withdrawal from India in 1947, Balochistan prepares for independence. The Khan of the Baloch, under the pressure of Baloch nationalists and anticipating the coming political scenario in the region, began to formulate strategies for regaining the lost sovereignty of the Baloch state. However, because of his inherent incompetency, personal weaknesses, and the dismal politico-social milieu among the Baloch, and because of secret designs of the British for the region, the chance of regaining the Baloch independence, after the general withdrawal of the colonial power from the region went astray. Balochistan was soon occupied by Pakistan in 1948 after a short-lived independence of only eight months.

## **BALochisTAN PrePAres for indePendence**

The decade of 1930 was a crucial period for the Baloch state of Kalat. The British were planning to quit and divide India for obvious reasons discussed in earlier sections. After the long and destructive rule of Mahmud Khan II, the aged Mir Azam Khan became the ruler of the Khanate on December 10, 1931 (Naseer, 1979). Mir Azam Khan was a featherless ruler, wholly yielding on the wishes of the British administrators in Quetta. Conscious of the rapidly changing scenario in India and anticipating the impending withdrawal of the British from the region, the Baloch nationalists tried to influence the new Khan in favor of their demands for political reforms and tried to embolden him to make preparation for the eventual independence of Balochistan. However, soon, they were disappointed by the sheer

impotence and unwillingness of the Khan to stand firm. Mir Azam Khan died after ruling for only two years, and his son Mir Ahmad Yar became the new Khan of the Baloch on September 20, 1933 (Naseer, 1979).

At this time, the British administrators were practically running the Khanate, and the Khan was the ruler in name only. The last Khan of the Baloch, Mir Ahmad Yar Khan, noted in his memoirs that soon he became aware of this fact. He summarized the administrative structure of his state as follows (see Baloch, 1975, pp. 123-124):

*An agent to the governor-general held the supreme position in the state with political agents in all the districts of Balochistan, while the political agent in Kalat district functioned as the prime minister of the state as well.*

*The Khan was the head of the state merely on paper. For all practical purposes, authority was vested with the political agents who functioned under the direct orders of the Agent to the Governor-General.*

*Nasirabad, Chagai, and the tribal regions of Mari and Bugti had each a separate political agent. Dera Ghazi Khan was absorbed in Punjab, and Jacobabad (originally Khangadh) was given over to Sindh.*

*A portion of Balochistan was passed onto Iran.*

*On key administrative positions, non-Baloch had been appointed.*

Practically speaking, the areas where nominally the Khan was entitled to exert his authority were under the control of tribal chiefs taking direct orders from the British administrators. It is interesting how the British political agent in Kalat, Mr. Wakefield, in one of his administrative reports to the authorities in New Delhi, summarized the state of affairs in Kalat during early 1930s (Wakefield, 1966, p. 79) thus :

*“Kalat was unique among the Indian States in that the ruler directly administered through his Wazir only about one-third of his territory; the remaining*

*portion was under the control of tribal chiefs known as Sirdars. The State was divided into five provinces. Their name had a romantic flavor of Central Asia; Sarawan, Jhalawan, Kachhi, Mekran and Kharan. The last of these Kharan, was administered by its own semi-independent Nawab. Each of the other four provinces contained extensive areas, known as Niabats, for the administration of which the Wazir-Azam was responsible. The Sirdars owned allegiance to the Khan but resented interference by him or by his Wazir in the affairs of their own tribal territory."*

On the general situation of the Khanate, Wakefield (1966, p. 80) wrote thus:

*"... I was conscious only of the appalling confusion into which the whole administration has fallen. Many State employees had not been paid for months. Cash chests in the more distant Niabats were empty. Corruption was ripe. In Makran the edict abolishing slavery, passed in 1927, was still ignored. There was as yet no written law in the State, either criminal or civil. Prisoners languished in jail untried. In Wazir-Azam's office there had accumulated many months of unanswered correspondence."*

The new Khan tried to invoke the articles of various treaty agreements with the British, and after assuming the charge of the Khanate, Mir Ahmad Yar Khan put forward the following demands to the British authorities with reference to various treaty agreements between the British and the Khanate (Baloch, 1975; Naseer, 1979):

1. The British must honor all their commitments, and the treaty of 1876 must be fully honored.

2. All leased and tribal territories such as Chagai, Bolan, Nasirabad, and Mari-Bugti areas should be returned to the control of the Khanate.
3. The Khan should be allowed to announce the establishment of a parliament, which should comprise of two houses.
4. The right to appoint the prime minister of the Khanate should be given to the Khan with the consultation of the British Government.
5. Instead of the tribal chiefs, the Khan should exert control on Jhalawan and Sarawan without the interference of the British political agents.

There was no positive response to the Khan's demands from the British authorities. As observed by Redaelli (2003), the British authorities in Delhi, however, indeed debated on the issue of transferring or partial retransferring of some authorities but not any substantial element to the Khan. The British were not willing to relinquish its hold on Sardars by paying them directly. In January 1938, the Khan again reiterated his demands of transfer of powers in a meeting with the Agent to Governor-General (AGG) in Quetta. His demands were declined on the pretext that he had neither the power nor the administrative machinery to control Sardars.

To strengthen his position, the Khan, in 1939, called a "Consultative *Jirga*" (assembly) of all Sardars and the lesser tribal chieftains from all over the state. He introduced some reforms in the education, bureaucracy, and revenue departments of the Khanate. Schools were opened in many towns, and the educated Baloch youth were recruited in the bureaucracy of the state. The Khan also introduced reforms in the taxation systems in the Khanate as well as some changes in the criminal justice system. The Khan announced the establishment of a cabinet and a Council of State without prior consultation with the British officials. The Council of State was to comprise twelve independent ministerial members of equal importance, and the *Wazir-e-Azam* (prime minister) was to be responsible to the Council of State.

As observed by Axmann (2009), the British vehemently opposed the administrative reforms during their previous discussions with the Khan and became irritated and alarmed by his unilateral actions. They did not openly disavow the actions of the Khan but decided to pursue a policy of combined harshness and flexibility. However, in response to a new memorandum sent by the Khan to AGG, the British authorities yielded to some of the demands while rejecting majority of them. On June 3, 1939, the Khan was informed that subject to the provision of Article 5 of the 1876 treaty, full powers, control, and jurisdiction over Sardars and tribal areas of the state would now be restored to him. The demand for returning the Bolan Pass was rejected, and returning of leased areas was postponed as well as the status of Las Bela was not clarified.

The Khan had placed his demand to the British Government for the restoration of the Khanate's international status; however, a new development in the Indian political scene adversely affected the endeavors of the Khan for regaining some of the autonomy for the Khanate. Way back in 1917, the British authorities had declared their intentions of introducing political reforms in India in order to increase the association of Indians in every branch of administration, concerning the gradual development of self-governing institutions. These intentions were incorporated in the Government of India Act 1921, which gave the Indian provinces powers by devolution. In 1935, another Government of India Act was promulgated, which introduced far-reaching constitutional and administrative changes in British India. Besides formally establishing the province of British Balochistan under the Government of India Act, the Khanate of Kalat itself was declared as a part of India. The Khan protested against the action as it was against the treaty signed by the Khanate and the British Government in 1876. The British Government reassured the Khan about respecting the clauses of the 1876 treaty. However, unsatisfied with the explanation and the attitude of the British administration in New Delhi, the Khan, in October 1940, demanded from the Viceroy of India, Lord Linlithgow, for the approval of posting a representative of the Khanate at New Delhi in order to avoid all possible chances of misunderstanding, to render correct explanation of facts concerning the Baloch state, and to

safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of the state. The Government of India ignored this request, and there was no meaningful response from the colonial administration in New Delhi on any of the Khan's initiatives.

