

Political Turmoil in Balochistan During the Musharraf Era, 1999-2008

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ABSTRACT

The paper examines the political and economic policies of General Musharraf era towards Balochistan and emergence of political turmoil in the province. It also evaluates the political leaderships' role in opposing the federal government's policies that launched a programme of mega development projects for the uplift of the impoverished province. The political leadership considered military government's policy of development as a threat to their survival. The Chieftains of the province tried to maintain the status quo and felt a threat to lose their traditional political constituencies and strong holds. The federal government considered the opposition an impediment to social and economic development and tried to develop the region. The most radical politicians waged an insurgency against the state to stop the implementation of mega projects and development of Balochistan.

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Introduction

This paper critically analyses the political and economic policies of Musharraf era and its repercussions on the politics of Balochistan. General Pervez Musharraf overthrew the Nawaz Sharif government in October 1999, suspended the 1973 Constitution, and designated himself as Chief Executive, while avoiding an outright pretence of Martial Law. Soon after his take over, emboldened by Chief Justice Irsad-led the Supreme Court's verdict, the military government initiated a programme of mega development in the province. Tensions between the Baloch leadership and the military government mounted when Justice Nawaz Marri, a judge of the Balochistan High Court, was assassinated by unknown assailants in January 2000.¹ The military government arrested Nawab Khair Bux Marri under the murder charge. The arrest led to sabotage activities including assaults on security forces in the province. After Marri's arrest, political turmoil increased the political leadership declared their opposition to the government's plan to build a seaport at Gwadar and establish cantonments in Balochistan. The central government's modernization and development policy endeavours in the province met with resistance by provincial political leadership.²

Reactions soon set in and sporadic violence against migrant Punjabis and government installations continued. Its intensity was such that it forced the federal government to constitute a parliamentary committee to resolve the conflict.³ Before the committee could submit its report, Balochistan was engulfed with dreadful violence prompted by the killing of Chinese engineers at Gwadar in 2004, rape of Dr. Shazia Khalid at Dera Bugti, and miscreant's rocket attack when President

1 "Pakistan: judge shot dead," http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/594423.stm January 7, 2000 (accessed May 14, 2014).

2 Martin Axmann, *Back to the Future the Khanate of Kalat and the Genesis of Baloch Nationalism 1915-1955* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2008), xvii.

3 "Parliamentary Panel on Balochistan," *Dawn*, Islamabad, Sep. 30, 2004.

Musharraf visited Kohlu in 2005.⁴ This paper seeks to investigate the causes and implications of resurgence of political turmoil in the province.

Arrest of Khair Bux Marri and Resurgence of Political Turmoil

In January 2000, some unknown assailants killed Justice Nawaz Marri, a judge of Balochistan High Court. In response to the murder, military government jailed for 18 months Nawab Khair Bux Marri, who claimed that he was arrested and punished for refusing to endorse plans to explore gas and oil from the Marri tribal area. Furthermore, he asserted that during the arrest he was not interrogated about the assassination of the Judge but about his training and activities in Afghanistan in the 1980s.⁵ The provincial government alleged that Nawab Khair Bux was behind the murder of the Judge. For his part, Marri insisted that he was being pressurized to ease his opposition to the exploration of natural resources in the district of Kohlu, a stronghold of his tribe. Nawab Khair Bux was an impediment to the exploration of oil and gas in the Marri area and was arrested with a view to control the warring Marri tribe.⁶ The arrest caused fury among the Marri tribesmen, triggering most volatile reaction leading to attacks on government installations. The killing of Justice Marri was the first incident in Balochistan during Musharraf government that gave new lease of life to the political turmoil.

The 2002 General Elections and the Baloch Political Parties

In 2002, the military regime held General Elections by debarring the political leadership of PML-N and Pakistan PPP.

4 "Saboteurs Will Fail, Says Musharraf: Rockets Fired during President's Kohlu Visit," *Dawn*, Islamabad, December 15, 2005.

