

BALUCHISTAN
AND THE PARTITION OF INDIA:
THE FORGOTTEN STORY

By

Baren Ray



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FOREWORD

Baluchistan: The Victim of Historical Errors

The recent hijacking drama, involving three young Baluch students in Hyderabad in Pakistan, has brought Baluchistan issue into sharper focus. According to the Pakistani press, the young hijackers, belonging to a student organisation, "wanted to focus attention on Baluchistan's socio-economic backwardness and were annoyed at the authorities' supposed indifference to the plight of people devastated by a flood earlier this year." Some other reports from Pakistan press suggested that "hijacking was an act of protest against the use of Chagai area in Baluchistan as a nuclear testing site by Pakistan". In the meantime, Baluchistan National Party has decided to boycott the forthcoming joint session of the Parliament for not taking the provincial government and elected representatives of Baluchistan into confidence regarding nuclear tests in Chagai district. The chief organiser of the Baluchistan's ruling party, Sardar Attaullah Khan Mengal directed his party's senators and MNA's not to attend the joint session of the parliament as a measure of protest.

In another related development, the Awami National Party (ANP) announced on 29th June 1998 that it would launch a joint struggle with two Baluchistan-based parties, the Pashtoonkhawa Milli Awami Party and Pashtoonkhawa Qaumi Party for Baluchistan's rights. Senator Ajmal Khatak, President of ANP, addressing a joint press conference said: "We have decided to launch a collective struggle to maintain supremacy of the Parliament to protect the interests of all nationalities." The press conference was also attended by the chiefs of Pashtoonkhawa Milli Awami Party and Pashtoonkhawa Qaumi Party respectively. According to a joint declaration issued at the press conference, the three parties would discuss the issues of emergency, provincial autonomy, achievement of national rights, supremacy of Parliament and the growing influence of Punjab (in the national affairs). The ANP leader also said that those elements which had hatched a conspiracy to pit Pakhtoons against each other were living in a fool's paradise. "Pakhtoons have decided not to tolerate these excesses any more and they will defend their motherland." He said that "Pakhtoons were not against any nationality or province, nor did they covet land of any other nationality. But we will also not allow usurpers to occupy our land."

Baluchistan is the largest province of Pakistan in terms of area. The province is rich in mineral resources. However, this province has been neglected by the successive governments in Pakistan for the last fifty years. It is amazing that both, treasury and opposition benches in Baluchistan's polity hold Islamabad responsible for Baluchistan's backwardness and argue that federal government was not providing required funds to bring this province at par with other provinces of the country according to daily Dawn, 28th June 1998.

Baluchistan did not accede to Pakistan on 14 August 1947. The forcible accession of the province took place toward the end of 1948. From 1948 to 1977 there were six armed uprisings in Baluchistan, which were ruthlessly crushed by the army. And from 1972 to 1977, there was a major insurgent guerrilla warfare going on in Baluchistan. The apparent peace in Baluchistan has not dampened the spirit of different political parties to assert that they were a 'nation' among other nations in Pakistan and would continue with their struggle for social, political and economic rights. There is a strong feeling in Baluchistan that their ethno-cultural identity is under severe threat.

This occasional paper is looking into the historical developments that incorporated Baluchistan within the Pakistani polity after the British pulled out of the sub-continent. The study reveals that the political factors, which were arraigned against Baluch people, brought about this union against the wishes of the people. The Indian National Congress equally contributed to the formation of this alliance. It is an irony that Indian National leaders who apprehended that an Independent Baluchistan could become a base for foreign powers and pose a threat to the stability of the region soon witnessed the spectacle of Pakistan joining the CENTO and apparently allowing military bases within Pakistan.

The author has taken great pains in scanning the historical materials available on the subject and processing the original sources to reach his conclusions. This occasional paper, apart from being a scholarly historical document, is highly informative and enables us to understand the later developments in Baluchistan in right perspective.

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Baren Ray is a political activist and a well-known Communist scholar. He had been to prison both before and shortly after Independence for his political work. He was active in the Indian and international Peace and Solidarity movements for many years since the inception of these movements. He represented India at the Permanent Secretariat of the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organisation (headquartered in Cairo) twice, from 1969 to 1973 and from 1978 to 1981, serving as the Deputy Secretary-General of the organisation during his second term. He had travelled very widely, having visited most European as well as Afro-Asian and other developing countries. Since 1981, he has been devoting himself entirely to research and has been a Fellow of the Indian Council of Historical Research for 1988-90 and 1992-93. He writes frequently and has several publications to his credit.

BALUCHISTAN AND THE PARTITION OF INDIA: A FORGOTTEN STORY

BAREN RAY

The Background

Baluchistan seems to be a very distant country, not only in terms of miles, but more in the sense that even before independence we were rather cut off from the region and had little direct acquaintance with that very considerable area. After independence, since 1947, it being part of another country, our direct information about Baluchistan was, even less.

Now Baluchistan, as one would remember, had found a place in the original plan for *PAKISTAN* which was mooted by Rahmat Ali in his Cambridge rooms in the early 1930s, in which *P* stood for the Punjab, *A* for Afghan (meaning *Pakhtoons*), *K* for Kashmir, *S* for Sindh and *TAN* for Baluchistan. In spite of Baluchistan being such an integral part of the conceived state of Pakistan, it so happened that, a good eight or nine months after the creation of Pakistan, Baluchistan, or rather the major part of it, had not yet joined Pakistan. It acceded to Pakistan later towards the end of 1948. As we know, the major part of Baluchistan constituted the state of Kalat. Originally, the state of Kalat and the territory of Baluchistan were co-terminus. Kalat was another name for the land of the Baluch people. Kalat was the name of the State whereas Baluchistan was the more explicit term as the land of Baluch people. It was British intervention and forced military occupation that had created a new region, namely British Baluchistan, while the remaining part of Kalat was made to be partitioned into several separate units.

Kalat: A Very Unusual State

The State of Kalat was a very large territory. In the order of the Indian princely States, Kalat came in the second order,* and thus, Kalat was a very considerable State. This state had not yet joined Pakistan and instead they were arguing that Kalat's legal and juridical position was different and their independence in all domestic affairs had been recognised by the British Crown. Thus they were not really like the other Indian states who were going to

* The order of hierarchy was fixed on the basis of the gun salutes they received and the biggest ones received 21 gun salutes like: Hyderabad, Mysore, Kashmir, Baroda, etc., six of them; those in the immediate next rung received two shots less, that is nineteen, and Kalat was placed among them.

be obliged to join either of the two Dominions succeeding the Raj. They were in the category of tributary States in their relations with the British Government and the Empire; and now that the empire was being withdrawn, they raised the demand that those other areas which the British empire had taken away from the original Kalat State should be returned to them. This demand was followed by negotiations in 1946, and they were pressing on. Of course, there was no progress on this count. But we will soon come to that in greater detail. The most dramatic situation developed by the end of March 1947, when Kalat had not yet acceded to Pakistan, even though Pakistan was only asking for accession on limited subjects, namely foreign policy, defence and communications, according to the original stipulations in the Cabinet Mission proposals. Kalat on its part was insisting that they would like to be in treaty relationship with Pakistan as a friendly independent State, in which, these three subjects will be part of a mutual agreement.

Anyway, till the 27th of March, no agreement or decision could be made. And on 27th of March it so happened that the redoubtable Mr. V. P. Menon, who was in charge of the Ministry of States, spoke rather loosely at a Press Conference in Delhi that the Khan of Kalat had been pressing India for agreeing to Kalat's acceding to India instead of Pakistan (of course, also on a limited basis), and that India had not paid any attention to the suggestion and India had nothing to do with it. So, the rather slighting manner in which V.P. Menon is supposed to have spoken while meeting with some Press people, although it was not much reported in the newspapers, was duly reported in the 9 o'clock evening radio bulletin. The Khan of Kalat was in the habit of listening to the All India Radio's daily bulletins, especially in the evenings and he heard it himself. He was so peeved and angry that the next morning he took up the telephone and spoke to Jinnah and said he was willing to accede and the necessary negotiations might begin. This, of course, is an oversimplification of the story, but something like this did happen and this dramatic development was followed by certain other unusual developments, which are being duly recorded here.

Kalat National Assembly Decides Against Accession

On 15 August 1947, that is the day after Pakistan came into existence, Kalat had a session of its parliament or national assembly. Elections to this body had been held a few weeks earlier in which the main political movement in the State, the *Kalat State National Party* (KSNP) with Ghaus Bux Bizenjo as its leader, had won 31 out of 50 seats. The national assembly decided not to join Pakistan and reiterated its position that Kalat was an independent state and would only enter into friendly treaty relations with Pakistan.

Indian Political Service

Kalat was certainly a very unusual State. It is true that of all the Indian States, there were a few, whose status was different. For instance, obviously, Nepal was very different and so also Bhutan and Sikkim. Kalat belonged exactly to the category of Bhutan and Sikkim. And this is corroborated in V.P. Menon's book also. V.P. Menon's book specially mentions that all the 560 odd states belonged to one category, *Category-A*. These were under what was called the Political Department. The officials of the Political Department, unlike the ICS, were members of the IPS. There is a very well researched book by a very senior former member of the IPS on the subject: *The Indian Political Service*, by T. C. Coen. The IPS supplied all the senior officials, the residents and political agents, who looked after the Princely States and kept them under the discipline of the British Government officials and their administration. But, there was a difference; while their central coordination was done by the Political Department of the Governor General whose Chief Officer was the Political Advisor to the Crown representative, in the case of States like Sikkim, Bhutan, etc., they were under the External Affairs Department of the Government of India. The difference may seem to be on paper, but nevertheless, this difference was there. This *Category-B* States included Sikkim, Bhutan, Kalat and the three States in the North-Western Frontier area, Chitral, Dir and Swat, which were under the External Affairs Department. There is much detailed information available about how Baluchistan (Kalat) was administered by the British and to what extent it differed from the practice in the other States.

