In this chapter, the nature of Baloch politics in Iran has been discussed decade-wise into four phases. The chapter deals with the main political issues, structures, strategies and culture of politics between Baloch and the Islamic Republic of Iran. The first phase briefly deals with the Baloch politics before the Islamic Revolution of 1979. The second section focuses on the major political developments in the first decade of the Islamic Republic. The third part is concerned with politics in the second decade. And, the final part discusses major recent political developments in Balochistan under the Islamic Republic of Iran.

BALOCH IN PRE-ISLAMIC REVOLUTION ERA

Except few hegemonic cases such as Doust Mohammad Khan’s rule, the power in the traditional Balochi society of Iran hereditarily used to be transferred from one generation to another. Due to the existence of arid and waterless deserts between Balochistan and the rest of the country, inaccessibility of Balochistan was always a major problem for the different Iranian central governments. Yet via Kerman the different central governments could exercise some degree of authority over the Iranian Balochistan through appointed governors. Such exercise of authority was usually limited to the collection of tax from the Baloch. However, a turning point began in the political history of the Iranian Balochistan when in 1928 Reza Shah’s forces led by Amanullah Jahanbani headed towards Balochistan and arrested Doust Mohammad Khan, the
disobedient Baloch ruler. This military expedition actually brought about a strong presence of central government in Balochistan for the first time of its kind in the history. With the coming of Pahlavi to power, Reza Shah initially pursued to alter the traditional federal authority of the tribal leaders (who used to play the role of a channel of political communication between Baloch and the central governments) in Balochistan by eliminating their role. Apparently, Reza Shah intended to replace the tribal authority with a modern central authority. Thus, a number of institutions such as State Police and Military were set up to look after the social and political matters of the region. But, this policy did not last long and Reza Shah soon realized that without the support of the Baloch tribal chiefs, it would be very difficult for the central government to preserve security in Balochistan. It was owing to the fact that the overall socio-political structure of Balochistan was highly traditional. The Baloch had a parochial approach towards politics and were unaware of the surrounding political developments. They were highly loyal and faithful to their tribal chiefs. Such state of affairs actually made the central government aware that by mere establishment of modern institutions in Balochistan, government cannot win the side of the Baloch masses. Therefore, government was forced to look for more collaboration and assistance from traditional Baloch tribal chiefs. On the other hand, the tribal leaders were not reluctant to have the attention of central government. Most of those Baloch tribal chiefs and leaders who did not resist against Reza Shah’s forces and voluntarily accepted the authority of central government in Balochistan subsequently received fair treatment from Shah’s regime. For instance, a number of these tribal chiefs used to get monthly stipends. The same was true with the policy of Mohammad Reza Shah’s regime i.e. those Baloch tribal leaders who remained faithful to Reza Shah also remained faithful to his son, Mohammad Reza Shah. In return, they received some privileges such as governmental or parliamentary positions or monthly stipends. On sensitive security issues serving the interest of the central
government, as well as, that of the tribal chiefs whenever government wanted Baloch tribal chiefs to cooperate, the respond has been positive. Dadshah’s (1950s) assassination plan can be referred as a major historical instance. He was a famous Baloch fighter who rose against government forces, and finally was trapped and killed with the help of some influential Baloch figures such as Eisa Khan Mubarak (the chieftain of Mubarak tribe), who received support from the regime of Shah. Until the early 1978, Amir Assadollah Aalam who served as Minister of the Court in Iran played a meditative role between Mohammad Reza Shah and Baloch tribal chiefs. Several times in a year, Baloch tribal chiefs privately used to visit Aalam in his residence. In such meetings various sensitive issues could be discussed. Amir Asadollah Aalam was an influential man who played a vital role in politics of Balochistan. He could decide who should be granted more privileges among the Baoch leaders, or who should be given such and such positions, etc. In fact, it was Alam who could decide on such matters. For Mohammad Reza Shah, these private meetings between Baloch leaders and Minister of the Court carried one clear implication. The implication was to remind him that the Baloch tribal chiefs or leaders were loyal and faithful to the regime of Pahlavi.¹

In 1975, Mohammad Reza Shah announced the establishment of ‘Iranian Nation Rastakhiz Party’ (Hezb-e Rastakhiz-e Melat-e Iran). Rastakhiz Party was a centralized political party, encompassing the entire Iranian nation. In every town and city of the country some societies known as ‘party clubs’ (Kanonhaay-e Hezbi) were set up for the people of Iran. Several times a year people used to assemble and discuss their problems in such clubs. Once reports collected, concerned lower officials used to transfer them to the higher officials, and higher officials used to communicate such problems with government so that government could take appropriate action. During this period, Shah considered himself on the peak of his power and egoism. Reportedly, Shah’s boldness had