5 Farhan Hanif Siddiqi, "The Political Economy of the Ethno-nationalist Uprising in Pakistani Balochistan, 1999-2013," in *The Political Economy of Conflict in South Asia*, ed., Matthew J. Webb and Albert Wijeweera (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 68.

6 Muhammad Kazim, (BBC Reporter from Balochistan), Interview by Author, Quetta, January 1, 2016.

The regime formed king's party, the PML-Q that comprised mainly turncoats from the PML-N and PPP. In addition, the regime was instrumental in the formation of asix-party religious-political alliance, the MMA. Both the PML-Q and MMA obtained majority of seats in Balochistan and formed a coalition government in the province.

Table 1: RESULTS OF BALOCHISTAN ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS 2002 (PARTY POSITION)

Sr. No.	Party Name	Total	Women	Non-Muslims	Total
1.	Balochistan National Democratic	1	0	0	1
2.	Balochistan National Movement (BNM)	3	1	0	4
3.	Balochistan National Party (BNP)	2	0	0	2
4.	Jamhoori Watan Party (JWP)	3	1	0	4
5.	Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal Pakistan (MMA)	14	3	1	18
6.	National Alliance (NA)	5	1	11	7
7.	Pakistan Muslim League (Quaid-i-Azam)	15	4	1	20
8.	Pakistan People's Party Parliamentarians (PPPP)	2	0	0	2
9.	Pakistan Pashtoonkhwa Milli Awami Party (PkMAP)	2	1	0	3
10	Total Party Candidates	47	11	3	61
11	Independent	1	0	0	1
12	Postponed Re-poll	2	0	0	2
13	Enquiry	1	0	0	1
	Grand Total Constituency Seats	51	11	3	65

SOURCE: Election Commission of Pakistan.⁷

The results revealed a fragmented verdict with 38 new members entering the Assembly while only 11 veterans were

⁷ www.ecp.gov.pk/Documents/General%20Election%202002/Party%20Position%20PA.pdf

losing the contest.⁸ The General Elections 2002 gave birth to a Provincial Assembly which had only graduate members.⁹ The military government had restricted membership of assemblies to graduates under the Conduct of General Elections Order, 2002. The restriction worked to keep out seasoned nationalist leaders.¹⁰ The PML-Q and the MMA formed a coalition government in Balochistan.

The military's alliance with the religious parties evidently alarmed the local leadership of Balochistan. The Baloch political leadership considered support of religious parties as a 'talibanization' of the province.¹¹ The military's policy of co-opting religious parties alienated the pro-federal political parties and stiffened their resistance to the policies of the central government.¹² The pro-federation parties were incensed by the regime's power-sharing with religious parties. Jam Muhammad Yousaf, a centralist chieftain, was elected Chief Minister of the province.¹³ Yousaf enjoyed little control over political and security matters in the province as the Assembly was overwhelmed by religious parties that derived

8 Election Commission of Pakistan, "General Elections 2002 Report", vol., II. <https://www.ecp.gov.pk/ge/ge2002vol2.pdf> (accessed March 11, 2017),343-369.

9 Election Commission of Pakistan, "General Elections 2002 Report", vol., II. <https://www.ecp.gov.pk/ge/ge2002vol2.pdf> (accessed March 11, 2017),343-369.

10 The traditional nationalist parties' constituencies were greatly affected by the influence of religious parties that were backed by the military regime. See Iram Khalid, "Balochistan: A Darkening Shadow of Mistrust", in *Conflict within State: A Case Study of South Asia and South East Asia Insurgencies*, ed. Iram Khalid (Lahore: Maktaba Tamir-i-Insaniyat,2006), 121-136.

11 The province of Balochistan witnessed an abrupt increase of religious seminaries in the Northern Districts, where Pashtuns are in majority. See Malik Seraj Akbar, "Threat to Secular Balochistan", *Dawn*, March 9, 2009.