Let us now look at a few maps (provided as figures at the end of the paper) which will give a clearer idea about Baluchistan and all its specificities. *Fig. 1* shows all the large princely States which had Muslim rulers and this is important because Jinnah had a perception about Pakistan not only on the basis of Muslim population but also of Muslim power. As early as in 1936, when he came back from England and re-entered Indian politics, he was in touch with those Indian princes who were Muslims. In *Fig. 2*, the upper portion in white shows what was cut out from the original Kalat by British intervention in the nineteenth century and this area came to be known as British Baluchistan. Further west of Kalat was Persia (Iran after 1935), and on the border lay the Bolan Pass, and this was an extremely important strategic area. All that frontier area was carved out by the British from Kalat. *Fig. 3* shows that the British had also insisted on cutting up Kalat into several units, so that they could deal with these separate units as the political authorities there, thus reducing the authority of Kalat. Thus there was Kharan on the West and Makran on the Southern coast. On the South-East there was Las Bela which also has some coastal area. In the central highland is Kalat proper. But this was now only about a fourth of the original Baluchistan. This is on a plateau. On the eastern side there are some areas which the British declared as tribal areas

and separated them from Kalat. In the north in British Baluchistan there were areas which were mainly inhabited by *Pakhtoons*.

In Baluch nationalist literature, this area is referred to as British Afghanistan because the British had taken the area out from Afghanistan. Even though it was part of the total area which was known as Baluchistan in the colonial period, the Baluch nationalists would rather forego this area for the purity of their own linguistic- cultural homogeneity. Militarily, this part is the most important area which the British had forcibly occupied. This included Quetta and the Bolan Pass, etc. The social and internal political structure in Baluchistan was not like in that other princely States. It was a tribal area, with its tribal society and with a great deal of internal democracy. Although there was no adult franchise and the right to vote was restricted to the male elders of the family, it was quite representative. The franchise based on the *Jirga* system was much more broad-based than the electorate for the Central Legislative Assembly in India till its last election in 1945. However, Kharan, Makran and Las Bela were separated in order to undermine the authority and predominant representative character of Kalat.

Fig. 4 shows the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP), lying to the north of Baluchistan. The three Princely States; Chitral, Dir and Swat; are on the North-West corner. *Fig. 5* covers the full area of Baluchistan showing the RCD Highway which went from Karachi to Quetta and beyond. It also shows Sibi, the only place which Akbar had conquered. Except Sibi, Akbar had not been able to occupy any part of Baluchistan. You may remember, those of you who have been watching the tele-serial *Akbar the Great*, that when Humayun was retreating after the onslaught of Sher Shah Suri's attacks, he crossed Rajasthan and could not find any place to stop in Sindh. So he ultimately found shelter in Baluchistan. And he stayed there for some two years or so. During this period he got considerable support from the Baluch people and his Army was reorganized and freshly equipped. Humayun also repaid for this hospitality because the Baluch at that time were facing attacks from the *Safavid* empire in Persia from the west and he engaged himself in some fighting against the Safavid forces, to help his hosts. After that, Akbar had succeeded in establishing only a camp in Sibi but the rest of Baluchistan was never part of the *Moghul* Empire. Incidentally, it may be mentioned in passing that at no stage of Indian history was Baluchistan a part of any Indian Empire, nor of any other empire from the west. That means, Baluchistan was never a part either of Persia or of Empires from the east, that is India. The North-West Frontier and Afghanistan had often been parts of major empires, i.e., of Ashoka and later of Kanishka and of the *Moghuls*. But not Baluchistan. Thus Baluchistan had this unique historical experience which cast its impact on the modern period too.

Fig 6 shows the distribution of the Baluch population in south west Asia from Kerman region in Iran through Sindh in the south, and southern margin of Afghanistan in the north, right till the borders of India along Rajasthan. The shaded area on the west of the political border with Iran, according to Baluch nationalists, has a very large proportion of Baluch population. On the east also, that is in Sindh, there is a very large proportion of Baluch population. In the medieval period, the reigning political power there was in the hands of the Baluch ruling elite. The Baluch did not create a fully feudal structure in Baluchistan itself. But Baluch military leaders, who went to Sindh, succeeded in creating a feudal authority in Sindh. They were the Mirs of Talpur whose tombs are there, not far from Hyderabad. They are rather similar stylistically to the Lodi tombs in Delhi and of about the same period. They were Baluch feudal lords who had established their authority in Sindh. One of the persistent ideas of Baluch nationalists from the early 1920s has been not only how to create a free Baluchistan, but also how to reunify Baluchistan, that means all those outside areas which are Baluch speaking and have Baluch people. The total area of Baluchistan is a little larger than Italy and covers 40 per cent of the total area of present day Pakistan. It is larger than Punjab.

Fig. 7 is very important and interesting. It is a unique map for any area sought to be represented in terms of cultural groups. This is an ethno-linguistic map. Within Baluchistan in the north-west are areas largely inhabited by *Pakhtoons*. Around Quetta and the Cantonment and other areas with military bases, etc., are largely *Pakhtoon*. Over the greater part of Baluchistan, the principal language is Baluchi. But there are areas where the language is *Brahui*. The history of the *Brahui* language is not resolved hundred per cent, but a majority of specialists think that *Brahui* is the remnant or a descendant of the language spoken in the Indus Valley civilization and philologically this language is most akin to Dravidian. Dravidian of course does not mean modern Tamil; it has close resemblance with some aboriginal languages in southern India, *Brahui* language belongs to that family.

What is the Baluch language? Encouraged by religious orthodoxy, some Baluch spokesmen had asserted that the Baluch language has a predominant Arabic character, and with the gulf countries within a short sailing distance from Baluchistan, such influence was not impossible. Islam came to Baluchistan within first two centuries after the Prophet and the Arabs kept coming in small numbers in the later centuries. But the language is certainly not Arabic; not Semitic at all. The great majority of scholars now think that it is actually an Indo-Iranian language and ethnically, the Baluch people are closest to the Kurds. The Kurds are at present situated at the other end of Iran, that is, in the area adjoining the borders of Iran, Iraq and Turkey. A portion of that population the Indo-Iranian language speaking population, might have moved east and settled in eastern Iran and in Baluchistan across the mountains. That migration, of course, had taken place long before Islam. At least well before the

Christian era. These Indo-Iranian people had originally come from Syria. But *Brahui* had been there, since much earlier. So, Baluch and *Brahui* are the two languages of Baluchistan and the strangest thing is that, in spite of these two languages being there, with certain areas more *Brahui* speaking and others speaking variations of Baluch, most of these people who were not literate and followed an oral culture and tradition, were bilingual and over the centuries maintained a satisfactory peaceful coexistence.

Cultural Uniqueness

Baluchistan is so specific and it has so many unique and peculiar aspects which are generally not known that it would be impossible to understand the problems of modern Baluchistan without some acquaintance with its background. Coming back to our narrative of the developments in 1948, the point to underline is that, if there was any State in India which was very different from the other princely States, it was Baluchistan. This was a State with a tribal society, which the British had subjugated by force of arms in the nineteenth century, and imposed their will against that State. However, all the earlier British officials have commented that the society was too democratic, and that they would rather wish that they were less democratic, (and they really tried their hardest to make them so), so that by either pressurizing or bribing one person or one family they would be able to impose their wish on the State as a whole. But this, of course, was not always easy or possible because, if one Khan died and the next one was comparatively more pliable, pro-British and agreeable to their demands, within a few years, the latter had to retire or was shunted away because of general opposition by the rest of the society with its assembly of chiefs, and then again a new Khan would be elected who would press for restoring the traditional rights of Baluch society and insist upon all the rights which the British had originally approved and agreed to in the written treaties.

There were these treaties, the first in the 1850s and the last one in 1876, the latter a very clear treaty in which everything in internal jurisdiction, the independence of the State and the non-interference in domestic affairs by the British were fully recognized. It was on this basis that the Khan of Kalat, after 1935, had never joined the Chamber of Princes in Delhi and always maintained that they were on a separate footing and not a part of Britain's Indian Empire.

While the majority of the Indian Princes, in Indian nationalist perception, were tyrannical and exploitative in respect to their subjects and were acting as the pillars of the British empire in India, the situation in Kalat was very different. When I began by saying that Baluchistan seemed such a distant place, this distance seemed so even before independence, not only to

the average man, but even to the political leadership of the country. We also mentioned that Jinnah, when he returned from England, had started a two-pronged movement. One was to convince Muslims in areas like the United Province or Bombay where a vocal Muslim minority contributed towards building up a popular movement and the other was to try to win the support of the Muslim princes, of Hyderabad, Bhopal, Junagadh, etc. (apart from Bahawalpur which had a Muslim majority). In all these states there were obvious weaknesses. For example, the Nizam of Hyderabad had a big name and his territory was very large and extensive. Yet, the majority of the subjects were not only non-Muslims, but they were seething with revolt and ready to burst into rebellion. This obviously made things difficult and the prospect of their joining Pakistan weaker. Among all these, Kalat seemed an exception and a gold mine for Jinnah. It was a large area with a Muslim political leadership ruling over a population which was entirely Muslim and with a sense of independence that it had never been over-run, never been subdued, and never been part of an empire. So, Jinnah had been particularly cultivating Kalat right from 1936.