In the wake of eminent British withdrawal from India, the Khan realized the importance of settling the issue of the Khanate status with the British authorities; however, he was not competent enough to take a robust and workable attitude toward the issue. One of the blunders he made in this regard was the hiring of a known protégé of the British authorities, Mr. Muhammad Ali Jinnah, as the lawyer to represent the interests of the Khanate in New Delhi. He was also unable to grasp the reality that the British had made their mind to create a country by dividing India and that his state (the Khanate of Kalat), by its geographical location and its contiguity with the proposed new country, might be collaterally damaged in the process of achieving the goal of making the new religious state viable or sustainable.

To defend the Khanate claim for independence in post-colonial India and in order to achieve the goal of repossession of the leased territory of the Khanate and of regaining the independence of Balochistan, the Khan made personal contacts with the constitutional experts of India. It is interesting to note that in 1936, the Khan of Kalat, Mir Ahmad Yar Khan, retained Mr. Muhammad Ali Jinnah as the most important member of the team of lawyers hired to represent the interests of the Khanate. The decision of hiring of Mr. Jinnah as constitutional expert to plead the case of the Khanate was based on the perception that Mr. Muhammad Ali Jinnah was an ally of the British administration in India. Mr. Muhammad Ali Jinnah, when appointed as the first governor-general of Pakistan in 1947, played a key role in the occupation of Balochistan by Pakistan.



## **cABinet Mission And BALochisTAN**

In 1946, the British Government sent a three-member Cabinet Mission to India in a final bid to devise the methodology for the transfer of power in India. The Mission, comprising the Secretary of State for India, Lord Pethick Lawrence, A. V. Alexander, and Sir Stafford Cripps, arrived in India on March 24, 1946. The Khan of Kalat, Mir Ahmad Yar Khan, approached the mission on behalf of his government to discuss the future status of his state in the scheme of Indian independence. Submitted in the form of an official memorandum to the mission, the Khan of Kalat stated that Kalat expected, upon the cessation of her power in India, to restore its pre-1876 status by regaining its full independence and recovering its sovereign rights over all the Kalat territories held or leased to Britain. The memorandum also stated that the Baloch state would become fully sovereign and independent in respect to both internal and external affairs and would be free to conclude treaties with any other government or state. In his political biography, Mir Ahmad Yar Khan briefly summarized salient features of the memorandum, which was handed over to the Cabinet Mission. They are as follows:

- The Kalat is an independent and sovereign state, its relation with the British Government being based on various mutual agreements and treaties.
- The Kalat is not an Indian state, its relations with India being of only a formal nature by virtue of Kalat's agreements with the British.
- With the ceasing of the agreement of 1876 with the Kalat Government, Kalat would regain its complete independence as it existed prior to 1876.
- All such regions as were given under the control of the British in consequence of any treaty will return to the sovereignty of Kalat state and resume their original status as parts of the Kalat state.
- On the lapse of the British sovereignty, the agreements in respect of the parts under their control shall cease to have any legal binding; and the rights hitherto vested in the

British shall automatically be transferred to the Kalat Government.

In another memorandum to Cabinet Mission, the Khan demanded the return of Quetta, Noshki, and Nasirabad (Baloch, 1975). These areas had been handed over to the British through contracts concerning perpetual lease, and the British had acquired control of them with the treaties in 1883, 1899, and 1903 (Naseer, 1979). It was emphasized in the memorandum that although administration of these territories is vested in the British Government and it is in actual possession of these areas, sovereignty of these areas remains with the Khanate of Kalat. It was also emphasized in the memorandum that a specific declaration of retrocession is necessary before the transfer of power takes place, and there should be a simultaneous delivery of possession as an agreement to retrocede is not sufficient by itself. The memorandum urged upon the British Government that it is imperatively necessary that before it handed over power in India, it should formally declare that they relinquish or retrocede all their powers and authority in and over the *niabats* and districts of Quetta, Mushkaf-Bolan, Noshki, and Nasirabad under the agreements of 1883, 1899, and 1903.

The Khanate of Kalat and the British relations were based on the Treaty of 1876, which committed the British to recognize and respect the independence of Kalat under its Article 3. However, it was only on papers, and as it was discussed earlier, the British never fully honored its treaty obligations vis-à-vis the Khanate of Kalat and with the promulgation of Government of India Act 1935, the Khanate was reduced to the rank of an Indian princely state, at least *de facto* if not *de jure*.

With the accelerated pace of Indian Independence, in 1946, the prime minister of Balochistan sent a report to the political department of the Government of India, discussing the issue of leased areas of the Khanate, which have been incorporated in the Indian province of British Balochistan. On April 11, 1946, the Khan, during his meeting with Indian Viceroy Lord Wavell, explained the Khanate position after the proposed British withdrawal from India.

## The indian Partition Plan And Balochistan

On June 3, 1947, the last British Viceroy of India, Viscount Louis Mountbatten, announced the final plan for partitioning of British India into India and Pakistan. In the months following the announcement, the Kalat Government made a series of meetings and presentations with representatives of the Viceroy and official of the future Government of Pakistan in Delhi. A tripartite meeting was held on August 4, 1947 in Delhi, chaired by Viceroy Lord Mountbatten and attended by his legal advisor Lord Ismay. Kalat state was represented by the Khan of Kalat, Ahmad Yar Khan, and his prime minister Barrister Sultan Ahmad. Mr. Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan represented Pakistan (Bizenjo, 2008). A consensus was reached upon three points, regarding the future of Balochistan.

1. *Kalat state will be independent on August 5, 1947, enjoying the same status as it originally held in 1838, having friendly relations with its neighbors.*
2. *In case the relations of Kalat with any future government become strained, Kalat will exercise its right of selfdetermination, and the British Government should take precautionary measures to help Kalat in the matter as per the Treaties of 1839 and 1841.*
3. *The Khan of Kalat, mentioning his services and those of the Baloch in the creation of Pakistan, expressed his full confidence in Mr. Muhammad Ali Jinnah and the Government of Pakistan to be established under his leadership.*

According to Baloch (1975)—as a corollary to this—a “Standstill Agreement” was agreed between the representatives of the Khanate and the future Pakistani leadership. The agreement was signed by Mr. Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan on behalf of future state of Pakistan and Mr. Sultan Ahmad on behalf of the Khanate of Kalat on August 11, 1947.

The very first clause of the agreement declared that the Government of Pakistan agrees that Kalat is an independent state, being quite different in status from other states of India (Baloch, 1987, p. 256) —

*“As a result of a meeting held between a delegation from Kalat and officials of the Pakistan States Department, presided over by the Crown Representative, and of a series of meetings between the Crown Representative, His Highness the Khan of Kalat and Mr. Jinnah, the following is the situation:*

- *The Government of Pakistan recognizes Kalat an independent sovereign State, in treaty relation with the British Government, with a status different from that of Indian State.*
- *Legal opinion will be sought as to whether or not agreements of leases made between the British Government and Kalat will be inherited by the Pakistan Government.*
- *When this opinion has been received, further meetings will take place between representatives of Pakistan and the Khan of Kalat at Karachi.*
- *Meanwhile, a Standstill Agreement has been made between Pakistan and Kalat at Karachi.*
- *Discussions will take place between Pakistan and Kalat at Karachi at an early date with a view to reaching decisions on Defense, External Affairs, and Communications.”*

## The shorT-liVed indePendence

The Khan of the Baloch declared the Independence of Balochistan in a formal proclamation on August 12, 1947. Nawabzada Muhammad Aslam Khan was appointed as the first prime minister of the independent state. The prime minister and foreign minister of the state were sent to Karachi to negotiate with the Government of Pakistan on the modalities for concluding a treaty and discussion on the matter of mutual interests on the basis of the August 4, 1947 Standstill Agreement, including matters relating to the areas held under lease by the British authorities under different agreements between the British and the Khanate.