12 Sana Baloch, *The Balochistan Conflict towards a Lasting Peace* (Bradford: Pakistan Security Research Unit, 2007).

13 Balochistan chieftains such as James, Jamalis, Raisainis, and Magsis to name a few had been pro-government in colonial and post-colonial Balochistan to advance their interests at the cost of common Baloch grievances. These tribal chiefs have been loyal to Islamabad in conflict and peace times and have succeeded to gain maximum perks and privileges from the successive civil or military governments at the centre.

their support and guidance more from the central government than from provincial leadership. At the centre, President Musharraf's nominee Zafarullah Khan Jamali, a moderate tribal chief, became the Prime Minister after 2002 elections.¹⁴ Electoral manipulations and malpractices drove the political leadership further away from democratic process and towards political turmoil in the province.

Opposition to the Mega Projects of the Central Government

The military regime launched a scheme of mega development projects for the uplift of Balochistan. This included construction of highways, dams, irrigation canals, and a seaport.¹⁵ No other project, however, aroused as much nationalist resistance as the proposed construction of the Gwadar Deep Sea Port. The announcement to construct a port on the southern coast of Balochistan gradually shifted resistance from Marri-Bugti tribal areas to Makran region.¹⁶ In the previous conflicts the people of Makran Division had remained peaceful and struggled only for the rights of Balochistan. The port project intensified political resistance and engulfed hitherto peaceful regions.¹⁷ The military government used force to curb this opposition, declaring the project as crucial to the whole country's economic development.

In 2001, the central government had announced that it would construct Gwadar Port at the coastal city of Gwadar, on the Arabian Sea, with Chinese aid and collaboration. President Musharraf and Chinese Vice-Premier Wu Bangguo

14 Alok Bansal, "Balochistan: Continuing Violence and its Implication," *Strategic Analysis*, 30, no. 1 (January-March 2006), 56.

15 Azmat Budhani and Hussain Bux Mallah, "Mega Projects in Balochistan", Collective for Social Science Research, March 2007, http://www.researchcollective.org/Documents/Mega_Projects_in_Balochistan.pdf (accessed April 20, 2015).

16 Frederic Grare, *Balochistan: The State versus the Nation* (Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2013),8-9.

17 Agha Hassan Jan (General Secretary BNP-M), Interview by author, Quetta, February 20, 2014.

inaugurated a ground-breaking ceremony for the purpose on March 22, 2002.¹⁸ The strategic port is located just 624 nautical km to the East of the Straits of Hormuz, which is a short route for oil transporting ships destined for western countries out of the Persian Gulf. Gwadar is 460 km away from Karachi in the East and 120 km away from the Iranian border in the West.¹⁹ The Gwadar port would be linked to Central Asia by a road and rail network which is currently under construction, funded by China. According to Ray Fulcher, the construction of the seaport has unlocked the prospects of an emerging free port in the province, which is projected to create substantial economic prospects for Balochistan.²⁰

The project was celebrated nationally with claims that it will reduce poverty and under-development in Balochistan. However, nationalists claim that the port would encourage inward migration and affect Balochistan's demography, turning Baloch into minority in their own homeland.²¹ The government's measures and occasional incentives have failed to buy off the opposition.²² The federal government's top-down approach to developing and integrating Balochistan within the national mainstream could not produce any tangible results.

Local people's fishing activity along the sea coastlines is a major source of income in the Makran region. The development of the port has created difficulties for the fishermen of the area, threatening their source of livelihood. Traditionally, Makranis had been reliant upon fisheries and

18 Saleem Shahid, "Gwadar Project Launched: Musharraf Lauds China's Assistance," *Dawn*, March 23, 2002.

19 Syed Fazl-e-Haider, *Economic Development of Balochistan: Potential, Constraint, issues & Suggestions* (Karachi: Shabbir-Ud-Din, 2004), 41.

20 Ray Fulcher, "Balochistan: Pakistan's Internal War," *Green Left Online*, 2006, <http://www.greenleft.org.au/2006/692/35932> (accessed April 13, 2011).