Jinnah's Strategy on Baluchistan

We have several accounts of the very close personal friendship between Jinnah and the Khan of Kalat, and of very large financial and other contribution from Kalat to the Muslim League funds even before the penultimate stage of the independence and partition process. There is a report that once, when Jinnah visited Kalat with Fatima Jinnah, he was weighed in gold, and a truck load of silver was also presented for the Muslim League programme of strengthening Muslim political power. But, what perhaps escaped the Khan's consideration was that the social structure of Baluch society was quite different from the kind of fundamentalism towards which Muslim League politics was moving; towards a purified Sunni orthodoxy in the future Pakistan. In this respect both Baluchistan and the North-West Frontier Province had certain common features, where, not the religious leaders, but the tribal leaders and their social customs (rawaz) were hierarchically the most important factors in society. In Baluch society, this was an even more marked feature than in Pakthoon society.

Nehru's Reaction to Kalat's Demands

Because of all this, in Baluch society, by the time talks of British withdrawal from India became loud towards 1946, in the wake of the arrival of the Cabinet Mission, the demand for the return of the areas which Britain had carved out of the original Kalat state back to Kalat, was raised not only by the ruling Khan but by the entire Baluch population. When this demand was made, the Indian National Congress gave a very sharp reaction to it. The Khan

of Kalat had addressed his demand to the Cabinet Mission and, as a supplement to his efforts, had asked Khan Abdus Samad Khan (a member of the AICC) to plead for the Kalat/Baluch case with the Congress leadership. We do not know what Samad Khan did but we have Nehru's long reply, which he also issued as a statement (*SWJN-15*, pp. 443-5). The Khan of Kalat had come to Delhi and demanded that these areas be returned and Nehru's immediate reaction was that Congress "are not going to accept on any account any attempt to bring about such a deal".

Now we can only understand that this reaction of the Congress could be because of two reasons. One was total ignorance of the specificity of the situation in Baluchistan, so distinct from all the other princely States. There was a general perception which applied to all the other princely States that they were feudal strongholds who were acting as the main props and pillars of British imperial rule in the country and no compromise with these feudal powers was possible. Guided by that perception, the Indian national leadership advocated no concession, no deal in favour of the State. Secondly, one may even surmise that perhaps the Congress leadership had information about some other British plan, because during 1943-44, there was a British General in India by the name of General R. C. Money* (and this is long before the Labour Party's victory at the end of the Second World War, but when victory in the war was almost assured), who was responsible for strategic planning in India and he had sent a report in 1944 on post-war strategic reorganization. This report considered that in case of any eventual transfer of power (and this in those bad times, with Churchill still ruling when, naturally, they were not thinking in terms of any radical transfer of power), a scheme was suggested that Baluchistan, since it was not formally a part of India, could serve as a strategic British military base for the defence of the Near-East and Persian Gulf area where Britain had strategic interests to safeguard. This report was sent to the War Office and from there to the Secretary of State who wrote to Viceroy Wavel saying that this paper makes a lot of sense, and one can verify this whole correspondence in the *Transfer of Power* records.†

From this point of view, one may say that Pandit Nehru's sharp reaction against any proposal for the return of these areas carved out of Kalat was perhaps conditioned by some rumour that there was such a military planning, and to prevent its being put into effect, he reacted so strongly. This could be true, but it is more important to note that the British by 1946, did not depend on any such strategy at all. In 1946, by the time the Cabinet Mission had come to India, there were only three possibilities left. We shall discuss them here.

* See *Appendix-1*

† See the same *Appendix*

The first possibility was that in India, somehow or other, the Hindu-Muslim divide (read the Congress-League divide) would be overcome and a new momentum of anti-imperialist united effort will be unleashed in such a strong fashion that the suspicions and differences of the previous period will be washed away and in one grand wave of anti-imperialist upsurge, the old colonial rule would be swept away. Obviously, the Congress leadership was not doing anything of the sort. They were not pursuing this line, although, arguably, it can be said that after the mass upsurge of the INA and of the RIN revolt and so on, such a possibility had emerged and it could not have been ruled out.

The second possibility was that there would be an agreement between the Congress and the League *à / à* the Cabinet Mission Scheme, and in that case too, the British imperial presence, whether in India or on the western border in Baluchistan, would be dealt with by different means.

The third possibility was what actually happened, that India and Pakistan would be divided and in that case no imperialist base would be needed to be located in a weak and separate Baluchistan. Pakistan was more than willing to establish all the military bases that British imperialism and later American imperialism wanted to establish in the region on its territory. In that case keeping Baluchistan tightly within Pakistan would be in the direct interest of the UK or the USA.

So, this emphatic refusal to the Khan of Kalat and also to his unofficial envoy, Khan Abdus Samad Khan, that their legitimate aspirations regarding territories that had been taken away by force can under no circumstances be given back to them was simply indefensible and absolutely unfortunate; most unwise and ill-advised, on the part of the Congress leadership.

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad failed to Understand Baluch Aspiration

Further, we have a statement of Ghaus Bux Bizenjo who told the eminent Baluch scholar Inayatullah Baloch the following in an interview in October 1984: "During the Cabinet mission's visit to India, Bizenjo had gone to Delhi where he called on Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the President of the Indian National Congress. Bizenjo was then President of Kalat State National Party (KSNP). Along with Bizenjo at this meeting with Maulana Azad was Khan Abdul Samad Khan Achakzai, then the President of Watan Party of British Baluchistan. Bizenjo claimed he had gone to Delhi with a mandate from his Party's Working Committee, to apprise the Indian leaders of Kalat's special constitutional and political status in the context of the Cabinet Mission's quest for a solution to the Indian political tangle."

"Bizenjo explained to Maulana Azad that the Kalat or Baluchistan had never been part of India. It had its own independent status governed by the Baluch-British Treaty of 1876. Bizenjo said he would like to know what the position of Baluchistan would be after the transfer of power. According to Bizenjo, to this Azad said, "Yes, I have gone through the British-Baluch Treaty of 1876. I know Baluchistan has never been part of India, but to me, you, the Baluch people, cannot survive as a sovereign, independent state of your own. Therefore, you will ask for British protection and if the British agreed and remained in Baluchistan, the sovereignty of the subcontinent would become meaningless. So, I (Azad) hope that you the (Baluch people) will not insist on compromising the sovereignty of the forty crore people of the Indian subcontinent. Though your demand is very genuine that Baluchistan had never been part of India, yet I cannot help you in this case."

"The policy of the Congress and the view of Azad were rejected by the National party in order to respect Baluch public opinion in favour of an independent, sovereign state of Baluchistan." (from Inayatullah Baloch, *The Problem of Greater Baluchistan*, p.158) However, it so happened that in spite of all that, Kalat did not give up completely and the Muslim League too was still following an ambivalent tactical line in that, the League even signed a joint statement with Kalat and repeated that declaration two or three times that the League recognized that Kalat was not an Indian State and constituted an independent entity and the League would recognize and respect this independence. When Pakistan was about to be formed, as late as on the 11th of August 1947, a joint statement was again signed in which the League leaders, now as the Government of Pakistan, again recognised the independence of Kalat.

British Pressure Mounted for Total Control of Baluchistan

But by that time, the League leaders had been completely shaken and taken over by British persuasion and then the British pressure started working, and the pressure was on the line that what had been promised to Kalat in 1876 and weakly reiterated several times in the earlier decades of this century (that Kalat was not an ordinary Indian State and it was independent), was a thing of the past, when actual independence was not so near. But now this had to be prevented. The correspondence between Mountbatten and the Secretary of State Lord Listowell, on this subject is very interesting, where the latter is advising Mountbatten that it was because of the situation of Kalat on the frontier that what had been promised in theory cannot be allowed to be implemented in practice because, that would be too risky and dangerous. (*Transfer of Power*, Vols. XI and XII).

It so happened that the British use of Baluchistan began as early as in 1949, against the new radical nationalistic Government that came into being in Iran, of Prime Minister Mossadegh, which nationalized the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. It was then that the British military bases in Western Baluchistan started acting against the radical progressive forces in eastern Iran. That is to say, both against the new Iranian Government's actions in regard to the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, and even before that, against the insurgent movements in eastern Iran and in the North-West Frontier area (east of the Durand Line), as well as in Baluchistan itself. The British military bases were working there on those lines right from the beginning. In the so called British Baluchistan, Martial law was declared as early as in December 1947, even before the year was out. Kalat had not yet acceded. The forcible accession of Kalat to Pakistan, which took place towards the end of 1948, was not done in one go. Ultimately, it came about on the basis of military intervention, and from 1948 to 1977, there were armed uprisings about six times, and from 1972 to 1977, for almost four-five years, there was a major insurgent guerrilla warfare going on in Baluchistan.

The Baluch Issue— Other Historical Parallels

So, this is the kind of developments that have been taking place in Baluchistan. The Baluch question is a bit like that of the demand for Kurdistan, but there is also a big difference. Kurdistan's case was specially considered, only after the issue was referred to the League of Nations after World War I, in the wake of the question of the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, when the state of Iraq was created under British patronage and a stooge like Faisal was brought from Saudi Arabia and planted in Iraq. So a part of Kurdistan was given to the British stooges in Iraq. Iran had the *Pahlavi* dynasty which too had close affinity with the British and so a part of Kurdistan was given to them and the rest remained with Turkey, the successor of the Ottoman empire. Kurdistan has this very different background and it has managed to draw international attention in recent years. But Baluchistan which was thought to be in India during the British period and later went to Pakistan, never became an international issue. It is yet to find any sympathiser who would raise the issue at the international level.