The new constitution of the Baloch state had been earlier promulgated by the Khan and was known as the Government of Kalat State Act 1947. It was a way forward, moving toward establishing some kind of a representative system of governance, associating the people with the government and administration of the Baloch state. Implicit in the constitution was the understanding that sovereignty was vested in the institution of the Khan and that the parliament was the representative of the people. According to the constitution, a council of ministers was constituted which was composed of a prime minister and the members of the cabinet. They were appointed by the Khan and held their office at the pleasure of the Khan. The function of the council was “to aid and advise His Highness the Khan in the exercise of the executive authority of the state.” The prime minister was head of the council. The Khan had the power to appoint any person to be a cabinet member, including citizens of other countries (Naseer, 1979).

The legislature was composed of an upper and a lower house. The Upper House (*Darul Umara*) composed of tribal chiefs from Jhalawan and Sarawan. It had forty-six members, ten of whom were appointed by the Khan. Eight of these ten members were to be selected from the Lower House as well as from the Council of Ministers, and the other two members were to be selected from the minority groups, such as the Hindus. The members of the cabinet

were allowed to participate in debates in the house but were not allowed to vote.

The Lower House (*Darul Awam*) was composed of fifty-five members, of whom fifty were to be elected in accordance with rules made under Kalat State Act 1947 and His Highness, the Khan, was to nominate the remainder.

The legislative period was five years, but the Khan was empowered to dissolve any house of the parliament before the term expired as well as to extend the term of any house by a period not exceeding one year. In case of the dissolution of the Upper House, it was the responsibility of the Khan to arrange for a date for the next session of a new Upper House within six months.

Elections were held for the two houses of the parliament under the Government of Kalat Act 1947. The majority of the members in the House of Commons were from the KSNP. The first session of the Darul Awam was held at Shahi Camp, Dhadar, on December 12, 1947. The KSNP, after the proclamation of independence, entered negotiation with the Khan, and some of its leaders joined the state government as secretaries.

## **The cAse of BALoch AreAs in BRiTish BALochisTAN**

At the time when the British decided to create Pakistan, Balochistan was divided into Khanate of Kalat and British Balochistan. The British Balochistan comprised of Afghan areas ceded to the British under the Treaty of Gandamak in 1880 and leased areas of the Khanate of Kalat. After the announcement of Indian plan of independence, the Khan of the Baloch asked for the return of leased territories and the Baloch territories of Derajat. The Khan was unable to take any positive step to regain the possession of the Baloch areas as the British had other plans for the future of Balochistan. The first blow to Balochistan came with the merger of British Balochistan with Pakistan.

The British Balochistan was annexed with the newly created country of Pakistan by using unfair means by the British authorities in Quetta. In a sham referendum, the British authorities were successful in pressurizing the members of *Shahi Jirga* of Quetta Municipality, who were the nominees of the British authorities to vote for the merger of British Balochistan with Pakistan; however, they were unable to muster the support of majority members of the *Jirga*. The date of the referendum was brought a day earlier, and without a voting, it was announced that the members of *Shahi Jirga* voted for the annexation with Pakistan (Janmahmad, 1987). Earlier, the British authorities outrightly rejected the demands of the Baloch tribal chiefs of Mari,

Bugti, and Derajat regions for rejoining the Khanate after the British withdrawal. The Khan of the Baloch protested only mutely on the loss of his precious territories and powerful tribes while they were formally incorporated in the Pakistan scheme.

## **PAkisTAn Builds uP Pressure on The BAloch sTATe: The Beginning of The end**

In August 1947, the Khanate drew the attention of the Government of India toward the Pak-Kalat Agreement, in which it was said that the Government of Pakistan had recognized the Khanate as an independent sovereign state. The Khan's government invited the Indian Government to enter into a similar agreement. Later, a request was made by the representative of the Khan, Sir Sultan Ahmad, on behalf of the Khanate, for permission to establish a trade agency in Delhi. The Khanate's representative was informed that these requests could not be considered.

The Khan went to Pakistan on Mr. Muhammad Ali Jinnah's invitation with a draft treaty, which he wanted to use as a basis for negotiations with the Government of Pakistan. The draft treaty proposed by the Khanate was aimed at entering into a treaty relationship with Pakistan. The proposed treaty suggested the following:

1. The recognition of the Khanate as a sovereign independent state.
2. The conclusion of a friendship treaty against a foreign invasion.
3. To pursue a policy of noninterference in the internal affairs of the respective countries and of settling any disputes through peaceful means.

A viable Pakistan was the aim of the British after their departure from India. As without Balochistan, it was difficult to give a proper geographical and strategic viability, the British authorities pressed upon the Pakistani leaders to take practical actions for incorporation of the Baloch state into newly created religious state. The person who was hired by the Khan to represent the case of the Baloch state before the colonial administration in New Delhi was now playing the role of Brutus. Mr. Muhammad Ali Jinnah and the Pakistani authorities were openly being encouraged by the British administration in India to deal with (the danger of) an independent Balochistan. The United Kingdom's High Commissioner in Pakistan had already officially warned the Government of Pakistan of the dangers of recognizing the Khanate as a sovereign independent state. An extract of a secret memorandum prepared by the British Minister of the State for The Commonwealth Relation Office on September 12,

1947, which is clearly indicative of the master-minding role of the British Government in future development of events leading to the occupation of the Baloch state by Pakistan in 1948 (Baloch, 1987, p. 257) is as follows :

*“Pakistan has entered into negotiations with Kalat on the basis of recognizing the state's claim to independence and of treating the previous agreements between the crown and Kalat providing for the Lease of Quetta and other areas, which would otherwise lapse under section 7 (I) (6) of the Indian Independence Act, as international agreements untouched by the termination of*



*paramountcy. The Khan of Kalat, whose territory marches with Persia, is, of course, in no position to undertake the international responsibilities of an independent state, and Lord Mountbatten, who, before the transfer of power, was warned of the dangers of such a development, doubtless passed on this warning to the Pakistan Government. The United Kingdom High Commissioner in Pakistan is being informed of the position and asked to do what he can to guide the Pakistan Government away from making any agreement with Kalat which would involve recognition of the state as a separate international entity."*

As mentioned earlier, Pakistan was of great importance for the defense of the Persian Gulf and other long-term strategic interests of Britain in the region. Concerned by the rise of the Soviet Union as a great power after the Second World War, an emergent progressive and anti-imperialist movement in Iran against the British puppet king Reza Shah, an apparently pro-Soviet Union Afghanistan, it was imperative for the British to strengthen the artificially created state of Pakistan by any means. Occupation of Balochistan by Pakistan was among one of the strategic moves in this respect.

## StrAngulation of BALochisTAN

Mr. Muhammad Ali Jinnah, after being appointed as the governor general of Pakistan, began to pressurize the Khan for the merger of the Baloch state with Pakistan. During a meeting with the Khan of the Baloch in October 1947, he proposed the accession of the Khanate of Kalat to Pakistan. He told the Khan that an independent Balochistan was not viable, and it would be better that the Khanate should decide for the merger in a peaceful way. Receiving explicit threat from his former hired man who had now become the heir to the colonial masters in the region, the Khan summoned his parliament. From December 12-15, 1947, the *Darul*

*Awam* (House of Commons) held several sessions and debated the issue of Khanate relationship with Pakistan and the consequences of any move by Pakistan against the Baloch state. The House of Commons rejected any form of merger with Pakistan or compromising any part of sovereignty of the Baloch at any cost. In a resolution, *Darul Awam* unanimously rejected the proposal for accession of Kalat into Pakistan. The *Darul Umarah* (House of Lords) met on January 2-4, 1948, and endorsing the decision of the *Darul Awam*, unanimously rejected the accession proposal. Pressed by the Pakistan Government, the Khan once again referred the accession issue to both the Houses for reconsideration.

*Darul Awam* again rejected it in its session held on February 25, 1948, and *Darul Umara*, in its session held two days later, also refused to accept it (Baloch, 1987; Janmahmad, 1989; Naseer, 1979).