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reached to that extent where he had declared "whosoever does not follow the rules of the party, we will give him his passport and allow him to leave the country." ² Under such one party system there were two wings, traditional wing led by Amir Assadollah Aalam, and modern wing led by the supporters of Shah Banoo (Mohammad Reza Shah’s wife). Some leaders in this wing were people like Ghotbi (uncle of Farah Pahlavi, Mohammad Reza’s wife), Jafarian (Vice President of Rastakhiz Party), and Dariush Homayon (Tourism & Information Minister). The bases of party’s traditional wing in Balochistan were the very Baloch tribal chiefs and leaders. Although Rastakhiz Party ordained that the Iranian people could openly participate in elections, Amir Assadollah Aalam had maintained a traditional method of politics in Balochistan. In other words, though during the existence of Rastakhiz Party the regime claimed elections could be conducted democratically, the way parliamentarian election conducted was not different from the past namely before the formation of Rastakhiz Party. Thus, despite the formal presence of ballot boxes in Balochistan elections were not conducted democratically. Aalam’s will was final in selecting the members of Parliament from Balochistan and the people who were selected from Balochistan by Aalam for such purpose were usually the very Baloch tribal chiefs or leaders. ³

The traditional socio-political structure of Balochistan, however, was unacceptable to a number of Baloch such as the educated group. According to Dr. Mohammad Reza Taheri, an Iranian Baloch political science professor, though the number of the educated Baloch were not notable, in 1970s several Baloch students who were studying in Tehran set up some gatherings and began their political activities. These activities, of course, were absolutely legal and thus not against the regime of Shah. This group of the educated Baloch was demanding more governmental attention and more economic developments in Balochistan. They asked central government to pay more attention to the poor status of the Baloch in Iran. Improvement of the irrigation systems in order to
improve the overall agricultural conditions and establishment of various industries, were among their major demands. Most of the people in this group who were studying at graduation levels occasionally organized some meetings with the high-ranking central authorities. They were of the view to change the traditional structure of leadership in the Balochi society of Iran, which was dominated by the Baloch tribal chiefs who enjoyed the support of Amir Assadollah Aalam, Minister of the Court. Instead, what they wanted or visualized was a modernized Balochistan. As a matter of fact, the traditional make up of Balochistan had made it easier for tribal chiefs to play a leading meditative role between the masses and government officials. The Baloch tribal chiefs were privileged with this natural gift, and therefore at much lesser cost they could tackle insurgency and political turbulences in Balochistan in favor of government, and in fact, this was what which government needed most. Therefore, much of the limited budget which used to be allocated for preserving peace and security in Balochistan would be pocketed by a number of tribal chiefs. As a result of this, no much heed was given to this land and its people, and government funds though inadequate could not be absorbed in Balochistan for its Balochi population. Hence, the educated Baloch intended to cut off this mediation between the masses and government. One of the most important decision makers whom the educated group of Baloch could rely on for the purpose was Dariush Homayon, the then Minister of Tourism & Information. On a number of occasions some meetings were organized between Homayon and the educated Baloch. Reportedly, in one of these meetings Dariush Homayon would ask from the educated Baloch "you (the educated Baloch) are sympathizing with Balochistan and trying to solve the problems while you are in Tehran. I suggest, you should go back to Balochistan and make yourselves physically present in there and from there continue your helpful activities. I can assure from Tehran we will support you and pave the way for social, cultural, economic, and political grounds." It was at this time onwards that a number of
politically active Baloch tribal chiefs felt the developing presence of the educated Baloch and thus looked upon them as a rival in the affairs of Balochistan. In this connection, Karim Bakhsh Saedi, a Baloch sardar or tribal chief who was also a Member of Parliament or National Assembly (majles-e shoray-e meli) arranged an important meeting with Amir Assadollah Aalam, (Minister of the Court). The invited Baloch participants included a number of tribal chiefs and some of the educated ones. The goal of the meeting was to prove to the Minister that there are no differences between Baloch tribal chiefs and the educated Baloch in their approach rather all share a common objective. In that meeting, Karim Bakhsh Saedi talked about some major issues or matters which mainly belonged to chieftainship or tribal leaders and pretended that the same are the very demands of the educated Baloch. Nevertheless, subsequently the educated group of Baloch did not obey tribal leaders and followed their own way of conducting politics within the legal framework. According to what stated above, finally Dariush Homayon (Tourism & Information Minister) told the educated Baloch, they should select one of themselves and introduce him to the government for the position of the Secretary General of Rastakhiz Party’s branch in Sistan & Balochistan Province. After several sessions among the educated Baloch finally Ghulam Reza Hossainbor was selected and introduced to the central government as the most appropriate person for this Office. Subsequently, the decree was issued by the Secretary General of the Iranian Nation Rastakhiz Party and Ghulam Reza Hossainbor was appointed to the office. Immediately, Hossainbor was dispatched from Tehran to Zahedan and began his activities in Balochistan. Along with Hossainbor, a number of the educated Baloch returned to Zahedan and joined the other educated Baloch who were already resided in Balochistan. But, the educated Baloch failed to undermine the traditional power structure of their Balochi society. Although Rastakhiz Party in collaboration with Governor House organized the city council and parliamentary elections, the educated Baloch suffered from a major
Amir Assadollah Aalam who was the Shah's chief executive officer and a supportive of tribal traditional system in Balochistan was so dominant that neither the party nor those accountable educated could alter or influence the Balochi traditional society. Subsequently, due to some illness Amir Assadollah Aalam, an ally of Baloch tribal chiefs died in 1978 in England. On the other hand, the educated Baloch could maintain their authorized political activities under the regime of Shah not more than a couple of years i.e. till 1978.4