In India, the Hindu-Muslim divide had created so much of a cobweb, so much of a fog, so much of misunderstanding that the Baluch people, who for centuries had remained isolated, never had the opportunity to gain an all-India perspective. Even the little acquaintance which we had in India about the *Pakhtoons* was because of the so called *Kabuliwallahs*, the *Pawindas*, who went all over India as moneylenders, and Heeng and dry-fruit sellers. The Baluch were never so mobile like that. They mostly remained within their own territory. At the most they went to Sindh. The Baluch had been isolated for many centuries and their

knowledge about the rest of India as well as the rest of India's knowledge about Baluchistan were very limited. The only period when there was some information, some exchange between Baluchistan and other parts of India was when the Government or the State in Baluchistan had a very modernising jump. This took place about the time of Nadir Shah and Ahmed Shah Abdali Durrani. At that time, there was a Khan in Baluchistan who became very famous. He came to be known later on as Nasir Khan the Great. He was the most exemplary Khan in Baluch history. This man succeeded in becoming a courtier of Nadir Shah and thus he succeeded in averting Nadir Shah's attack on Baluchistan. Nadir Shah, after his conquests elsewhere, died and that trouble was over.

Uniqueness of Baluchistan's History

After that, there was Ahmad Shah Abdali Durrani in Afghanistan. In spite of Nasir Khan having helped Abdali win the third battle of Panipat, there was the danger of Abdali conquering Baluchistan. Nasir Khan resisted and there came about a non-aggression pact between Baluchistan and Afghanistan (1758). This first non-aggression pact was formally recorded and is preserved in Kalat's archives as the first documentation of the international recognition of Baluchistan's independence. It appears that Nasir Khan had relations with Tipu Sultan who had relations with the French, and this being the time of the French Revolution, a lot of progressive ideas of the French Revolution had come to Tipu Sultan and through Tipu Sultan to Nasir Khan which helped him to adopt a clear confederacy character of his state. A hundred years later, one of the excuses that the British gave for attacking Baluchistan was that Baluchistan was dangerous because they had been hobnobbing with the French and there was the danger of the French establishing their base there.

Baluch People Did Not Give Up

In 1948, Prince Karim, the younger brother of the Khan who was the governor of Makran province, led a revolt against the Pakistan occupation. Since then, up to 1977 there have been six revolutionary uprisings and the last one lasted for more than four years. In this entire period, of course, Pakistan had very little democratic parliamentary rule. But in Baluchistan, except for hardly a year or two, there has never been even a regular legally constituted civilian Baluch Provincial Government. There has always been either military rule under Martial Law or President's rule or Governor's rule under Section 93. The situation in Baluchistan has been such that almost the entire political leadership, for many years, have been living abroad. They have been living in Britain, Germany, the USA and other countries. Elections were held only once after the promulgation of the 1972 Constitution, but even the elected government was thrown out by Bhutto after a short period. After the

elections, one Baluch Governor was appointed and one Chief Minister sworn in. Later both the Governor, Mr. Mengal and the Chief Minister, Bizenjo, had to flee abroad. Baluch senior scholars are now in Germany. Thus, most of these nationalist political leaders, as well as their think-tank, are all abroad, even though, there is a large amount of political activity going on at home. They have a lot of literature coming out from California, from New York as well as from Europe. They all stand for full self-determination, and they dream of a greater Baluchistan as well, which means inclusion of some of those other areas which are partly in Iran and partly in Afghanistan and in Pakistan.

The Baluch situation became very sensitive in 1979 when Soviet Troops entered Afghanistan and then stayed there for ten years. This was the time when America had its fingers crossed. Then they started looking into what was the political situation in Baluchistan; whether the Baluch people had any legitimate case and the strength of their ethnic aspirations, etc. Then they appointed a number of genuine and serious scholars and journalists to study the Baluch problem and to study as to why there was this insurgency. One of the results of this enquiry was the work of a very serious senior journalist Selig Harrison. He wrote a book, a very informative and well researched book, titled *In Afghanistan's Shadow – Baluchistan*. The book has very little to do with Afghanistan. It is entirely about Baluchistan. This book was written when they thought that Baluchistan was under Afghanistan's shadow; when it was feared that any time Afghan forces supported by the Soviets could move southwards or at least give military and political support to the Baluch insurgents. There may have been many factors why such a development did not take place. The book also studied the Baluch situation before 1947.

Even as early as at the time of the Khilafat movement, when all over India Muslim politics was so concerned about how to save the Khilafat in Turkey, almost the entire Muslim population in Baluchistan was totally unworried about the issue. But nevertheless, some adventurous political minded people among the Baluchis did go out from Baluchistan, towards the north. They could not go to Turkey, instead they landed in the Soviet Union and they became active participants in the ongoing revolution in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. Two of them became important Bolshevik personalities in Tajikistan and had a great role to play in establishing the new regime there.

The British were naturally very concerned and tried to arrest them. But as far as the Khan of Kalat was concerned, he was not particularly worried. Of course, we do not know what the Khan of Kalat really felt those days, but many years later, the Khan of Kalat wrote an autobiography in which he recalls that during the late 1920s and 1930s the Baluch youth and intelligentsia were thrilled by the developments in the Soviet Union and the October

Revolution. However, in India we did not know at all what was happening in Baluchistan or anything about the nature of Baluch society and what were its potentialities.

There were reasons for this. Apart from the insular nature of the Baluch people, who had kept contact with India to a minimum, there was an additional factor. While in the North-West Frontier area, the greater part of the territory was in the British administered area where Congress activities could be carried out and only a lesser part, the unadministered tribal area, fell outside the area of operation of the INC, in Baluchistan, the situation was the other way round. British Baluchistan was a small part of the total Baluchistan. According to the Congress constitution, political movements in the Princely States could not be part of the Congress. Thus there was a nominal Congress presence only in British Baluchistan and the leader there, who was an ethnic *Pakhtoon* and not a Baluch, Khan Abdul Samad Khan, incidentally, was called the *Baluch Gandhi*. He had been attending all Congress sessions from the late 1930s and was also a member of the AICC. He was later imprisoned in Pakistan intermittently for long terms till his death in prison in 1973. But there was no contact with the Congress in Kalat.

Within Pakistan, even today, Baluchistan is the most backward part although natural gas and several mineral ores of high value have been found there. These are being exploited but without the benefits accruing to the Baluch.

The Tragedy of Baluchistan

In conclusion, let me quote from what one Pakhtoon scholar wrote in another context: "In almost all of his speeches for the independence of Pakhtoonistan and India, he [Abdul Gaffar Khan] equated foreign rule with the status of slavery. Yet, despite his strong nationalist and anti-British sentiments, Gaffar Khan at no time advocated the sort of nationalism from which stems the degenerate creed of authoritarian totalitarianism or the cult of national self-worship. He offered a humanitarian nationalism, i.e., one designed to protect the dignity, privacy, and welfare of individuals against alien interference.....He referred to the inseparability of fundamental, universal human rights as integral to all true nationalism, and, moreover, indicated that he [Abdul Gaffar Khan] had gone considerably beyond the ordinary concept of nationality."

"For Gaffar Khan, each nationality was almost a manifestation of the divine, and therefore, something sacred which should not be subverted but cultivated. Extrapolating from his [this] expanded definition of nationalism, he believed that the creation of nations on such a basis

would promote peace not only in the Indian sub-continent, but all over the globe." (Ahmad Shah Mohabbat, Ph.D. thesis, Saint Louis University, 1979).

That had underlined Abdul Gaffar Khan's modernity and the continuing relevance of his praxis well beyond this century. It was this perception of tribal people, of their aspiration for autonomy and self government, that was totally absent in Nehru's perception in regard to both NWFP and Baluchistan.

Nehru would be most open to criticism for his emphatic support for the British position regarding the North-West Frontier tribal area and for endorsing the legal validity of the Durand Line as the legitimate boundary between Afghanistan and Britain's Indian Empire. Apart from the fact that Afghanistan had never recognised the legality of the Line, even Lord Curzon's dictum about the three-tiered frontier was a clear admission of the rather ambiguous legal position. Not only the people of the NWFP (in British India) were denied their right to determine their future (as stated by Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan) but the people of the tribal area (between the Durand Line and the NWFP) too were denied their right of self-determination when the Empire was withdrawing. Immediately on the heels of the transfer of power, these areas in the North-West as well as British Baluchistan in the south became active as military bases as well as targets for aerial bombardment.

□□□□

APPENDICES**APPENDIX - I***AMERY TO WAVELL, 23 NOVEMBER 1944*

"I have just seen an interesting memorandum which General Money * put in to the War Office, on the subject of making Baluchistan a main imperial military centre when India becomes self-governing. Basing his argument on the sensible point that our future imperial reserve must be largely airborne, he dwells on the fact that Baluchistan covers the whole region from Cairo to Calcutta, east and west, as well as covering Afghanistan and Persia. He also points out that the climate in the upland regions is healthy enough for European troops and believes that by boring and irrigation much more water could be obtained and life made pleasanter, while apparently the country wherever there is water grows plenty of fruit and vegetables of all kinds. He further suggests that there may be oil, convenient not only for itself, but also as a source of revenue to cover the costs of local administration. All this is rather in line with Caroe's views about the ring of defence areas round India. Looking even further ahead, if the world is going to be one of disturbance rather than of peace, I can imagine a future in which an imperial zone, including Baluchistan, Afghanistan, Tibet and Burma, may be the outer bulwarks of India's defence, India only coming in directly with supplementary forces, more particularly with air and sea forces. All this may be pure fantasy, but meanwhile the possibilities of Baluchistan as a military centre may be well worth considering." (*Transfer of Power-V*, Doc. 110, Para No. 8, p. 233)

* Major General Robert Cotton Money. was a District Commander in India (1942-44)

APPENDIX - II*COMMUNIQUE 11 AUGUST 1947*

"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.