After failing to achieve its target peacefully, Pakistan resorted to use other options. In order to cripple the Baloch state, the Pakistan Government manipulated Kharan and Lasbela—the two subordinate states of Kalat—for their “merger” with Pakistan directly. Similarly, Makuran, another province of Khanate, was forced to declare its “independence” from the Baloch state on March 17, 1948. It was later lamented by Mir Ahmad Yar Khan in his memoirs (Baloch, 1975) that the Pakistani Cabinet was working on the scheme to break up hundreds of years old Baloch state. The taking over of Khanate provinces of Makuran, Kharan, and Las Bela, according to him, was tantamount to the political castration and geographical isolation of the Khanate of Kalat. The Government of Kalat issued a press statement declaring Kharan, Lasbela, and Makuran inalienable parts of Balochistan. A few days later, the Khan, in a press interview, expressed his desire for an amicable settlement of the dispute with Pakistan over the accession of its three constituent units of Kalat.

Worried about the defense of the Khanate against the aggressive moves from Mr. Muhammad Ali Jinnah and not fully realizing the real intentions of the British, the Khan instructed the commander-in-chief of the Khanate forces, Brigadier General Purvez, to

reorganize the forces and to arrange for acquiring arms and ammunitions. Brigadier Purvez approached the Commonwealth Relations Office and the Ministry of Supply during his visit to England in December 1947. However, it was made clear to him that no supplies would be authorized to Khanate without the approval of the Pakistan Government (Bizenjo, 2008).

The prime minister of the Khanate visited Karachi and met Mr. Muhammad Ali Jinnah. He was handed over a letter from Mr. Muhammad Ali Jinnah, dated February 2, 1948, addressed to the Khan. In this letter, once again, he forcefully repeated his demand to join Pakistan. The parliament of the Khanate in February 1948 was finally informed by the prime minister of the Baloch state that Pakistan had refused to enter into a treaty relationship and had demanded unconditional accession (Naseer, 1979).

On March 18, 1948, the Pakistan Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a press state ment, announcing that Pakistan had accepted the accession of Makuran, Kharan, and Las Bela. With the occupation of these territories by Pakistan, the Khanate became strangulated and lost its geographical connection with Iran and Afghanistan and was left without any out let to the sea. The Khanate protested and demanded a denial. Pakistan refused to accept the protest and accused the Khan of plotting against the interests of Pakistan. The Khan denied this allegation and threatened to approach the International Court of Justice and the United Nations. The Khan also warned the Pakistan Government and Mr. Muhammad Ali Jinnah from betraying him and the Baloch nation. Denying the allegations of Pakistan, the Khan also denied any talks, which his government was allegedly having with Afghanistan or India (Bizenjo, 2008).

The Pakistan Government justified its unconstitutional act and aggression on the following grounds (Naseer, 1979):

- a) The Khan was offering through an agent (most probably Abdul Samad Khan Achakzai, a pro-Congress leader from

- British Balochistan) for accession to India and was ready to provide facilities for the use of Kalat airfields to India.
- b) The Khan offered Afghanistan the use of the seaports on the Makuran coast.
  - c) The Khan was seeking British protection when the news of the “accession” of the areas of the Khanate reached Kalat.

After gaining the possession of Khanate provinces of Makuran, Las Bela, and Kharan, the Pakistani authorities were now openly threatening the use of force against the Baloch state. The tribal chiefs and various political parties and groups, including KSNP, advised the Khan that since it is not possible to face the Pakistan Army in a head-on collision, in the given situation, the only option to defend the country is to wage a defensive war from mountains. The Khan was advised to proceed to Afghanistan and from there approach the United Nation while the Baloch fighters would wage a guerilla war against the invaders. However, the Khan could not muster enough personal courage, and under the influence of his English advisor Mr. Douglas Fell, he decided to hand over the Baloch state to Pakistan.

The short-lived independence of Balochistan ended on March 27, 1948. The Khan of Kalat, Mir Ahmad Yar Khan, after hearing the news that the Pakistani troops had moved into southern coastal towns of Pasni and Jiwani, eventually succumbed and affixed his signature to the Agreement of Accession on March 27, 1948, terming his action as “dictate of history.”

*“I confess, I knew I was exceeding the scope of my mandate . . . [but] had I not taken the immediate step of signing Kalat’s merger, the . . . British Agent to the Governor-General could have played havoc by leading Pakistan into a fratricide war against the Baluches (Baloch, 1975, p. 162).”*

Mir Ghous Bux Bizenjo, the leader of the House of Commons at the time of the collapse of the Baloch state, observed that in taking such

a step—in gross violation of the will of Baloch people as expressed unanimously by the members of both Houses of Parliament—the Khan rendered himself guilty of an act of great injustice to them by his act of cowardly submission to the invaders (Bizenjo, 2008).

The Pakistani authorities resumed the full charge of the Khanate on April 1, 1948 by appointing a political agent for the administration of the Khanate. This shattering of the dream of regaining their sovereignty was the most shocking events for the Baloch all over the world. A short-lived and ineffective resistance against the occupation led by the younger brother of the Khan was crushed by Pakistan, political activists were arrested, and KSNP was banned. The Baloch dreams of an independent and honorable status were shattered by the grand designs of an imperialist power safeguarding its interests in the region. A state of overall frustration and humiliation prevailed among the Baloch.

## **Fall of the Baloch state: an overview**

**T**he Baloch tribes, after centuries of wandering through different regions in the Iranian plateau, finally settled in the region, which became known as Balochistan. The growing need of pasturelands and overcoming the resistance of the indigenous population necessitated the Baloch tribes to organize themselves in military formations. During the medieval period with the formation of tribal unions and after being dominant culturally on the region with the assimilation of other ethnic entities in a broader Baloch identity, there emerged a strong national consciousness among these agro-pastoralist nomadic tribes. Development of a national identity and domination of the Baloch cultural values in Balochistan created the necessary ideological basis for a state. Although different tribal unions and confederacies tried to establish their hold on various regions, due to various reasons, they failed to develop into chiefdoms or primitive state structures. By the time, strong Nahrui Baloch confederacies in Sistan and Rind and Laashar confederacies in Kachchi vanished as potent forces. From early seventeenth century, two tribal confederacies led by the Buladai in Makuran and Brahui led by the Ahmadzai clan in Turan found circumstances favorable to establish chiefdoms. Buladai replaced Malik rulers of Makuran as autonomous chiefs for a while, but, eventually, Makuran was incorporated into emerging Khanate of Kalat. The Brahui confederacy transformed into the Baloch Khanate of Kalat, which, by the time, incorporated the whole Baloch regions and functioned in an independent and semi-independent status for 300 years. During 300 years of its existence, the Khanate had fallen twice: once in 1839, when the British occupied Kalat, and for the

second time, it was occupied by the newly created state of Pakistan in 1948. The causes for the decline and final demise of the Baloch state can be categorized and argued on various contexts. The causative factors, which brought down the Baloch state on two occasions, were similar in nature and context. The search for the causes of the fall of the Baloch state reveals a multitude of hard truths and realities concerning the governing system and the geopolitical environment of the region. On both occasions, it appears that the Khanate suffered intertwined political, economic, and personal crises, which helped the external forces to intervene and strangle the Baloch state.

## **inTernAl cAuses of The decline of The khAnATe**

After an initial period of glory beginning from the advances made by Mir Abdullah Khan and carried out by Mir Naseer Khan I, a process of decline followed, which culminated with the occupation of Balochistan by the British in 1839. Internally, the Khanate gradually became weak, and the factors responsible for this gradual decline may include absence of clear rules of succession, absence of state institutions, inter-tribal and regional animosities, absence of financial resources, and the process of cyclic decay among the Ahmadzai ruling clan.