However, apart from the legal role of the faithful Baloch tribal chiefs and the educated Baloch under the regime of Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, there was another major Balochi force on the political scene of the Iranian Balochistan, fighting against the policies of Mohammad Reza Shah in Balochistan. It was Balochistan Liberation Front (BLF) which formed in 1964. According to Dr. Mohammad Hassan Hossainbor, 'Balochistan Liberation Front' represented the first major nationalist organization in the Iranian Balochistan. BLF came into being mainly because of the discriminatory policies of Shah's regime towards the Baloch, especially after Dadshah's assassination which served to widen the sense of antagonism between the central government and the Baloch, and second, because of the long economic and political neglect pursued by the Shah's regime over the Baloch. 'Balochistan Liberation Front (BLF) represented a truly national organization involving individuals from all strata and classes in Balochi society. Its prominent founders included Jumma Khan (from intelligentsia), who had championed the cause of Dadshah in Pakistan; Abdul Samad Barakzahi (a poet-writer); Mir Abdi Khan (the chieftain of the Sardarzahi tribe); Musa Khan (a leading member of the Lashari tribe); and Rahim Zard Kouhi, a commoner. The BLF defined its ultimate goal to be the creation of an 'Independent Greater Balochistan.' It published a controversial map which depicted 'Greater Balochistan' as contiguous to the southern borders of the former Soviet Union by claiming and incorporating into Balochistan proper the
ethnically mixed border region between Iran and Afghanistan extending northward from Sistan up to the point where the boundaries of Iran, Afghanistan, and the Soviet Union met. This was, of course, a far exaggerated claim, as argued by Dr. Mohammad Hassan Hossainbor, because Baloch living in that area constitute a minority as compared to other ethnic groups, mainly Persians and Turkmen, who inhabit the same region. However, to achieve that goal, the BLF espoused the strategy of armed struggle of the masses as the only way of liberating Balochistan. The BLF managed to attract various degrees of support from several Arab sources including Syria, Egypt, Iraq, etc. But, the most substantial Arab support, as elaborated by Dr. Selig Harrison, came from Iraq after the Baath Party seized power in that country in 1968. Iraq allowed the BLF to establish its headquarters in Baghdad and provided it with arms and other military equipment, training facilities inside Iraq, and access to Radio Baghdad for daily broadcasts in Balochi language. There are a number of reasons on Iraq's support of BLF. Behind the Iraqi support of BLF against the Shah of Iran several issues have been discussed in the following way. According to Mohammad Hassan Hossainbor, for Baath Party the BLF was accorded the status of national liberation movement which was fighting against Western imperialism as represented by the Shah's regime in the region. Second, Iraqi regime portrayed the Baloch's struggle as an Arab cause by reviving the issue of the Baloch's Arab origin, as believed by BLF, which wanted to identify the Baloch as part of the 'great Arab nation.' According to Dr. Selig Harrison, Iraq's rivalry with Iran for supremacy in the Persian Gulf, its territorial dispute with Iran over Shatt-al-Arab Waterway, Iran's support of anti-Iraqi Kurdish insurgency headed by Mullah Mustafa Barezani, and the Shah's ties with Israel could be regarded among the main factors accounting for Iraq's calculated support of BLF. Reportedly, BLF committed its vandalized activities in Balochistan against the regime of Shah, disarming and killing army and gendarme officers. The insurgency was particularly strong in central and
southern Balochistan. To the Shah's regime, the emergence of BLF in the Iranian Balochistan considered a part of an elaborated scheme designed most likely by Moscow and implemented by Iraq and Afghanistan for the purpose of creating an Independent Balochi State which might provide the Soviet Union with access to the Persian Gulf. Consequently, the Shah's government took some drastic military measures to suppress the BLF, but simultaneously initiated a series of economic programs designed to win over the Baloch population, beginning in the early 1970s. On the military side of this policy, government intensified its counter-insurgency operations against BLF guerrillas by sending a whole new mechanized army division into Balochistan, which was permanently stationed in Khash city, in 1972. At the same time, Iranian naval units were reinforced along the coast of the Gulf of Oman in order to prevent the entry of any smuggled weapon for Balochi insurgents. Equally important, however, were economic measures such as the establishment of educational facilities like University of Balochistan; development of the provincial economic infrastructure by constructing the first network of asphalt roads beginning in the 1970s; setting up Radio Zahedan for the Iranian Baloch in order to counter the effects of Balochi programs from Radio Baghdad and Radio Kabul; and a number of other developments, taken to undermine the BLF’s popular base of support among the population. In addition, the central government initiated a policy of general amnesty for Baloch guerrillas who finally laid down their arms. They were promised with employment and subsidies as well. The plan proved largely successful particularly after SAVAK (State Organization for Intelligence & Security) used its intermediaries to convince Mir Abdi Khan to return from his exile in Iraq in 1973. Subsequently, an estimated 1,000 guerrillas were reported to have turned themselves in. The final blow to BLF, however, came as a result of the Iraqi termination of its support in the aftermath of the Algiers Agreement signed between the Shah and Saddam Hossain in 1975. At last, BLF lost its external base of support and its leaders
were forced to disperse from Baghdad and seek haven in other Arab Gulf States where Abdul Samad Barakzahi and Musa Khan Lashari were eventually assassinated by SAVAK. Later on, in 1979 Rahim Zard Kouhi (the military commander of BLF) resumed insurgency against the newly established Islamic Republic, but was killed in a battle by the Revolutionary Guards in 1979.  