1. The government of Pakistan recognizes Kalat as an independent sovereign state; in treaty relations with British government, with a status different from that of Indian states.
2. 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.
3. When the opinion has been received, further meetings will take place between representatives of Pakistan and the Khan of Kalat at Karachi.
4. Meanwhile a Standstill Agreement has been made between Pakistan and Kalat at Karachi.
5. Discussions will take place between Pakistan and Kalat at Karachi at an early date with a view to reaching decisions on Defence, External Affairs and Communications."

[*Baloch - p. 256. Source: IOR/ L/P&S 13/183 and 1846*]

APPENDIX - III

Extract from Secret Memorandum prepared by the Minister of State for Commonwealth Relations (UK) dated 12 September 1947.

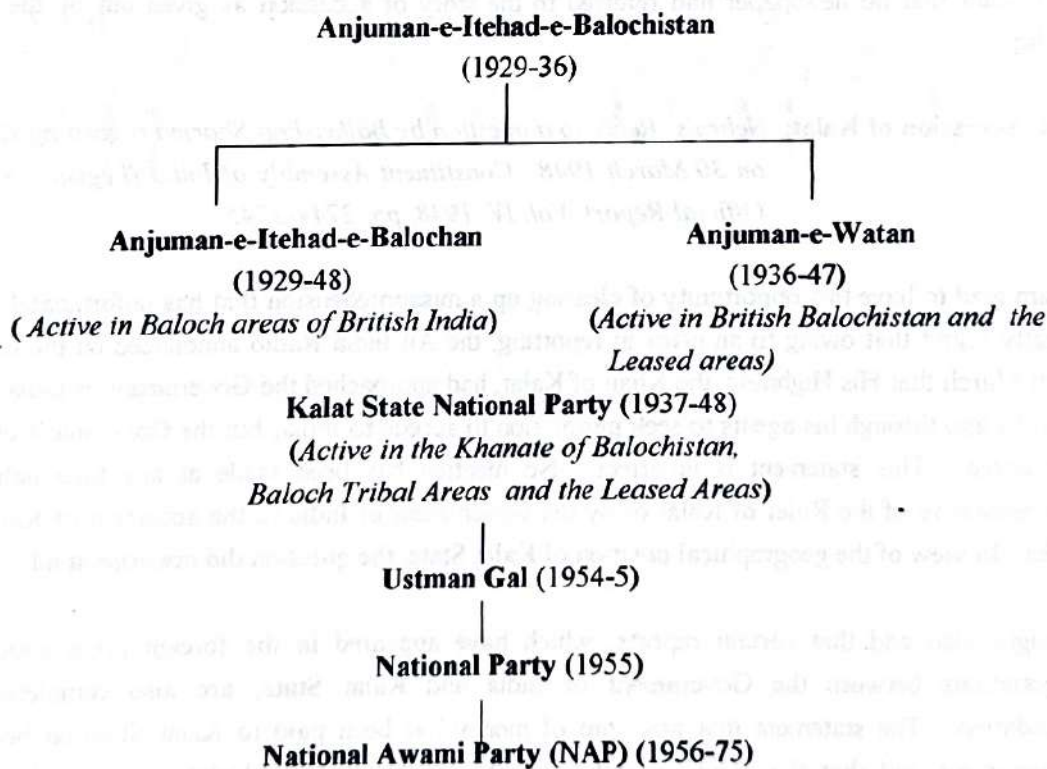
"Pakistan has entered into negotiations with Kalat on the basis of recognizing the State's claim to independence and of treating the previous agreements between the Crown and Kalat providing for the lease of Quetta and other areas, which would otherwise lapse under Section 7(I) (6) of the Indian Independence Act, as international agreements untouched by the termination of paramountcy. The Khan of Kalat whose territory merges with Persia is of course in no position to undertake the international responsibility 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."

[Baloch - p. 257]

Source: IOR / L/P&S/13/1846

APPENDIX - IV

Baloch Nationalist Political Parties (1929-93)



Successor Organizations of the NAP

Awami National Party (ANP)

Pakistan National Party (PNP)

Baluchistan Liberation Organization (BLO)

Baluchistan National Movement (BNM)

The Baluch People's Liberation Front (BPLF) and the Baloch Students Organization (BSO) have also been affiliated with the NAP.

APPENDIX - V

Nehru on the State of Kalat: *Minutes of a Cabinet meeting, 29 March 1948.*
Cabinet Secretariat Papers.

The Prime Minister explained the events leading to the accession of Kalat to Pakistan. Kalat had acceded to Pakistan on 28 March 1948. He particularly referred to the statement attributed to Mr. V.P. Menon according to which he was alleged to have stated that Kalat had offered to accede to India and that the offer had not been accepted by us. Mr. Menon had, in fact, made no such statement and it appeared that his references to Kalat had somehow been distorted by the All India Radio. It was significant that no newspaper had referred to the story of accession as given out by the All India Radio.

The Accession of Kalat: *Nehru's Reply to a question by Balkrishna Sharma regarding Kalat State on 30 March 1948. Constituent Assembly of India (Legislative Debates, Official Report, Vol. IV, 1948, pp. 2744-2745.*

"I am glad to have this opportunity of clearing up a misapprehension that has unfortunately arisen. I greatly regret that owing to an error in reporting, the All India Radio announced on the night of the 27th March that His Highness, the Khan of Kalat, had approached the Government of India about two months ago through his agents to seek permission to accede to India, but the Government of India did not agree. This statement is incorrect. No mention has been made at any time either by the representative of the Ruler of Kalat or by the Government of India to the accession of Kalat State to India. In view of the geographical position of Kalat State, the question did not arise at all.

I might also add that certain reports, which have appeared in the foreign press about political negotiations between the Government of India and Kalat State, are also completely without foundation. The statement that any sum of money has been paid to Kalat State on behalf of the Government and that the Government have sought air bases in Kalat are also wholly without foundation.

The facts are as follows: In August last, soon after the declaration of independence in India, the Government of Kalat drew the attention of the Government of India to a press communiqué in which it was said that the Government of Pakistan had recognised Kalat as an independent sovereign State, in treaty relations with the British Government, with a status different from that of the Indian States. They invited the Government of India to make a similar declaration. Some time later, a request was made on behalf of Kalat State for permission to establish a trade agency of the State in Delhi. No formal reply was sent to either of these requests. Informally, the representative of Kalat State was informed that these requests could not be considered then. No further communication of any kind has passed between the Government of India and the Government of Kalat.

Nehru's Letter to Premiers:

New Delhi

1 April 1948.

"Para No. 5. The recent development in Kalat State is evidence of how a wrong or careless world can have serious consequences." [In a sharp reaction to All India Radio's announcement of the plans of the ruler of Kalat State to accede to India, Mir Ahmad Yar Khan declared on 28th March 1948 the accession of his state to Pakistan and stated that despite his differences with Jinnah, he as a Muslim ruler, could never allow his state's accession to India. *Editor's footnote*, p. 96, Letters to Chief Ministers, Vol. I]

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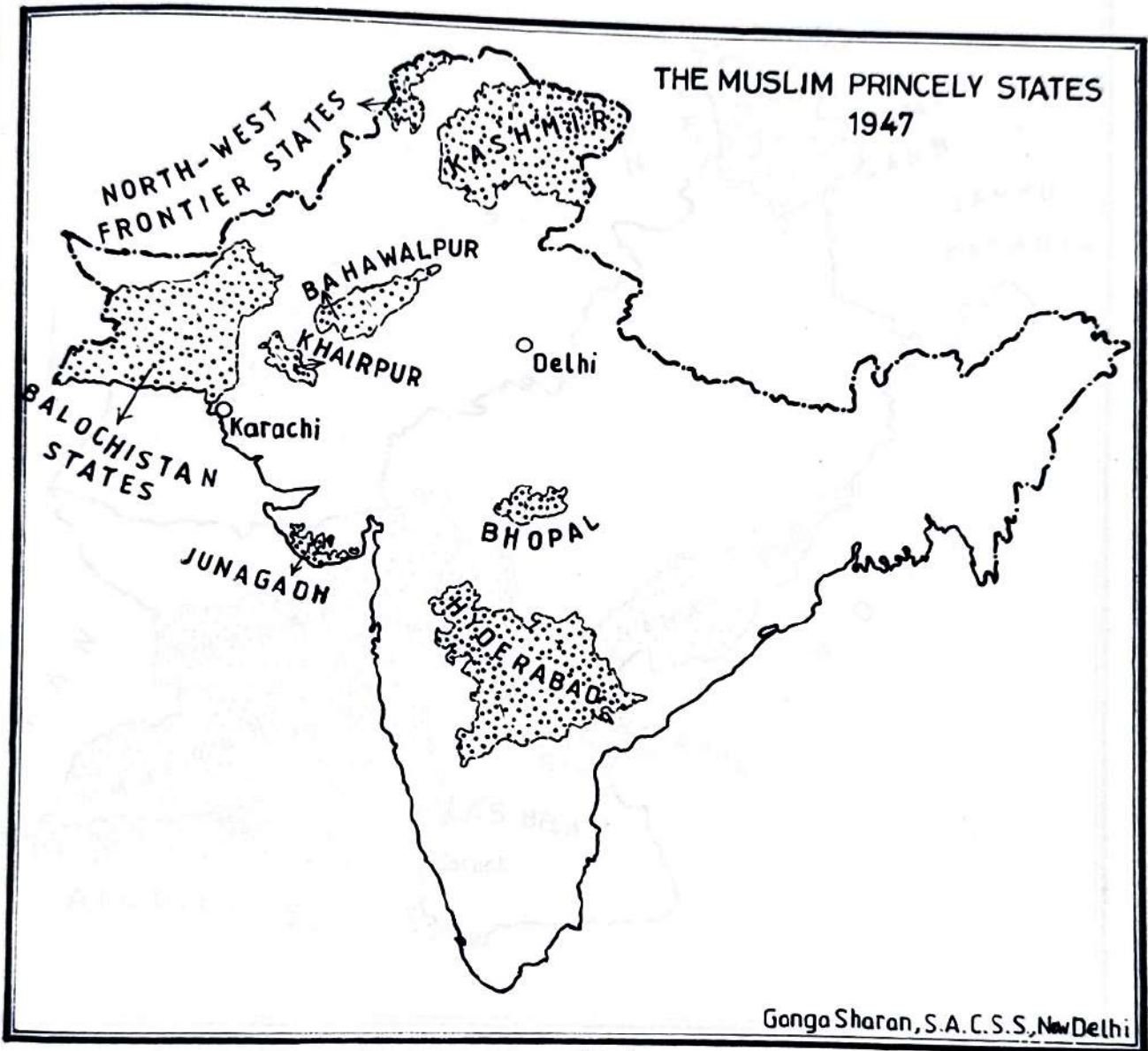


