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What the Mongols, Iranians or the British could not do was done by a naive usurper in a day. Balochistan was transformed with the murder of Nawab Akbar Bugti . The fond memories of this scribes childhood and those of many others were destroyed by General Musharraf.

Quetta which was a uniquely beautiful city was transformed into a city of zombies.

Nawab Akbar Bugtis physical elimination was the most direct attack on Baloch psyche. He might have been a tyrant of sorts, but the manner in which he was killed created an irretrievable narrative that any Baloch who opposed a thoughtless usurper could be removed in a manner supremely injudicial.

There were loopholes and questionable chinks in the Bugti affair. A rushed up funeral, lack of DNA proof, haste of a mafia burial, and conflicting claims in the aftermath.

The net loser in the affair was Pakistan more than Balochistan. What we see in the news i.e Punjabi settlers, Hazaras etc were actually smaller losers. The bigger loser was Pakistans nuclear program, Pakistans maritime ambitions centered in the Gwadar port, Pakistans Afghan policy which is largely based on Pakistans occupying the land mass that we call Balochistan.

When I drove from Karachi to Khuzdar and Quetta it was like a highway of death. You find cars till Bela but thereafter it is a road to nowhere. Few cars are seen, apart from corolla taxis. Checkposts increase in size and number as you proceed to Khuzdar and multiply fourfold between Kalat and Lak Pass.

The tract between Kalat and Lak Pass is full of doom and suspense and witness to many unnatural deaths every day. The victim can be a Baloch, a Punjabi labourer, a Pashtun road worker, a Hazara Shia, an FC soldier. A sign of how vague and ambiguous this silly war in Balochistan has become.

As you enter Quetta FC soldiers repeatedly stop you to find if you are travelling in a non custom duty paid vehicle. This pointless drive will go in history as one of the reasons for greater alienation of Balochistan. The order to check non custom duty paid vehicles has only hurt the poor and the downtrodden. The children of the underprivileged have to travel many miles on foot to go to school as the cheap townace vehicles can no longer ply on the road. Five year old Balaach now walks 9 kilometres to school in Quetta from his home near Hazar Ganji.

Sarwar Khan who previously drove a non custom townace and made ends meet is now a wretched of the earth and penniless. His thoughts of making ends meet travel from peddling Hasheesh to joining an insurgent group where life is riskier but finances more stable. As I heard these real life stories I was shocked how our so called stake orders act, in a manner which aggravates crisis rather than mitigating them?

I went to my old mechanic Abdul Kaleems workshop near the Jinnah Road. Where is Kaleem I asked his brother? He was heartbroken as no work was going on in the workshop and drives a rickshaw to make ends meet, came the reply from his brother!

I went to my favourite restaurant for lunch and the manager greeted me with the desperate happiness of a wrecked sailor who is rescued from a lone Pacific Island after two decades of solitude. How is business my dear Yusuf Sahib, "Sir bad to worse, people are leaving everyday"!

Most restaurants and hotels were deserted and those who wanted to go out only had the option of the safety of Serena Hotel where they were charged through their nose for a cup of tea.

Farah Hotel where we used to see immaculately dressed Nawab Akbar Bugti was long gone! When you walked on Jinnah Road you could no longer see the smartly dressed, cheerful Quetta wallahs! What I saw were morose, turbaned, dirtily clad walking zombies.

I visited Malik Muneer, one of Quettas most respectable businessmen from the Tajik community .Muneer was depressed as some Tajik youngsters had been shot and wounded without any reason as they had travelled for a picnic to the previously serene Hanna Lake. A man present hypothesized that they may have been shot as they had slightly Hazara Mongoloid features. What a state where a man is shot for the size of his nose or for being from a particular ethnicity or sect?

After a glorious dinner with an old friend when we drove back from the airport road to Jinnah Road around 1130 at night not a single soldier, FC or police was to be found or seen. So much for the vigilance of law enforcement.

My Baloch guards feared for their life if they were not allowed to leave for their Sariab Road homes before sunset. Thus the myth that only settlers were in danger being firmly laid to rest.

I met my friend Yusuf Marri, son of legendary Baloch guerrilla commander General Sher Mohammad Marri. Yusuf was terrorised in the Musharraf era and was still at a loss why the guardians of security took all his family photograph albums and never returned them.

The picture that emerged was that no one was safe regardless of ethnicity or sect!

Quetta was built as a great citadel of civilization by the British, Pashtuns, Baloch and Punjabi Urdu Speaking and Parsi settlers in between 1878 and 1947. A passage of 69 years. It was destroyed by a thoughtless military usurper by an unnecessary murder one dark August day.

There is no point in blaming Indians, Americans or Jews. As the adage goes, there is no bad luck or good luck, there are only consequences.

The idea of mega projects and turning the Baloch into an insignificant minority created fear in the Baloch. And that that fear led to a backlash, as fear makes men believe in the worst.

A great deal of what Akhtar Mengal states is correct. But the foundation was laid by General Musharraf. Granted that Musharraf killed few or few were killed on his orders. However the process that he started became more morbid and finally disappearances were replaced by elimination.

When a state resorts to extra judicial measures the line between right and wrong is removed and all sides resort to methods which in the end lead only to anarchy.

As a nation we must fear anarchy the most. What we see in Balochistan is the anarchy that India saw in 1759 or Punjab in 1845. Anarchy destroys faith that an ordinary man has in his country or religion. That was the reason why English East India Company succeeded in India. When the company occupied Delhi in 1803 they were greeted as saviours. The Mullahs of Peshawar praised the English East India Company's liberation of Peshawar in 1849 from the Sikhs in their Khutbahs.

Pakistan above all is Balochistan in particular is paying the price of sins of an impetuous impulsive usurper who rushed without forethought into situations which were entirely avoidable. Like the cruel and callous sailor in the albatross story this usurper killed an albatross and condemned this land to darkness.