These developments demonstrate, the Baloch in Iran have been dissatisfied with the policies of Shah. Such dissatisfaction has reached to that extent where groups like Balochistan Liberation Front (BLF) would emerge and manage to attract the attention of foreign factors (such as Iraq) against Iran. On the other hand, the aforementioned developments also indicate that favorable policies towards the Baloch such as those economic developments undertaken by Shah's regime can make the unsatisfied Baloch into the obedient subjects who may play a vital role in the political security of Balochistan. However, it was too late for Mohammad Reza Shah's regime to learn from her mistakes and as a result of her miscalculated policies the regime was directed towards her fall by the Islamic Revolutionary Forces. Anyway, with the outbreak of the Islamic Revolution in 1979 a new chapter opened in the political history of the Baloch in Iran, as shall be discussed in the following section.

**BALOCH IN THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN 1979-1989**

As Baloch were in the beginning of their political socialization process to acquire familiarity with the monarchical regime, the Islamic Revolution broke out and thus again altered the political set up of Iran. In post-Islamic Revolution (after 1979) Baloch had to re-adjust themselves with the Islamic state. The new government was based on Shia version of Islam, which could not tolerate the previous role of the Sunni Baloch tribal chiefs in Balochistan. The theocratic regime of Iran in its policies towards the Iranian people was a step ahead of the
monarchical regime in the sense that it had learned some precious lesson from mistakes of the monarchical regime. The foremost lesson learned was ideological. In this respect, the constitutional remarks of the Islamic Republic of Iran can be referred to where it says “the fundamental characteristic of this Revolution as compared with other movements in Iran during the last century is its ideological and Islamic character...” With the beginning of the Islamic Revolution, considerable number of Baloch from the elitist Balochi society including the educated and the clerics welcomed the Revolution and its leader Ayatollah Khomeini. This could be considered an opportunity for the educated Baloch who had no influence over the traditional Balochi society of Iran, to reorganize themselves under the new establishment. As stated by Dr. Mohammad Reza Taheri, even till the mid of 1978 most of the Baloch did not imagine the fall of regime, that is why, tribal chiefs maintained their old good ties and remained as faithful to Shah and his regime. In fact, from the beginning of the 1978 SAVAK’s (a powerful intelligence organization) power began declining. The educated Baloch (although not all) in Balochistan had some sort of cooperation with a number of Shia clerics or influential supporters of the Islamic Revolution. Close to the end of 1978 at times revolutionary agents including both clergy and non-clergy traveling from Tehran to Balochistan where they used to give some lectures with utmost care against the regime of Shah. Among the Baloch participants of such meetings were a number of Sunni clerics and the educated ones. As the regime of Shah began to lose its power and influence, and as a result of political confrontation between the monarchy and the Islamic forces, which finally led to the victory of the Islamic Republic, for a while the new regime could not establish its influence over some remote parts of Iran especially on an area like Balochistan. As a result, political liberties erupted in Balochistan in an autonomous way. In this connection, Dr. Mohammad Hassan Hossainbor, an Iranian Baloch lawyer based in Washington writes, "during the early months of Revolution, the new government for a while