21 Akhtar Jan Mengal (President Baloch National Party), Interview by Author, Islamabad, January 11, 2016).

22 Shah Muhammad Marri, (A Baloch Intellectual), Interview by Author, Quetta, December 30, 2015.

ship-building industry, marketing and transportation of seafood.²³ The government allocated a key part of the city for the construction of the port, which disturbed the population with the commencement of the development work.²⁴

The pro-federation nationalists maintain that they do not oppose the development of their province but exploitation of its resources. They are concerned for Baloch rights and identity under an influx of economic migrants and the weight of migrant culture. Dr. Abdul Malik, former Chief Minister of Balochistan has claimed that Musharraf wanted to legislate to change the status of Gwadar to a Federally Administered Area.²⁵ The nationalist parties were determined to prevent any such move of the military government. The provincial leadership was not even invited when the project was signed with the Chinese Premier.²⁶ The unilateral decisions of the central government on mega projects based in Balochistan fed into nationalist resentment and even the moderate leaders detested this stark unilateralism by the centre. They insist that only Balochistan should be the key recipient of income from its natural and mineral resources and that the benefits should not be left to the mutual discretion of Pakistan or Chinese governments.²⁷

The feared influx of two million people from other parts of Pakistan alarmed the Baloch as did the presence of countless Afghan refugees who along with Pashtuns constitute a majority in the northern districts of Balochistan. It was this fear of losing majority that partially accounted for their suspicions about development work. The Baloch perceived and not

23 Fazl-e-Haider, *Economic Development of Balochistan: Potential, Constraint, Issues & Suggestions*, 40.

24 Balochistan National Party, "Gwadar: Past and Future," Gwadar, BNP Publication, Nd.

25 Abdul Malik (Central Leader of NP and Former Chief Minister of Balochistan), Interview by author, Islamabad, January 13, 2016.

26 Saleem Shahid, "Gwadar Project Launched: Musharraf Lauds China's Assistance," March 23, 2002.

27 Rabia Aslam, "Greed, Creed, and Governance in Civil Conflict: A Case Study of Balochistan." *Contemporary South Asia* 19, no. 2 (June 2011), 197-98.

without any good reason, their majority and majority right shrinking if the flow of population to the province is not stopped.

The mega project that created stiff opposition is the building of Gwadar Port. The central government claimed that the port would attract huge business activities and would give boost to the national economy. As the port is being linked to Karachi, the largest city of Pakistan, the nationalists grudge why is it not linked with Balochistan's urban centres such as Turbat, Panjgur and Quetta? They are convinced that the poor province would benefit the least from the mega scheme.²⁸ The nationalist opposition to the construction of Gwadar Port did not dent the military government's determination to develop the province as it deemed fit. In May 2007, the regime announced that it was going to build another port at Sonmiani in Las Bella District.²⁹

In return, Musharraf blamed Baloch nationalists, particularly Nawab Marri, Akbar Bugti and Sardar Ataullah Mengal who, he thought, wanted to appropriate all the benefits by controlling such projects. He held the tribal chieftains responsible for the underdevelopment of the province, branding them as "vicious, decadent and unforgiving."³⁰ The military government termed the demands and concerns of the Baloch as baseless. The General used military force for the implementation of its policies and to eliminate opposition.³¹

28 Abdul Hakim Baloch, "Bringing development to Balochistan," *Dawn*, Karachi, December 13, 2004.

29 Saleem Shahid, "Gwadar Port Inaugurated: Plan for Second Port in Balochistan at Sonmiani", *Dawn*, Quetta, March 21, 2007.

30 In 2012 an article titled "Understanding Balochistan" appeared in one of the widely read national newspapers of Pakistan. Signed by Pervez Musharraf, this article was purportedly an attempt to dispel some of the "myths and misconception" about Balochistan. Apart from his scathing criticism of Baloch sardars, he vaunted the "development" works carried out in the province during his tenure. Pervez, "Understanding Balochistan," *News International*, March 14, 2012.

31 Shakoor Ahmad Wani, "The Changing Dynamics of the Baloch Nationalist Movement in Pakistan: from Autonomy toward Secession." *Asian Survey* 56 no. 5 (September/October 2016): 807-832.