### **ABsence of cleAr rules of succession**

The system of succession in Balochistan was quite different from the primogeniture model followed by other similar states of the region during the seventeenth century. The Khanate was a voluntary union of the Baloch tribes controlled mainly by tribal chiefs of Sarawan and Jhalawan. In the formative period of the Khanate, a supreme authority, having the title of Khan of the Baloch, was nominated with the consent of the tribal chiefs. This tradition was followed for some time; however, by that time, the traditional institution of nominating the Khan became ineffective with the manipulation of powerful Khans. The Khans, in order to limit the authority of the tribal chiefs on the nomination of the Khan and on

the running of the state machinery, tried to play one tribe against other—covertly or overtly. It became the priority of successive Khans to sow the seeds of distrust among the powerful chiefs of Sarawan and Jhalawan.

Succession differences gained momentum with the death of Mir Naseer Khan I in 1794. His nephews challenged the succession of his sons as the Khans. The tribal chiefs jumped into the succession struggle by siding with one or the other contender. By asking help from neighboring powers in the struggle, the contenders for the throne paved the way for future interference and encroachments by these powers. The fight for the accession continued until the end, and the tribal chiefs and the interference of foreign powers continued to play their negative roles. It can be observed that successive Khans acquired power by force or manipulation of the loyalties of rival tribal groups. In the process, major sections of the Baloch masses were excluded from the power structure. Suppression of any dissent by force further alienated a large portion of population of the Khanate from the affairs of the state.

Manipulations on the part of the Khan weakened the authority of the tribal chiefs. As their authority was threatened, the tribal chiefs became involved in the unending struggles concerning the succession led by various contenders for the throne of Kalat after the death of each Khan. These tug of wars, on many occasions, caused the enthronement of members of the Ahmadzai family who clearly lacked the ability and potential for ruling a state, having complex dynamics as did Kalat. The installment of undeserving candidates as the Khan of the Baloch by the time not only eroded the authority and trusts of the Khan among the masses but also gradually caused the fragmentation of the very fabric of the Baloch polity in the coming years.



## **ABsence of sTATe insTiTuTions**

For a state system to run on strong foundations, formal state institutions are fundamental. These are essential for delivering services to their citizens, controlling misuse of power, and for proper accountability of state officials. Failure to provide basic education, health services, and lack of infrastructure are important reasons for the weakening of a state.

Formal institutions can prevent any direct schism between the state and the masses by acting as a cushion. In order to achieve resilience, the state must achieve “institutional hegemony,” that is, it must be able to set the rules by which society is governed. The institutions acting under the law will be engaged in promoting compromises and resolving conflicts among individuals and groups. Unfortunately, in the Khanate of Kalat, the Khans never pursued the path of a broader project of creating a state that serves a collective good or even of creating institutions that are capable of developing independent perspectives and acting on behalf of state interests distinct from rulers’ personal interests.

The absence of any functional state institution was responsible for creating a situation where outsiders, soldiers of fortune, and mediocre lackeys of rulers took on a wider range of political roles conventionally reserved for state institutions. Such would be providing internal security for rulers and relations with tribal chiefs and establishing diplomatic relations with neighboring powers. In a classical tribal state, this would forestall any claim on the sovereignty of the ruler from coequals and brothers-in-arms. The advice and suggestions of mediocre advisors, mercenaries, and lackeys of foreign origin on major issues of national importance further widen the gap not only between the ruling Ahmadzai clan and the tribal chiefs but also created a disconnection between the general population and the institution of the Khan. As a result, this initiated a process of gradual disenfranchisement of Khan’s well-wishers and loyal tribes in the matters of governance, causing further alienation of tribal chiefs and the committed well-wishers of

the Khanate and Ahmadzai ruling clan. The eventual effect of the systematic downgrading of their clan members and close tribal allies in favor of dependant clients produced negative results for the Khanate's stability.

In the absence of proper state institutions, the tribal chiefs and rulers of various dependencies gained disproportionate importance. By the time, they replaced the state as the representative of local interests and cultural practices, and ultimately gained the status of being a bridge between state and society. The state represented by the Khan increasingly became weak, and the state building process came to a near halt undermining the internal stability of the state and limited the manipulative capabilities of the Khanate with external powers.

## **inTer-TriBAL And inTrA-TriBAL AniMosiTies**

The Khanate came into existence when the Baloch tribes of Jhalawan and Sarawan came together to organize themselves in a union and take over the governance of Balochistan. Initially, in power, the union produced good leadership, organized egalitarian social system among their subject population, became powerful, and was economically well off. However, soon afterwards, the social cohesion began to drift, dwindle, and visibly decay; it was mainly because the personal interests of the ruling clan and tribal chiefs clashed with the interests of general population. The interests of tribal chiefs clashed with the interests of clan chiefs, causing intra-tribal fractions.

The history of the Baloch state had been a history of inter-tribal and intra-tribal animosities. This was because of seeking out land and extending authority and influence by the tribes and their chiefs. Intertribal rivalries were also fuelled by divide-and-rule tactics employed by successive Khans in their bids to undermine the influence of powerful tribes so that they could be neutralized before becoming a potential threat to the authority of the Khan. Tribal chiefs usually formed short-lived alliances either to counter a similar

alliance or to strengthen themselves against the manipulations of the Khan. These rivalries ultimately turned into civil wars as the tribes divided and fought each other during succession battles between the different contenders of the throne.

Countering the Khan's power and overwhelming influence, the tribal chiefs espoused the doctrine of tribal and regional autonomy. In the dependent regions of the Khanate—Makuran, Kharan, and Las Bela—the local tribal groups were often engaged in a type of independent movement. Despite chronic factionalism, there occurred always a small but crucial degree of solidarity among the Baloch in the face of external aggression; nevertheless, inter-tribal and intratribal animosities prevented the implementation of any coherent administrative and economic policy if desired by any Khan.

After the British advent in Balochistan, the rivalries between tribal chiefs and the Khan and among various tribes were successfully exploited by colonial administrators in order to weaken the Baloch resistance. Due to continued internal strife, neither the Khans could emerge as strong leaders nor were they able to make their Khanate into a relatively powerful and stable state. The never-ending conflicts between various tribes and the Khans were instrumental in forcing one or the other group to ally itself with an outside power, thus threatening the stability and long-term survival prospects of the Khanate. The interests of the Khan, tribal chiefs, and rulers of various dependencies of the Khanate had been greatly diverged from those of their general population. A state of alienation and apathy was prevailing on both the occasions when the Baloch state was overrun by foreign forces in 1839 and 1948.

## **ABsence of finAnciAl resources**

There was no formal system of revenue generation in the Khanate. No taxes as such were paid to the government. The Khanate was being run by tributaries from the dependent regions or from land

revenues (*batai*) of Kachchi. However, the tribal chiefs were entitled to collect certain levies in kind from their tribal territories and landholdings, such as *Rahdari* or toll tax, *Mali*—one animal from a flock of fifty, and *Bijjar*—a volunteer contribution collected from his tribesmen.

After the reign of Mir Naseer Khan I, the revenue income of the Khanate declined significantly in the wake of territorial losses, wars of successions, and tribal rivalries. As trading had not been a skill in which the Baloch excelled, the trade was controlled by merchants based in Sindh and Kandahar. These merchants were the only source of financing the Khan, the tribal chiefs and ordinary Baloch living in villages or nomadic settlements. The Khans, tribal chiefs, and the elite section of the Baloch society became permanently indebted to these merchants with psychological, political, and administrative repercussions. It became impossible to run the finances of the state without the support of the merchant group. The services provided to the ruling elite by the merchants were so substantial that they became influential in all sphere of the Baloch society. As they were based in Sindh and Kandahar, and the situation in the Khanate was often not ideal for investment, the influential merchants drew profit up and out but there was no reinvestment in the productive process in the Khanate. Economic activities were limited to tending sheep and cattle besides farming. Farming depended almost entirely on rains, and rains were a very rare occurrence in most areas of the Khanate. Only a very small and insignificant share of produce came from *Karezes*.