could not pacify the disturbances in Balochistan. Baloch began to reassert their power by ousting non-Baloch officials from their positions, occupying the offices left vacant by SAVAK in various cities, and in many instances by disarming the gendarme and army units stationed in Balochistan. Faced with the prospect of loss of control in Balochistan, the provisional government of Mehdi Bazargan responded favorably to the demand for appointing Baloch to positions of authority in the province. Thus, Dr. Danesh Narooie, a mathematics professor at the University of Balochistan and a Baloch favorite was appointed to the post of Governor-General of Sistan & Balochistan Province. Similarly, among other top positions headed by the Baloch appointees was the Chancery of the University of Balochistan, which went to Dr. Gamshadzahi, a statistics professor. Both officials, however, were replaced in less than six months by the Islamic government," and till today no Baloch has been ever allowed to occupy such positions again. Dr. Mohammad Hassan Hossainbor further writes, "during these months after the Revolution, Baloch found a favorable situation in which they could freely express their national sentiments and carry out open political activities; use their national dress in school and public offices without prohibition by the government; and read, write, and publish in their language for the first time in fifty years. Although this spring of freedom was short-lived, it gave birth to multiple political parties and organizations, as well as, numerous publications in Balochi and Farsi. The Balochi periodicals included the monthly Makoran, a literally journal; Mahtak (Monthly Dispatch) also a literally journal; Roshna-ie (light), a weekly nationalist publication; Kookar (cry), an organ of Marxist forces; and Grand (Majesty), a monthly journal dealing with revolutionary doctrines also published by leftist forces."  

After the 1979 Revolution, the strategy was to apply the Islamic codes in the entire organization of the country, however, so far as the issue of Balochistan is concerned in the beginning of the process central government was not very
much successful in her approach towards the Baloch. Although the Islamic revolutionists strive to expand their ideology in Balochistan, generally they failed to attract the attention of Baloch students. Surprisingly, many young Baloch including secondary school students who were also involved in politics did not absorbed in the on going Islamic propaganda, rather they were inclining towards leftist groups and few were inclining towards the Mojahedin Khalq Organization (Sazman-e Mojahedin-e Khalg), an organization in which mixed Marxism and Islam formed in the 1960s. The organization was expelled from Iran after the Islamic Revolution and its primary support came from the former Iraqi regime of Saddam Hossain since the late 1980s. Perhaps because, the Baloch clerics who mostly belong to Sunni-Hanafi sect of Islam and possessed hundreds of mosques as their bases in Balochistan failed to desirably project that period’s revolutionary political and social issues under an Islamic umbrella while propagandizing Islamic teachings. In any case, for the young Baloch mere Islamic teachings could not make any sense. On the other hand, the newcomer Shia missionaries at that time were unable to play their due role in attracting the attention of the young leftist Baloch, though both Shia and Sunni clerics had some sort of cooperation for the purpose. Besides, leftist slogans such as ‘liberty’ and ‘freedom’ had more temptation and fascination for the young Baloch leftists.  