Fig. 1

Ganga Sharan, S.A.C.S.S., New Delhi

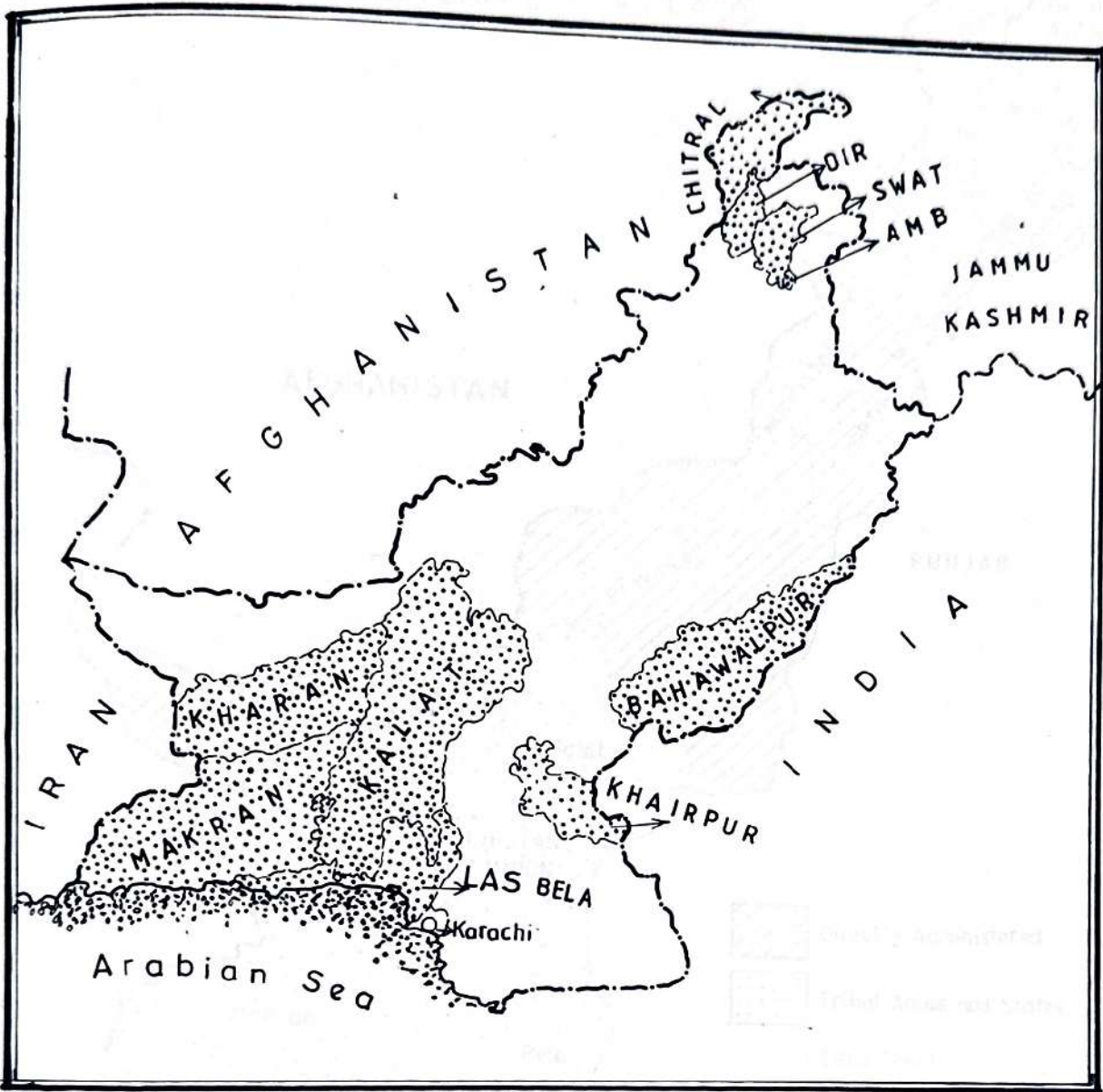


Fig. 2 States in West Pakistan, 1947.

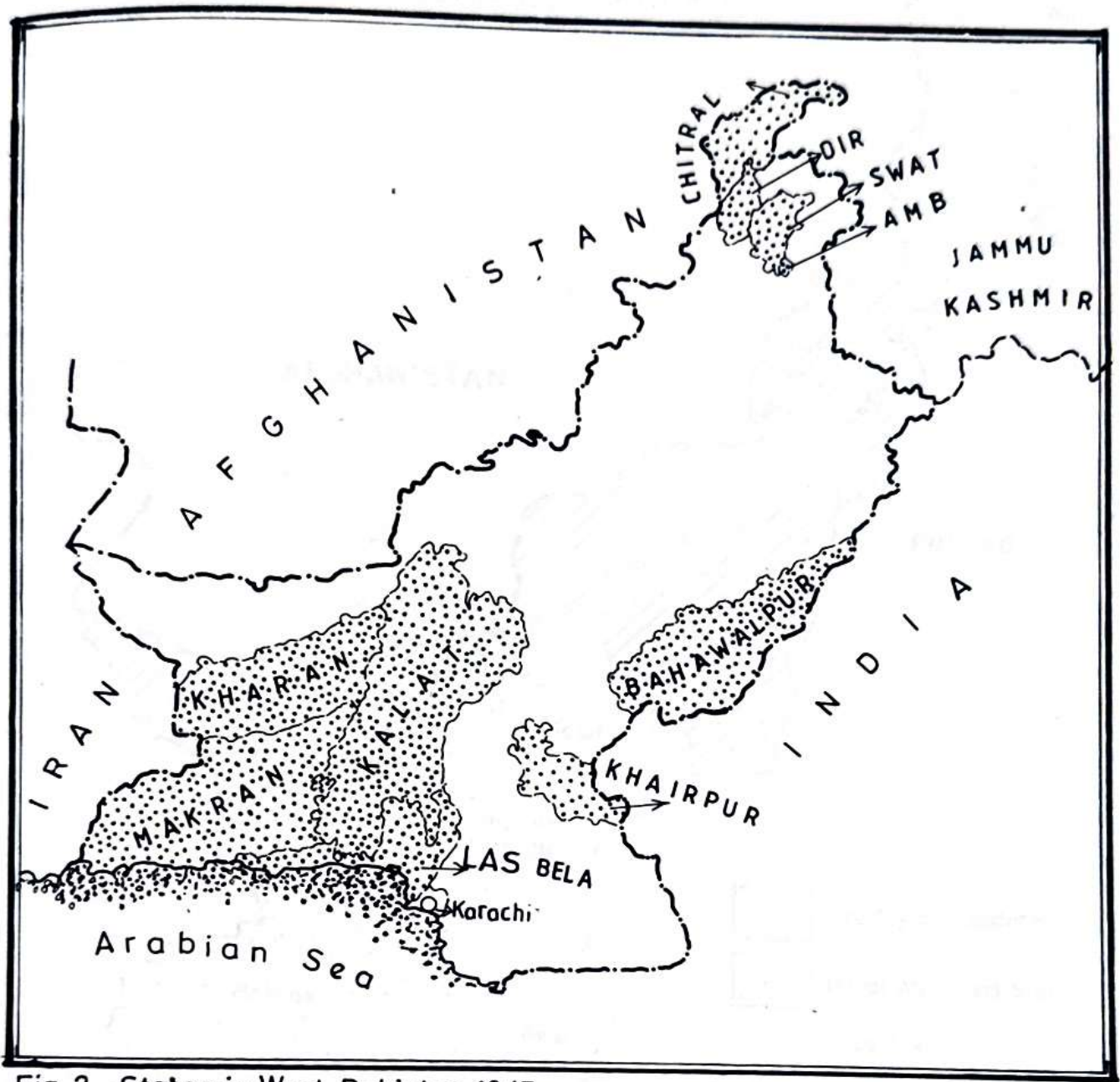


Fig. 2 States in West Pakistan, 1947.