The strength and stability of a state correlates not only to neighboring states but also correlates strongly to available resources and economic durability, and there was no economic foundation of the Khanate. The poorly institutionalized Khanate could not develop the means to seriously spur sustainable economic growth. With unstable political conditions, there occurred economic deterioration. With limited finances, it became impossible for the Khans to maintain a standing army or develop a functioning bureaucracy, which undermined not only the position of the ruling Ahmadzai clan

but also prevented any concrete effort for introducing a centralized administrative setup throughout Balochistan. It became impossible to maintain a decent court in Kalat and to sustain campaigns against unruly tribes, or to maintain a sufficient force for law and order with limited resources of the Khanate.

## **degenerATion of The ruling clan**

The Khanate was created and stabilized by powerful personalities and gained its glories under the robust leadership of Mir Abdullah Khan and Mir Naseer Khan I. It lost its glories and witnessed its fall due to ineffective and degenerated successors.

According to Gibbon (1789), the history of oriental dynasties is one of unceasing round of valor, greatness, discord, degeneracy, and decay. The medieval analyst of political developments in Middle East, Ibn Khaldun, posited that the rulership of tribal dynasties is held together and united by group feelings, cohesion, and solidarity of the tribes forming the backbone of such dynastic rules. Abandoning the ways of nomadic tribal ways and adoption to the luxury of the settled life had been mentioned by one of the causative factors in the fall of dynasties in his famous cyclic theory (Bonte, 2003). Due to solidarity and cultural togetherness, the group of tribes took control of governance, administered justice, and, as time went by, the controlling group adapted to living in luxury and opulence in urbanized setting, which caused the overthrowing of the group (Alatas, 2008). The Ahmadzai clan as a whole had become effeminate, unwilling to live a tough life, which was fundamental in ruling a tribal society like the Baloch. The Khanate succumbed to external invasions in 1839 and 1948 partly due to the gradual loss of virtues in the person of the Khans. They had become weak, outsourcing their duties to run the state by people of slave origin or persons born from concubines, opportunist courtiers, and foreigners, who, then, became so powerful that they were able to take over the Khanate in practical terms.

Corresponding to the personal degeneration of later Khans was a rise in the status and power of mediocre supporters of the Khans and foreign officials in the policymakings of the Khanate. Subservient only to their personal interests, these officials destroyed the foundations of the Baloch state by alienating the tribes and masses. The Khans for exercising their own autocratic authority dispensed with all those who had helped their ancestors to the throne of the Khanate and surrounded themselves with flatterers and sycophants. At the time of British invasion of Kalat in 1839, the Baloch tribes and men of self-respect stayed away and refrained from any involvement in the matters of the Khanate. Many able tribal chiefs, who could have played vital roles in the defense of the Khanate, had already been killed on various pretexts.

After the death of Mir Naseer Khan I, his successor, Mir Mahmud Khan, proved inadequate to the task of rebuilding his father's state. Seeing his deficiencies and weaknesses, the peripheral territories reasserted their independence and the tribal chiefs began to act independently. His successor, Mir Mehrab Khan II, tried to stop the decline for a while but lacked the diplomatic skills in dealing with unruly tribal chiefs, and he was also unable to curtail the activities of his powerful advisors of foreign origins. Encircled with mediocre advisors, the Khan became detached from the realities of the Baloch society. His advisors were not able to comprehend fully the intricacies of the Baloch society and tribal relationship. However, in pursuit of self-interests, they cleverly exploited the disgruntlement of the Baloch chiefs to further the schism between the Khan and the subject. This gave them further advantage on the Khan, and they increased their grip on the Khanate affairs to the detriment of longterm interests of the Baloch state.

Mir Khudadad Khan was unable to comprehend internal and external development taking place in the region. He did not accommodate to the changing situation, which had arisen by a resurgent Persia, and the intensifying game of influence played by the British and the Russians in Central Asia. He was also unable to come into the grip of the reality of "divide and rule" policy of the

British regarding the internal affairs of his Khanate. Gradually, his position became untenable, and in 1893, he was forced to abdicate. He was succeeded by Mir Mahmud Khan II who was personally a man of many weaknesses. The Baloch saw his personal behavior not according to the accepted Balochi norms. Hated by his subjects, he closely identified himself with British interests and received strong British support but at the price of continued erosion of the power of the Khanate and respect of his family.

The last Khan of the Baloch, although an ambitious person and was relatively well aware of internal needs of reforms and adapting of policies to deal with external developments in the region, because of personal weaknesses of various nature failed to achieve his desired goals. Many among the Baloch directly blame him for the collapse of the Baloch state in 1948. One of the towering personalities of the Baloch national struggle in the twentieth century, Mir Ghous Bux Bizenjo, while lamenting on the death of the Baloch state, observed that at the crossroads of history, Balochistan was unfortunately without a robust leadership. According to Bizenjo, a leadership, which was needed to consolidate the newly achieved independence after a long and dark period of colonial rule, was lacking. At this crucial period of the Baloch history, the Khan of the Baloch was a broken man, and the grit and conviction to defend the independence of the Baloch state was no longer in him (Bizenjo, 2009).

Accession of a nomadic tribe to power is due to many factors, including the whole male population of such a tribe being fearless warriors. However, city-dwelling changes the nature of nomadic invaders, ignites rivalries among them over the political power and distribution of wealth, and causes continuous fission and schisms in the ranks of the ruling tribes and allied tribes. It was not only the Ahmadzai clan who lost its vigor after taking the control of the Khanate in 1666 but also a process of decay could have been observed in tribes of Sarawan and Jhalawan and their leadership on whose strength the Khanate was created. After the acquisition of lands in Kachchi, the role of tribal chiefs changed from a

commander of a militant force to a landlord chief taking the role of administering estates, negotiating disputes between tribesmen, shopkeepers, and peasants, and dispensing patronage. In the process, the martial aspects of tribal leadership diminished. The military prowess of the Khanate diminished as it was based only on the will of the Baloch tribes to protect their state and not on military training and technological know-how.

## **hisToricAl hAPPenings in The regionAl And inTernATionAl PoliTics**

Important historical happenings in the eighteenth-and nineteenth-century Europe were directly responsible for the occupation of Kalat in 1839, the division of Balochistan under various boundary commissions, and the final demise of the Baloch state in 1948.

The British Empire and the Napoleonic France were engaged in violent contest for political influence and for colonial possessions in Asia and Africa. From the time of Peter the Great, Russia was flexing her muscles and advancing westward, eastward, and southward in pursuit of its grand expansionist designs. The presumed Russian desires to reach the warm waters of Indian Ocean brought them into direct confrontation with the British. Securing the precious colonial possession of India became the prime military and political concern of the British administration in Calcutta, New Delhi, and London. A great game of high espionage and proxy war was fought in Central Asia between Russia and Britain with some direct or indirect involvement of France. Balochistan sustained heavy collateral damages in this conflict.

Keeping a friendly Iran, maintaining Afghanistan as a viable buffer state, and creating Pakistan were the major policy decisions of the British Empire during the long-drawn “Great Game.” After the Bolshevik Revolution of Russia in 1917, the “Great Game” continued with much vigor but with the addition of an ideological



element of socialism versus capitalism. Two world wars, the advent of socialist Russia and its support for colonized nations, and gaining of mass support by national liberation struggle led by popular leadership of Congress Party made it untenable for the British to retain India. The British decision to withdraw from India in 1947 and to design plans to safeguard its long-term interests in the region, and to counter the growing advance of socialism in Asia made it imperative for the British to divide India and create a client state of their own in the region. The creation of Pakistan and the British manipulation to make it viable made the demise of the Baloch state inevitable.