Eventually, the **Muslim Unity Party (MUP)** formed by a group of Sunni clerics and religious oriented intellectuals under the leadership of Molavi (cleric) Abdul Aziz Mullazadeh, the most prominent religious and political leader in Balochistan of Iran, emerged as a major party for presenting the Baloch demands for religious, cultural, and administrative autonomy for Balochistan during the process initiated for drafting a new constitution for the Islamic Republic. The Muslim Unity Party (MUP) was headed by some major Baloch clerics and its religious orientation made it the only acceptable forum for
the Islamic Republic to deal with. Soon after his return from exile in Paris, Ayatollah Khomeini (the founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran) met a Baloch delegation headed by Molavi Abdol Aziz in March 1979 and reportedly promised them to give equal treatment to both Shia and Sunni branches of Islam in the projected constitution and to direct the provisional government to consult the leadership of Muslim Unity Party with respect to government appointments in Balochistan. Thus, upon returning, Molavi Abdol Aziz declared to the Baloch people that “all their national and religious wishes have been accepted by the new Islamic Leadership, hence inviting them to vote for the establishment of the Islamic Republic as proposed in the referendum of April 1979, and finally, Ayatollah Khomeini’s forces won the referendum with an overwhelming vote for the Islamic Republic. But surprisingly, as presented in the summer of 1979 to an elected Council of Experts (Majlish-e Khobregan), dominated by Shia clergy, the draft recognized only Shia Jafari Athna Ashari as the state religion and Farsi as the only official language in Articles 12 and 15, respectively. It accorded no equal recognition to the Sunni branch of Islam, nor did it include any provision for granting political and administrative autonomy to the Baloch. As a result, the Baloch members of the Council of Experts, Molavi Abdol Aziz and Mir Moradzahi (a lawyer), both elected by MUP, tried in vain to persuade the Council to introduce the necessary changes in the draft to meet Baloch demands. In an interview with Ayandegan, a Tehran daily newspaper then used by the Iranian opposition for airing its views, Molavi Abdol Aziz expressed his opposition to the provision of Article 12 for recognizing only 'Shia' as the official state religion by stating that “the ethnic and religious rights of Iranian Sunnis will be safeguarded only if Article 12 omits any reference to the Shia and Sunni and merely stipulates that Iran’s official religion shall be Islam. The Sunni branch of Islam has nearly 10 million adherents in Sistan & Balochistan, Kurdistan, Gonbad, Gorgan, Khorasan, and Iran’s southern ports. Thus, making 'Shia' Iran’s official religion will automatically make second class
citizens out of these 10 million Iranians.” Molavi Abdol Aziz was equally adamant in expressing Baloch opposition to the draft for failing to address their demand for autonomy, which was described by him as the Baloch’s “birthright.” In articulating the quest of his constituencies for autonomy, he stated in the same interview “we are not secessionists and it is not in our interest to be independent in all fields. Our goal is to see that the Baloch make their own decisions in cultural and political fields, instead of being forced to accept decisions made in Tehran. We want to choose our own governor general, governors and administrators (although not military officials). That is what the Baloch mean by autonomy.” However, such objections produced no positive change, rather things become even worse in that the rights of the Iranian Sunnis including the Baloch was further restricted by the provision of Article 115, which excluded them from holding the Office of Presidency of the Islamic Republic of Iran. For example, Article 115 of the Islamic Republic of Iran states, “… the President of Iran shall be true and faithful to the essentials of the Islamic Republic and the official faith of the country.”

As a matter of fact, some Articles of the constitution such as Articles 5 (during the occultation of Mahdi or the Messiah, the leadership of the nation in the Islamic Republic of Iran shall be the responsibility of a Shia jurisconsult. This shows that a Sunni cannot hold the Office of leadership in the Islamic Republic of Iran), Article 12 (the official faith in the Islamic Republic of Iran shall be Shia Jafari Athna Ashari and this Article shall be eternal and immutable), Article 15 (the common and official language and script of the people of Iran is Farsi), Article 115 (it is about the conditions of the President who must be faithful to the essentials of the Islamic Republic and the official faith of the country), and some concepts such as ‘the ultimate authority of the Iranian leadership over all three branches of government, etc., considered to be controversial for the Sunni Baloch. Reports indicate that such state of affairs triggered a strike among the Iranian national minorities and the secular forces that boycotted the nationwide
referendum held for approval of the constitution on 2nd and 3rd December 1979. Muslim Unity Party (MUP) and Balochistan People Democratic Organization (BPDO), as well as, other lesser nationalist organizations such as Baloch People's Cultural & Political Center (formed by a group of leftist and nationalist youth) joined forces to organize large demonstrations to protest against the new constitution. According to Nikki R. Keddie, these groups objected to the concept of 'Islamic Republic' for lacking any precise definition in its form, substance, and content. The followers of Balochistan People Democratic Organization (BPDO) waged violent demonstrations against the new government by attacking many polling places and officials and burning numerous ballot boxes in various cities. In many instances, the demonstrations erupted into active fighting between BPDO members and government forces.  