For their part, the nationalists went on criticizing the military for the destruction of Baloch identity and for failing to establish any genuine institutions for the empowerment of youth. They suspected the Gwadar project as a masquerade for turning the Baloch majority into a docile minority. Driven by consideration of identity and loss of political space they rose in revolt and engaged in sporadic violence against the security forces.³²

Parliamentary Initiative to Placate the Baloch Leadership

The escalating unrest in the province, concomitant with resurgent Baloch political turmoil, forced the military leadership to seek political solution.³³ In August 2004, the then caretaker Prime Minister Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain constituted a parliamentary committee to investigate the problems of the province and suggest ways to improve the situation. The committee was divided into two sub-committees; one led by Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed was to study the volatile situation of Balochistan and make recommendations for its solution; the other under the chairmanship of Senator Wasim Sajjad, an eminent jurist, was to suggest recommendations “for promoting inter-provincial harmony and protecting the rights of provinces.”³⁴

The committees discussed the conflict and submitted reports. They urged: (1) the provision of a formula for giving royalty on gas and development surcharge; (2) strict implementation of job quota of 5.4 percent for the province in all federal government corporations and institutions, as under the constitution; (3) relocation of the office of Gwadar Port Authority (GPA) from Karachi to Gwadar, preference for local youth in the port jobs; (4) speeding the work in highway infrastructures connecting the province with other provinces

32 Anwar Sajjidi, (Veteran Journalist of Balochistan), Interview by Author, Quetta, January 2, 2016.

33 Grare, *Balochistan: The State versus the Nation*.

34 Senate of Pakistan, “Report of the Parliamentary Committee on Balochistan,” Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Report no. 7, Islamabad, November 2005, 9.

of the country; (5) effective measures against drought, easing the water shortage in the province; (6) and judicious distribution of funds among the federating units through NFC award, and due consideration to the viewpoint of Balochistan; (7) and policy and confidence building measures in the province.³⁵

Ironically, these recommendations were not implemented, neither in letter nor in spirit. Mushahid Hussain expressed his concern. He was confident that if even 15 percent only of the committees' recommendations had been applied, the intensity of the conflict in Balochistan would have subsided.³⁶ The non-implementation of the committees' recommendations ended the temporary peace on 14 December 2005. Baloch insurgents attacked with rockets the military camps in Kohlu where President Pervez Musharraf was present to address tribal elders. The security forces launched counter offensive against the Marri tribes in Kohlu district.³⁷

The Shazia Khalid Case and the Escalation of Political Turmoil

The main trigger for renewed political turmoil was the January 2005 rape of Dr. Shazia Khalid, who was then working at the Sui Hospital in the Pakistan Petroleum Limited complex at Sui. Captain Hammad of Pakistan Army was accused of the crime.³⁸ The government mishandled the incident and attempted to cover up the crime and shield the culprit. There was massive outrage in Balochistan, particularly in Dera Bugti area, where the crime had taken place.³⁹ Perceiving it as an

35 Senate of Pakistan, "Report of the Parliamentary Committee on Balochistan," Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Report no. 7, Islamabad, November 2005, 95-100.

36 *Dawn* Islamabad, March 3, 2006.

37 Noor-ul-Haq. "Balochistan Disturbances: Causes and Response." *IPRI Journal* 6, no. 2 (Summer 2006), 67.

38 BBC News, "Raped doctor: I'm still terrified," June 29, 2005, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/4633849.stm (accessed January 4, 2015).

39 Asia Pacific Report, "Pakistan: Continuing unrest in Baluchistan", *Keesing's Record of World Events*, 51, no.1, (2005), 464-65.

affront to their honour, Bugti tribesmen, led by Akbar Bugti, waged an armed revolt against the state.⁴⁰

Dismissing the charge, General Pervez Musharraf accused the victim of fabricating the rape case to implicate a serving Army captain and to seek political asylum in a Western country. The General's remarks evoked condemnation throughout Pakistan, while Bugti demanded justice for the victim.⁴¹ Neither the police nor the country's courts ventured to prosecute the officer. Sensing the severity of the matter, the government deployed more troops in the area to counter the possible reprisal by the tribes. To add insult to injury, the President threatened that the Baloch "would not know what had hit them", if they would not stop firing at the forces.⁴² The threat was counterproductive as the Baloch retaliated with greater zeal and fury.⁴³ Akbar Bugti considered the defence of the culprit officer a direct insult to tribal honour.⁴⁴

Groups of insurgents started attacking security forces and railways. They blew up gas supply lines disrupting the supply of gas to the country, halting industrial units in Punjab and Sindh. The military retaliated with greater force to stop the

40 Shakoore Ahmad Wani, "The Changing Dynamics of the Baloch Nationalist Movement in Pakistan: from Autonomy toward Secession." *Asian Survey* 56 no. 5 (September/October 2016): 807-832.