In the wake of British withdrawal from India in 1947, the Khanate could not defend its newly acquired independence for obvious reasons. The international situation was not favorable for the Baloch, the sociopolitical milieu of the Baloch was not exemplary, and, above all, Balochistan was unfortunately without a robust leadership. With the degeneration of ruling Ahmadzai clan, a leadership that was needed to consolidate the newly achieved independence was lacking. The enemies of the Baloch cleverly exploited these weaknesses, and a perpetual state of subjugation was imposed on Balochistan.

## **The long walk from Balashagan to Balochistan**

**T**he historical journey of the Baloch is a tale of persecution, genocide, deportation, and struggle for survival. It is the story of a pastoralist nomadic people who not only survived against tremendous odds but also, as one of the unique examples in the history of Central Asia, became the master of a land where they initially entered as a group of migrating nomadic tribes. Their journey brought them into the present land of Balochistan, where they become culturally and linguistically dominant. They gave their name to the region and created a state of their own. After treading smoothly for a while, enjoying the dignity and honor in their newfound state, due to short-sightedness of their rulers and under the influence of strategic policies made in faraway lands, their journey into history ended with the occupation of their land and loss of their sovereignty.

It has been established that the Baloch belong to Indo-Iranic group of tribes. However, it is difficult to simply state that the people who presently call themselves Baloch belong to a homogenous racial entity. It would be justifiable to identify the Baloch as an admixture of original median branch of Aryan tribes with various invading nations and with the indigenous population of various places where the Baloch had been wandering in their long and tortuous journey. This is apparent from the diversity of the physical type of the Baloch, which strongly indicates that they had been mixed with other ethnic groups even before they began their migration from their original abode in the Caspian region toward east or before the beginning of their forced dispersion to eastern and southern corners

of the Persian Empire. In ancient times, there had been an admixture of various people with Baloch like the Scythians, Parthians, Arsacid, Saka, Kushans, Huns, Turks, and many others. This fact also cannot be denied on any ground that the Baloch were greatly influenced by the languages and cultures of the indigenous population, which they came into contact at different stages of their walk from Balashagan to Balochistan. In the course of their *en masse* migrations, they have linguistic and cultural influences from Armenians, Kurds, Arabs, Turkmens, Persians, Dravidians, and other Indian groups. Indeed, a section of the Baloch tribes in present-day Balochistan speaks a language (Brahui), which is an admixture of Balochi, Turkish, and Dravidian languages. In present-day context, the Baloch identity can be defined as the feeling of a people of being “Baloch.”

The first phase of the Baloch history begins when a group of Indo-Iranic tribes of Central Asia, during the great migrations of Aryan tribes, settled in northwestern Iranian region of Balashagan (Balashagan) in ancient times. Here they were known as Balaschik. It is not clear whether they got their ethnic name by virtue of being the inhabitants of Balashagan or the land itself got its name from the people known as Balaschik. It appears that this group of pastoralist nomads had the firm belief in their way of life and could not tolerate any interference by outside forces neither on their traditional ways nor any encroachment on their territory. This behavior caused this people many miseries.

As part of wider Indo-Iranic group of tribes, the Balaschik were living as neighbors of other major or minor national entities of the ancient Central Asia like Medes, Persians, and the Parthians. They made strong linguistic and cultural connections with a Median group of tribes, which, later, became known as Kurds. Although they have been scantily mentioned in the historical accounts of that period, it appears that the Balashchik came into confrontation with major powers of the region while in Balashagan and sometimes, they became allies and part of the armies and fought for these powers.

Their head-on collisions with mighty Achaemenid and Sassanid rulers resulted in disasters for them. The history of their persecutions begins with vows of Achaemenid and Sassanid emperors to wipe out the Baloch from the face of earth. Although the persecutions, acts of genocide, and vows to annihilate the Baloch failed to materialize fully, the Baloch became a wandering nation and lost their territory and close ethnic allies. Circumstances forced this pastoralist nomadic group of tribes to migrate *en masse* and abandon their original homeland. After many centuries of wandering and sufferings, these pastoralist nomads ultimately settled in the south and eastern fringes of Iranian plateau.

The tortuous history of their long walk from Balashagan to presentday Balochistan and from being Balashchik to becoming Baloch is a tale of miseries and wanderings. However, to survive physically against all odds and retaining their ethnic identity and keeping unity among various Baloch tribes at the times of tragedies and misfortunes is extraordinary and shows the resilience of this people. Out of Balashagan and fleeing from persecutions, they scattered in different regions, including Sistan, Makuran, and Turan. It appears that at the time of the collapse of the Sassanid Empire, however, major concentration of the Baloch tribes was in Kerman.

With the fall of the Sassanid Empire and emergence of Arabs as the dominant power of the region in the seventh century begins a new chapter of the Baloch history. Starting from the alliance with Sia Sawar Baloch, the Baloch made their first contact with the advancing Arabs. At that time, they were mentioned as Koch o Baloch in the Arabic and Persian chronicles of that period. In the long drawn-out struggle for supremacy between the crumbling Persian Empire and the emerging Arabs, the Baloch failed to adopt a unified stance. Some of the Baloch, under the leadership of General Sia Sawar, sided with the Arabs, while the rest either adopted a neutral position or joined the Iranian resistance against the invading power. In the end, the Baloch faced persecution, humiliation, and deportations in various regions by the new rulers of Iran.

The persecution of the Baloch by conquering Arabs is one of the ugly episodes of the Baloch history. From the deportations and acts of genocides during the Arab supremacy the Baloch became very weak, materially and militarily. However, among them developed an increased sense of solidarity and national pride, which became fundamental in the formation of a national consciousness during the dark days of wanderings and migrations in medieval times.

The medieval period was a period of major upheavals in and around the Iranian plateau. The history of the Baloch in the medieval times is marked by bloody conflicts with various regional dynasties of the region after the collapse of Arab power in Iran. The Baloch, tribes who had been scattered in different regions of southeastern fringes of Iranian plateau, came into direct conflicts with Saffarids, Ghaznavids, Buyids, Seljuqs, and Mongols. It was the Buyids and Seljuqs who were responsible for major acts of genocide and mass deportation and migration of the Baloch from Kerman and Sistan. It is interesting to note that the acts of barbarism against the Baloch were justified by the powers of the day on the ground that the Baloch had been continually harassing the settled population of the region. However, the fact is that these “harassments” were rather a reaction from the Baloch against encroachments on their traditional way of living a life independent of any state or organized authority.

The Baloch history of medieval times is also marked by painful migrations, struggle for survival, development of formal tribal structures, formation of tribal unions, and settling of a section of the Baloch in permanent settlements. Although, for obvious reasons, the Baloch tribal confederacies could not play a major political role in the power-plays of the region at that time, nevertheless, it was the dominating cultural and linguistic influences of these unions which later formed the basis of the Baloch national identity. With the dominance of the Baloch culture and language, the whole area became recognized as Balochistan (the land of the Baloch).

One of the important happenings in the Baloch history of that period was the *en masse* migration of a group of the Baloch tribes from

Barez Mountain of Kerman into Turan via Sistan. The union of these tribes who later became known as Barezui or Brahui into a confederacy paved the way for the establishment of the first Baloch state. The development of Brahui language (which is an admixture of Balochi dialect spoken around Bashkard region with elements of Turkish and Dravidian languages) is also a remarkable happening of medieval period in a Baloch perspective.

History of the Baloch people during medieval times is a history of fundamental social transformation in which individual tribal identities gave way to larger tribal groupings. There also occurred fundamental changes in the social organization of the tribes. During this period of constant uncertainty and conflicts, the Baloch tribes began to organize in strict hierarchical patterns, which are still being manifested in the social organization of many tribes in contemporary Balochistan.

Among the important developments during medieval times was the establishment of core cultural values in the Baloch society. Sociocultural values, which govern the conventions on various rights and responsibilities of a Baloch, were firmly established during the twelfth and sixteenth centuries. It was the particular context of constant vigilance against uncertain situations and assimilation of other ethnic and tribal entities into the Baloch national identity that became responsible for a stubborn behavior and a secular mindset among the Baloch.