Although the leaders of Muslim Unity Party attempted to calm the situation by mediating between the two sides, they were not successful due to the growing polarization between the secular and religious forces in Balochistan, as well as, in other parts of the country. As a result, these demonstration and armed clashes between the Baloch and the revolutionary guards turned into a daily occurrence in Zahedan. The unrest grew so intense that an angry mob stormed the Office of Jaririe, the then Governor General of Sistan & Balochistan (a Persian who had replaced the first and the only Baloch Governor General). They held Jaririe captive until he was released through the intervention of Molavi Abdol Aziz three days later. Violence grew more intense without any positive development on both sides. Outnumbered in their fortified headquarters in Zahedan, the revolutionary guards asked for more troops from other cities of Iran such as Isfahan, Yazd, Mashhad, etc., and sought help against the angry Baloch. This action created a reaction by the Baloch that led to the large-scale riots and open warfare between the two sides. During only one week in late December, the toll on both sides had reached to twenty-four killed and eighty wounded. Meanwhile, the government dispatched Dr. Ibrahim Yazdi, a member
of the Revolutionary Council from Tehran to Balochistan to deal with the growing unrest. Upon arrival, however, he was confronted by an angry mob and barely managed to escape injury, thus leaving the province without being able to begin his task of calming the situation. This event prompted the central government to declare martial law and impose a dusk-to-dawn curfew in Zahedan in order to quell the riots.\textsuperscript{18} There are, of course, some major reasons that resulted in such a conflict between the Baloch and the government. In this regard, two main causes observed by Dr. Selig Harrison, can be mentioned in the following way. First, the Baloch felt ‘betrayed' by the Islamic leaders in failing to meet constitutional demands as had been promised earlier by Ayatollah Khomeini and other high ranking officials.\textsuperscript{19} Second, the quick dismissal and replacement of the Baloch Governor General and other officials by Persians was seen as a clear sign of government policy of discrimination against the Baloch (Sunni) and in favor of Shia.\textsuperscript{20}

Less broadly based than MUP, but more articulate and vocal in its demand for autonomy was the \textbf{Balochistan People Democratic Organization (BPDO)}, formed by Baloch supporters and sympathizers of the two Iranian Marxist organizations, Organization of People’s Self-Sacrificer Guerrillas (Sazman-e Cherik-haay-e Fedai Khalg) and the Organization of the Working Class Struggle (Sazman-e Paikar-e Tabaghay-e Kargar), shortly after the Revolution. As a front, it represented a loose coalition of Marxist and leftist-oriented nationalist factions, including \textit{Kanoon-e Farhangi va Siasi-e Khalg Baloch}, a youth organization representing nationalist students with socialist tendencies; \textit{Nabard-e Baloch} (The Baloch Struggle), serving as the provincial arm of the Paikar Organization; \textit{the Bame-i Estar} (The Red Star), affiliated with \textit{Feda-i Organization}; and several lesser groups. Balochistan People Deomcratic Organization (BPDO) derived its main support from Baloch intelligentsia, students, and the nascent working class. It also absorbed large groups of leftist oriented Persians who were
working and living in Balochistan in order to broaden its base of support. It was the inclusion of the latter group in its ranks that led to the adoption of 'Balochistan People Democratic Organization' as its official name rather than 'Baloch People Democratic Organization', as had been suggested originally by its overwhelming Baloch members. In its manifesto, BPDO rejected 'all the manifestations of secessionism' in favor of 'self-autonomy' in a united Iran. It defined autonomy in terms of full administrative autonomy by the Baloch, the adaptation of Balochi language as the official medium of instruction and administration in Balochistan, the revival of Balochi culture, full control by the Baloch over their natural resources, their representation and participation in the highest organs of the central government, and protection of the Sunni religion.