PAKISTAN'S WESTERN BORDERLADS

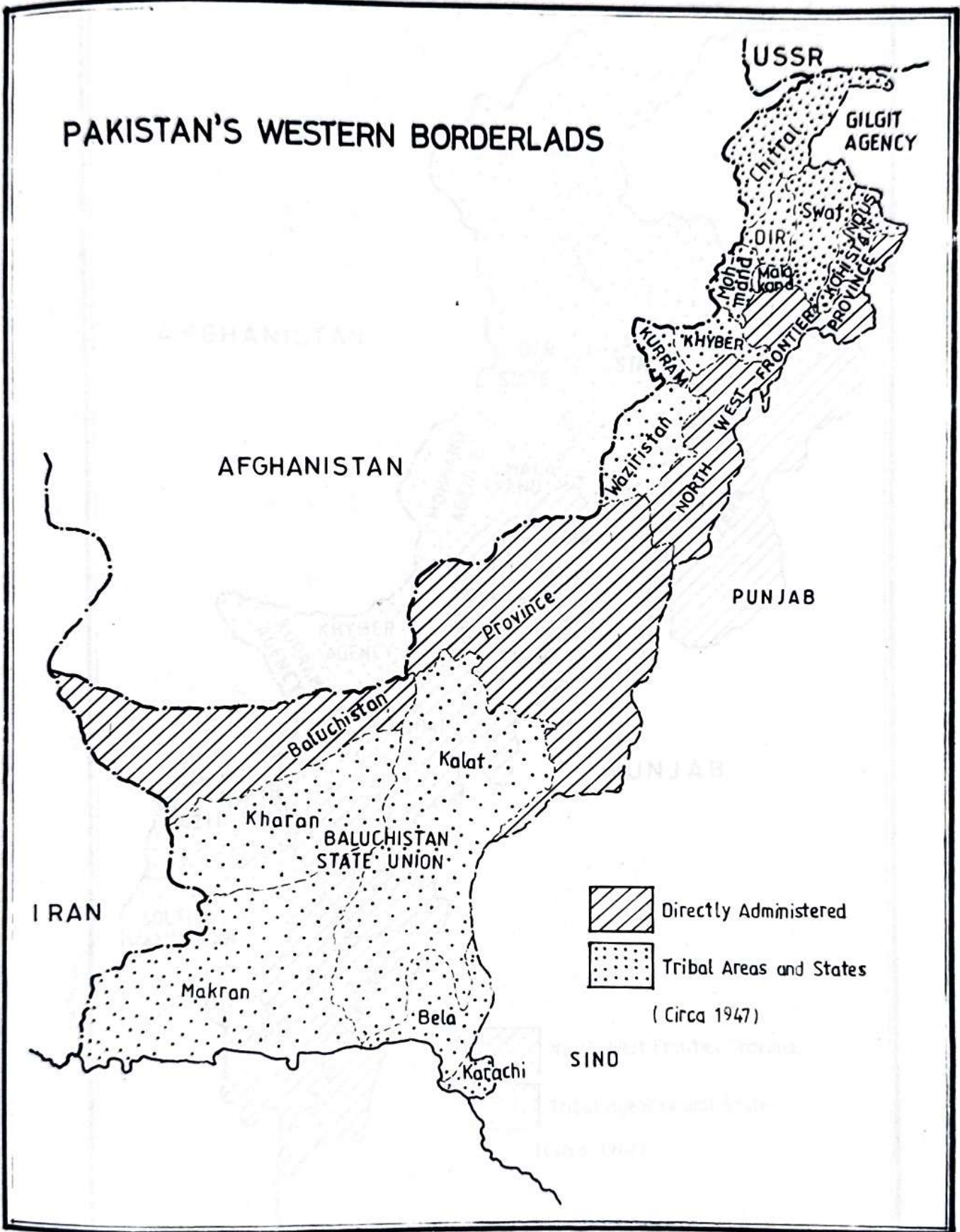


Fig. 3

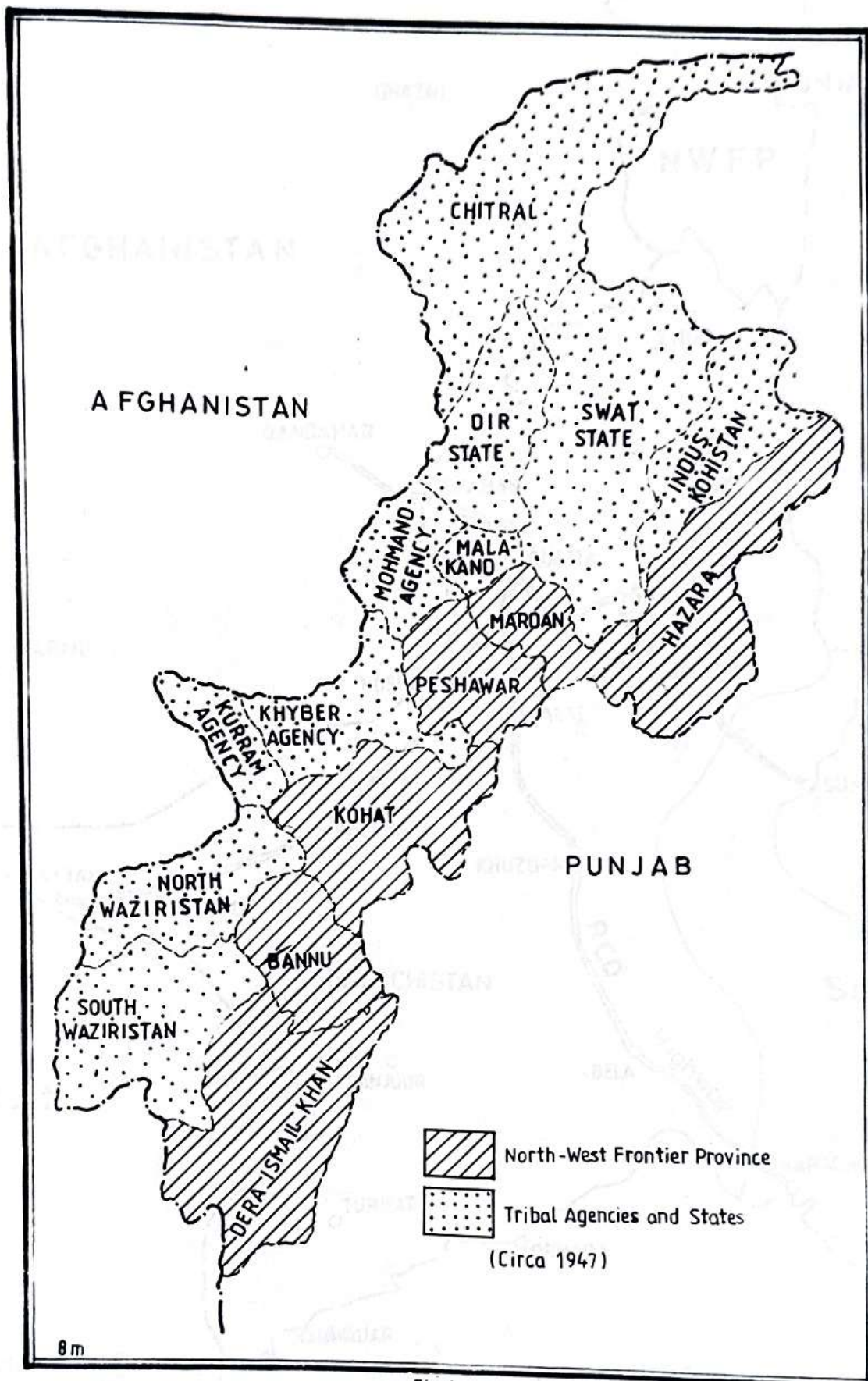


Fig.4

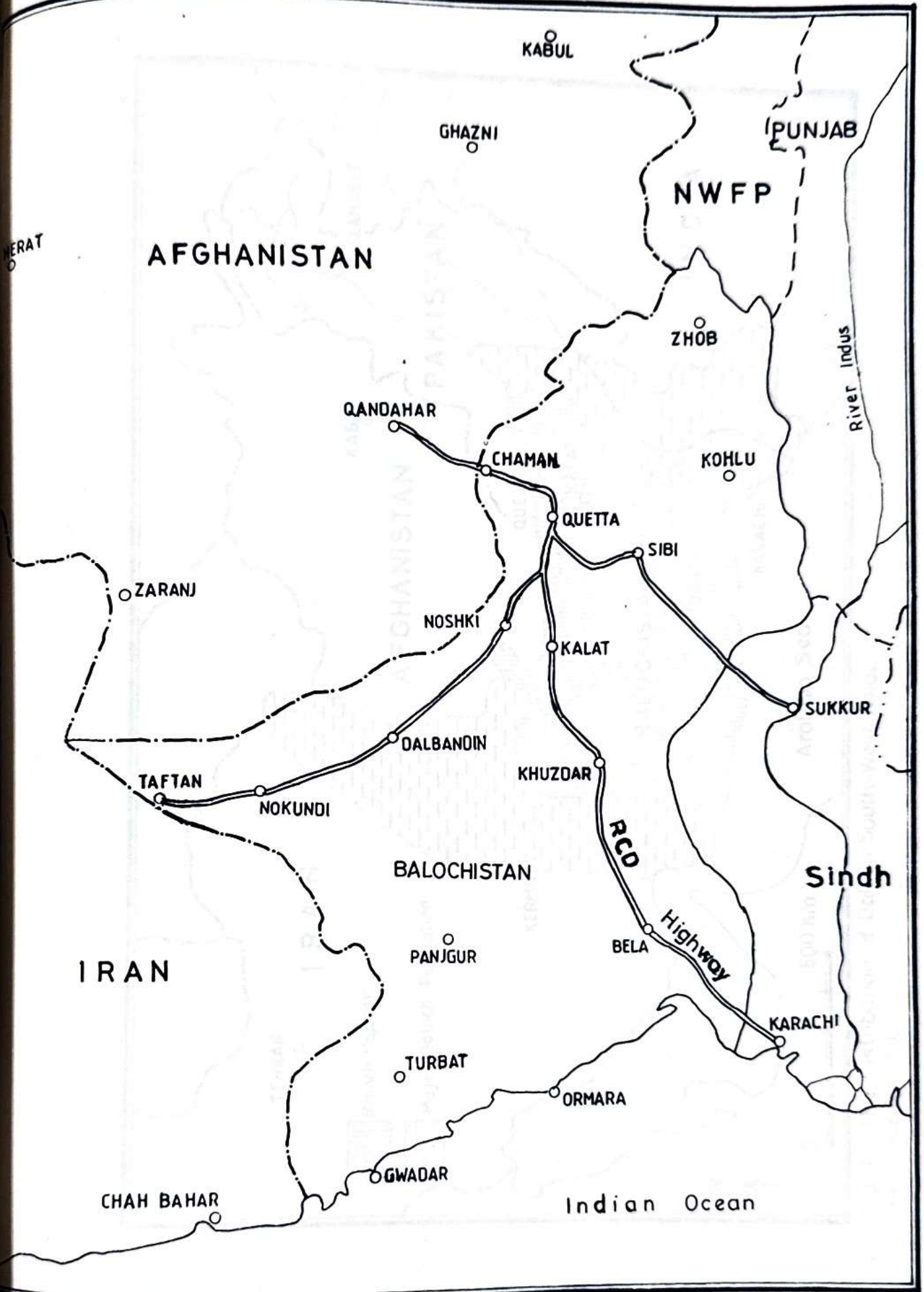


Fig. 5 RCD Highway, Pakistani Balochistan.