The phenomenon of the Baloch national identity began to take shape. In an unprecedented but remarkable development, the wandering and nomadic Baloch tribes began to assimilate vast segments of other ethnic groups. The history of the Baloch in this period is also marked with the adaption of a settled way of life and involvement in the agricultural activities. Taking firm roots of a secular mindset was established during this period, which is one of the fundamental Baloch social behaviors and is the result of intermingling and assimilation of various ethnic groups with diverse religious beliefs.

Now it has been established beyond any doubt that the Balochi language belongs to the northwestern group of Iranian languages related to Middle Persian and Parthian languages and having close affinities with Median languages like Kurdish, Tati, and Taleshi. With the absorption of various influences from the languages spoken in the areas where the Baloch came into contact during their migrations, the Balochi language took its present shape and became the *lingua franca* of the region where they finally settled. In the consolidation of the Baloch cultural values and development of a Baloch national consciousness, it played a fundamental role.

The political turmoil of the seventeenth century in India and Persia became very important for the Baloch. The whole area was witnessing dramatic changes because of the intense power struggle between the dying empires of the Mughals and Safavid and the European powers, which were increasingly encroaching on various regions of India and Persian Gulf. In the prevailing state of anarchy, various regional ethnic groups began to assert themselves. Following the example of Abdalis and Gilzais of Harat and Kandahar, various Baloch confederacies also joined the race. The first Baloch state emerged from the fog of chaotic state of the affairs in the region.

The establishment of the first Baloch chiefdom in Turan, which later transformed into the Baloch state of Kalat, was a turning point in the history of the Baloch. The migratory pastoralist nomads finally became the master of a region, having their own ruler or Khan. Their state incorporated the cherished Baloch social and tribal values into its unwritten constitution and remained on the map of the world for about 300 years. The Khanate of Kalat was the first Baloch state to embrace all Baloch regions in western and eastern Balochistan and consolidate them into a body under the authority of a central government.

With the establishment of the Khanate, there occurred fundamental changes in the economy and society of the nomadic Baloch tribes. Acquisition of agricultural lands of Kachchi offered a relatively firm

economic base for the impoverished masses in Turan. With the enthusiastic support of the tribes of Sarawan and Jhalawan, the Khanate was able to expand its authority into a vast area. The Baloch became familiarized with the ways of settled life, and a period of economic wellbeing and nation-formation began.

The history of the Baloch state is a story of ups and downs. It is marked with expansions westward and eastward. It is also marked with the struggle of the Baloch state to retain a sovereign status vis-à-vis emerging powers of Persia and Afghanistan. The history of the Baloch state is also marked with continued struggle of power between various contenders among the Ahmadzai ruling clan. After the initial phase of unity between tribal chiefs and the Khan, there was a continued tussle between the Khan of the Baloch and tribal chiefs.

The immediate successors of Mir Ahmad were unable to sustain the gains made in political, administrative, or financial aspects of the state. The chiefs of tribes and the Khans were vying for safeguarding their traditional powers in the framework of the Khanate. Sardars were operating with considerable independence, often breaching the solidarity of the Khanate by appealing to authorities at Sindh and Kandahar for support in factional disputes among themselves and with the Khan. To counter the influence of Sardars, Mir Mahabat Khan nearly surrendered the sovereignty of the Baloch state to Afghan Kingdom.

The Baloch state reached its peak under the leadership of Mir Naseer Khan I. His reign, which lasted for almost fifty years, was the golden age of the Khanate of Kalat. During the latter half of the eighteenth century, Kalat attained its maximum territorial expansion, conquering western parts of Makuran and various regions of Sistan, including Nemroz. He introduced land reforms and held the law and order in full control, boasting economic activities in the state. After Mir Naseer Khan I, continued civil war, struggle for the throne of the Khanate among the various members of Ahmadzai clan, intrigues of court officials, and loss of important territories to



Punjab, Afghanistan, and Sindh were events that caused the prestige, power, and finances of the Khanate at a very low ebb.

The occupation of Balochistan by the British in 1839 was a watershed in the history of the Baloch. The Khan of the Baloch was killed, and the Khanate came under the rule of the British East India Company. Under different treaties, Balochistan lost its sovereignty and the British-ruled Balochistan through puppet Khans. The Baloch resistance against the occupying forces was disorganized and failed to have an impact. As tribal chiefs led the resistance, the colonial power skillfully manipulated them in order to divide the Baloch resistance. However, failing to get a firm grip on Balochistan through Khan and Sardars, the British took over the direct control of Balochistan by signing a treaty in 1876. Introduction of administrative reforms by the British administration changed the basic fabrics of the Baloch society, and it helps the British to crush successfully the pockets of Baloch resistance against their rule.

The phase of the Baloch history, which begins by the British occupation of Kalat, witnessed increased Persian incursion upon western Balochistan and the ultimate division of Balochistan under various boundary commissions. This division gave a major portion of Balochistan to Persia and a small territory to Afghanistan. The British policy of appeasement toward Persia, their obsession of establishing Afghanistan as a viable buffer state between Russia and British India, and the protection of Indo-European Telegraph Line were the immediate causative factors in the division of Balochistan.

The Baloch resistance against Persian domination in western Balochistan finally collapsed with the fall of the Baloch chieftdom of the Barakzai Dynasty. After gaining full control of western Balochistan, the Persians took drastic measures to erode the foundation of the Baloch national identity and cultural traditions. They embarked upon a systematic and well-planned program of total assimilation of the Baloch into an artificial Persian national identity.

The phase of the Baloch history, which began in the twentieth century, had far-reaching consequences for the Baloch as an independent national entity. After the collapse of the Baloch resistance against occupation, beginning from the first quarter of the twentieth century, the political mobilization of the Baloch against the colonial domination continued under the leadership of a group of the Baloch youth. They began to mobilize the Baloch masses by forming the *Anjuman-e-Itehad-e-Baloch-wa-Balochistan*. The *Anjuman* became Kalat State National Party, which was the first political party in the history of the Baloch. It became the guiding force in the struggle to regain the sovereignty of the Baloch state in the wake of British withdrawal from India in 1947.

The creation of the religious state of Pakistan in 1947 was among the happenings of the history, which ultimately caused the demise of the Baloch state of Kalat. Before quitting, the British divided India by creating a state on religious grounds, joining various Muslim majority regions. During the process of division and independence of India and withdrawal of the British, the Baloch witnessed a shortlived independence of their country. However, they also witnessed the tragic occupation of Balochistan Pakistan.

Many factors were responsible for the collapse of the Baloch state. Balochistan was without a robust leadership, the international situation was not favorable for the Baloch, and creating and sustaining a viable Pakistan to serve its regional interest was the top priority of the colonial power. With the occupation of Balochistan by Pakistan on April 1, 1948, the Baloch dreams of regaining their sovereignty after a long period of colonial occupation were shattered, and a state of overall frustration and humiliation prevailed upon the Baloch horizons.

The long walk from Balashagan to present-day Balochistan and from being Balashchik to Baloch was tortuous and painful. However, to survive physically against all odds and retaining their ethnic identity and keeping unity among various Baloch tribes at the times of tragedies and misfortunes, is extraordinary. It is an

interesting aspect of the history how an ethnic group, consisting of pastoralist nomads from the hardship of centuries of wandering through Iranian plateau, not only survived physically but successfully struggled to preserve their national and linguistic identity, and within a few centuries, they were able to establish a nation-state in the regions where they settled after their long wanderings.

The historical journey of the Baloch is still not ended. Their struggle to regain their lost sovereignty is continuing. The contemporary history of the Baloch is marked with tales of heroism from the Baloch resistance fighters and violent events causing human tragedies, human right violations, and acts of genocide on the part of the powers controlling the Baloch and Balochistan.

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