41 Pervez Hoodbhoy, "Deference to the Mullahs, Iron Fist for the Rest: Pakistan under Musharraf", *Economic and Political Weekly* 41, no. 40 (October 7-13, 2006), 4232-4233. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4418775> (accessed June 4, 2012).

42 Declan Walsh, "Pakistan's Gas Fields Blaze as Rape Sparks Threat of Civil War," *Guardian*, (February 21, 2005). <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2005/feb/21/pakistan.declanwalsh>, (accessed January 13, 2012).

43 Declan Walsh, "Pakistan's Gas Fields Blaze as Rape Sparks Threat of Civil War," *Guardian*, (February 21, 2005). <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2005/feb/21/pakistan.declanwalsh>, (accessed January 13, 2012).

44 "Sui Rapist Must Hang: President," *The Dawn*, (February 25, 2005); Syed Saleem Shahzad, "Tribals looking down a barrel in Balochistan," *Asia Times Online*, January 15, 2005, http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South_Asia/GA15Df07.html, (accessed March 1, 2013).

damage of national installations.⁴⁵ During the visit of Musharraf to Kohlu, there were a series of rocket attacks on security forces. While Musharraf was attacked too, the IG of the FC, Major General Shujaat Zamir Dar, and Divisional Inspector General Brigadier Salim Nawaz, were wounded in Kohlu district. Enraged, Musharraf ordered to eliminate militants in the province.⁴⁶

The Assassination of Akbar Bugti and its Political Repercussions

The major opposition to Musharraf's policies in Balochistan was led by Akbar Bugti — otherwise a moderate politician who felt compelled to launch armed struggle. He offered armed resistance from Dera Bugti District, his traditional stronghold, and challenged the security forces.⁴⁷ Musharraf tried to cow down nationalists saying it was not the 1970s and that if they did not get in line, "they will be so struck with new weapons—they will hardly know what happened to them."⁴⁸ The climax came when Nawab Bugti was assassinated in Kohlu District on August 26, 2006.⁴⁹ Bugti became a political martyr and was widely mourned in Balochistan and throughout the country among those opposed to military rule. The assassination was widely condemned in Pakistan. It created a furore in the province, further firing separatist sentiments and attacks on security forces, destruction of national installations and gas

45 Rajshree Jetly, "Resurgence of the Baluch Movement in Pakistan: Emerging Perspectives and Challenges" *Pakistan in Regional and Global Politics* ed., Rajshree Jetly, (London, New York: Routledge, 2009), 215.

46 Yunas Samad, "Understanding the Insurgency in Balochistan", *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics* 52, no. 2 (2014), 294.

47 Alok Bansal, "Nawab Akbar Bugti's Assassination: Future Portents," *Strategic Analysis*, 30, no. 3, (Jul-Sep 2006): 650.

48 "President Pervez Musharraf Speech," Pakistan Television, January 10, 2005.

49 Saleem Shahid, "Bugti killed in operation: Six officers among 21 security personnel dead," *Dawn*, August 27, 2006.

pipelines. The insurgents also targeted Punjabi settlers and doctors and teachers from other provinces.⁵⁰

Bugti was a leading nationalist politician of Balochistan and was loyal to the state of Pakistan.⁵¹ In 1973, he had publicly acknowledged that he was involved with NAP leaders in a conspiracy to liberate Balochistan. This claim was rejected by Ghaus Bux Bizenjo, the then Governor, and by the Chief Minister Attaullah Mengal. The testimony of Bugti “gave Bhutto the pretext to dismiss the NAP Government.”⁵² Bugti was made Governor of the province and as such a party to curbing the Baloch nationalist uprising in 1973. Bugti’s relations with successive federal governments had often been tense but never spiralled out of control during the decades of eighties and nineties.⁵³