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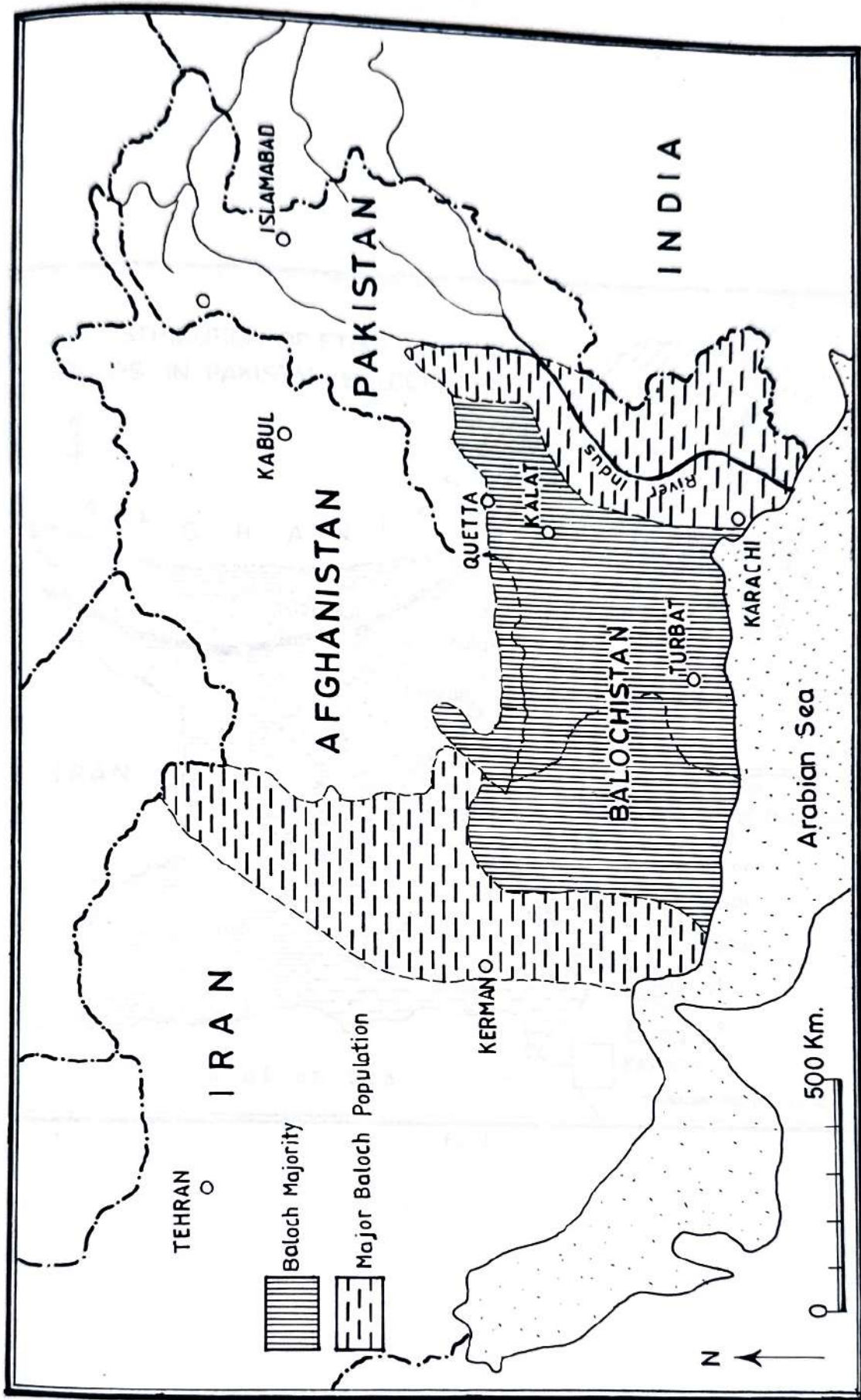


Fig. 6 The Distribution of Baloch South-West Asia.

Source: Hamson (1981).

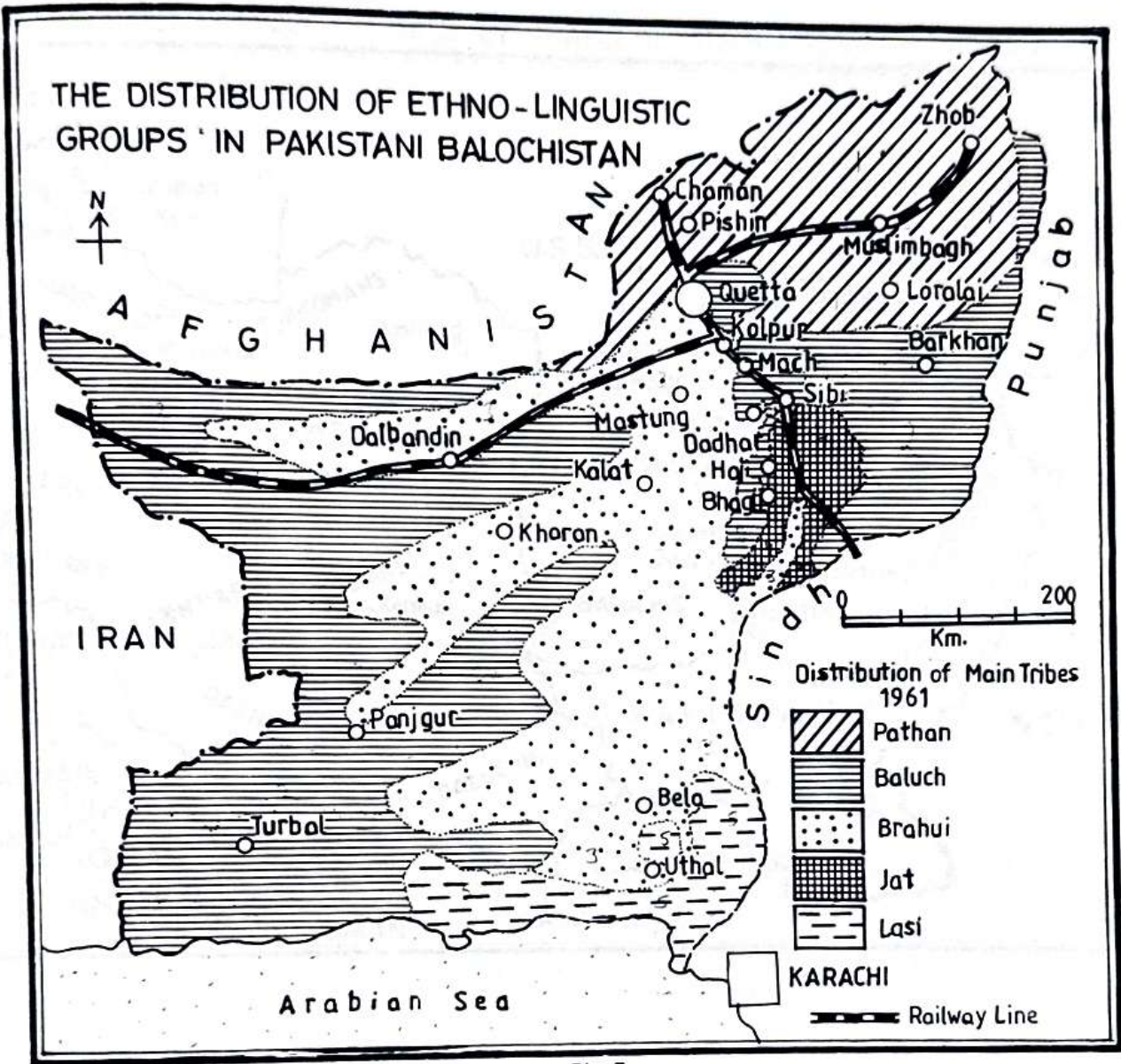


Fig. 7

Fig. 8. MAJOR ETHNIC GROUPS OF IRAN, PAKISTAN AND AFGHANISTAN