Nawab Bugti was not initially the leading voice of Balochistan while Khair Bux Marri and Attaullah Mengal were. Bugti believed in the federation and integrity of Pakistan since independence. His nationalist stance was not based on secessionism rather it focused on greater autonomy, economic and political rights for the province. He had never followed aims beyond the constitutional limits.⁵⁴ Rather he pursued the politics of reconciliation and accommodation with the federation. Towards the end of his political career, he

50 Samad, “Understanding the Insurgency in Balochistan”, 302.

51 Nawab Akbar Bugti was chieftain of the Bugti tribe and politician of Balochistan. He had held important positions in the Provincial Government during 1958, 1973-1974 and 1989-1990 and actively supported the Baloch nationalist cause. Bugti’s fort in Dera Bugti was placed under siege by the armed forces for two months in 2002 on accusations that he supported saboteurs engaged in blowing up gas pipelines and disrupting supply to the rest of the province and the country.

52 Paul Titus, “Introduction” to Sylvia Matheson, *The Tigers of Baluchistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2007), xvii.

53 BBC, “Unrest after Pakistan Rebel Death,” (27 August 2006), http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/5290194.stm, (accessed January 10, 2012).

54 Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency (PILDAT), “Balochistan Civil Military Relations,” Issue Paper (March 2012,) www.pildat.org, (accessed, April, 2014), 1721.

became a symbol of defiance, changed into a separatist and was killed in the process.

Bugti's assassination only intensified opposition to the central government in Balochistan. General Musharraf went on emphasizing that the writ of the state is supreme and warned "if someone wants to fight Pakistan he has to fight me first."⁵⁵ The assassination of Nawab Bugti was followed by the killing of Balach Marri by Pakistan Army on the Pak-Afghan border on November 21, 2007. Balach had headed the leader of banned BLA and had escaped to Afghanistan following Bugti's death. Marri's killing resulted in widespread outbursts and enraged the people of Balochistan, which testified to the gravity of the loss.⁵⁶

Unlike other tribal chieftains, Bugti was both admired and despised even among his own sub-clans. According to Surrat Khan Marri, "Bugti was neither a freedom lover nor a nationalist as his politics was driven by self-interest. He was a feudal lord and wanted to be sole authority of Balochistan."⁵⁷ It was Islamabad's historic blunder to turn him into a political martyr and an icon of Baloch resistance. The incident added to the list of Baloch grievances about the central government, especially the military.⁵⁸

Conclusion

Musharraf's policy of developing the province without taking the political leadership into confidence led the political turmoil in the province to challenge the military's rhetoric of development. Musharraf had a militaristic approach towards political problems

55 D. Suba. Chandran, "Akbar Bugti and After Implications for Balochistan and Pakistan." Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, Issue Brief No. 38, (Sept. 2006), 3.

56 Robert G. Wirsing, "Baloch Nationalism and the Geopolitics of Energy Resources: The Changing Context of Separatism in Pakistan", <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/pub853.pdf> (accessed December 15, 2011), 34.

57 Surrat Khan Marri, (Baloch Intellectual), Interview by Author, Quetta, December 30, 2015.

58 Chandran, "Akbar Bugti and After Implications for Balochistan and Pakistan." 1.

and he aggravated the sense of Baloch alienation. The alienated groups responded with implacable demand of more political power and challenged the writ of government in the province by launching attacks on mega projects. The federal government deployed force to meet the challenge and favoured military solution to the problem. The conflict had taken a heavy toll on human life including the assassination of Nawab Bugti and Balach Marri. The dead Bugti was more dangerous for the regime than the living. Though Bugti's struggle for *Sahil-o-Wasail* [Urdu: Coast and Resources) did not materialize, the resistance he led shook the province. His death drew a sharp line between Balochistan and federation and gave a momentum to the alienation in the province.