As narrated by Dr. Mohammad Hassan Hossainbor, BPDO was divided ideologically into two camps of anti and pro Moscow groups, as was the case with the Iranian Marxists throughout the country. BPDO led by Dr. Rahmat Hossainbor, an Iranian Baloch, sought to secure Baloch national rights through the victory of the working class over the bourgeoisie in Balochistan. Accordingly, it waged a campaign for organizing councils of peasants, workers, and students against the 'reactionary forces' i.e. the Baloch clerics, tribal chiefs, and the dependent bourgeoisie namely the very small commercial middle class. This strategy, however, was doomed to failure from the beginning due to its miscalculation and misperception of the prevailing social and economic structure of the Balochi society. Because, first, the thesis of class struggle as elaborated by the Iranian Marxists was developed with a view to the major industrial areas in Iran, where there existed relatively strong classes of the proletariat and bourgeoisie, and thus it could not be applicable to an area like Balochistan, which lacked a significant working class due to the lack of industrialization. Second, in the immediate aftermath of the Islamic Revolution, the rising religious and ethnic tensions between the Baloch and the Persians made the Baloch clerics the major rallying point for the Baloch masses,
therefore not only did the attacks on Baloch clerics serve to arouse a strong hostility on their part against BPDO, but alienated their large number of supporters at the grassroots level as well. Third, the organization’s campaign against Baloch tribal leaders and chiefs fell on deaf ears, because this group had already lost the last vestiges of its power with the collapse of the Shah’s regime. Of course, BPDO was short lived and banned after seven months of open political activity in August 1979. Similarly, MUP was also forced to dissolve itself and submerge in the provincial branch of the government sponsored Islamic Republican Party in early 1981. Thereafter, all Balochi publications were also banned as has been the case ever since. However, BPDO members and sympathizers suddenly singled out once again for their leftist ideology and nationalist demands, but were arrested en masse, as was the case with other opposition groups throughout the country. By mid February 1982, an estimated 3,000 Baloch, most accused of belonging to the Balochi separatist movements, had crossed the border to seek refuge in Pakistan, while another 4,000 of their fellows were reportedly being held in the jails of Zahedan, the provincial capital. Other groups of Baloch exiles took refuge in countries such as Britain and Sweden. The overwhelming majority of these exiles were former members of the BPDO, while a smaller number were followers of the nationalist Baloch clerics who had broken away from the MUP during the Baloch boycott of the constitutional referendum in December 1979. Of the detainees, several dozen were executed after being charged and tried for counter-revolutionary activities.

Anyway, in spite of the strong opposition by national minorities and secular groups, Ayatollah Khomeini’s forces won the referendum with an overwhelming vote for the Islamic Republic. Taking notice of strong opposition demonstrated by different national groups, Ayatollah Khomeini attempted to calm their fears in his message of congratulation to the nation for the approval of the Islamic
Republic by stating, "... congratulations on such a government (Islamic Government) which does not discriminate between races, black or white, Turk, Fars (Persian), Kurd or Baloch. All are brothers and equal. Superiority is accorded to piety and virtue and good deeds."  

In fact, right after the 1979 Revolution till around two years, Balochistan witnessed a sort of unconditional freedom. A number of educational institutions such as schools were run by the leftists who received their instructions from their leaders in Tehran or other big cities of Iran. They arranged seminars and lectures in Balochistan, and slogans that chanted were charming for the Baloch youth. It was during this period that leftist groups used to publish harsh and caustic articles against Baloch clerics and the educated Baloch. The leftists looked upon them as those who cooperated with the Islamic revolutionary figures and thus tried to defame them by calling them as ostentatious people. Almost, two years after the Islamic Revolution, revolutionary rulers of Iran began to establish and organize revolutionary organs in Balochistan. The Islamic revolutionary forces executed many of the previous heads of army, gendarme, police, and SAVAK. With regard to the fate of some Baloch tribal chiefs or leaders (as oppositional figures), after the Revolution many such people were detained or executed by the revolutionary courts. A number of influential Shia clerics or revolutionary guards such as Ayatollah Khalkhali (a Shia cleric) directly carried out many of such executions especially in provinces where leftist parties enjoyed more support including both Kurdistan (Ayatollah Khalkhali carried out his mission especially in Kurdistan) and Balochistan. The Trans-Iranian Radio and Television Networks on daily basis used to broadcast the news concerning execution of such groups or of senior members or colleagues of Pahlavi regime. As a result, a number of Baloch leaders or tribal masters ran away to Pakistan. Some just saved their lives and remained passive, but some joined major escapee oppositional figures of Pahlavi regime like Daryadar
Madani and Shapour Bakhtiyar. Occasionally, some Baloch insurgents used to enter Iran illegally, engaging in sabotaging activities such as killing government officials and conducting other related operations against the forces of the Islamic Republic on different highways that connected the cities of the Iranian Balochistan. In return, they used to receive financial support or some funds from their masters. Several Baloch leaders received regular stipend for their activities from Shahpor Bakhtiyar, the last Prime Minister of Shah’s regime who was also on the run and staying in Paris. In fact, these turbulences occurred in Balochistan during the first decade, where the country was engaged in a terrible long war (1980-1988) with Iraq. The attacks by the rebellious Baloch in Balochistan against the Islamic Republic actually forced the government to build up security measures within Balochistan. Therefore, work began on all highways where connecting the different cities of Balochistan. The regime began to erect several military bases on each route that linking the major cities of Balochistan with each other. As remarked by Dr. Mohammad Reza Taheri, "these bases usually were constructed on the height of the hills and mountains to act as a watchdog. This action compelled government to spend billions of Rials for this purpose. Meanwhile, a number of the educated Baloch suggested the concerned provincial officials that establishment of military bases and allocation of huge funds within Balochistan for security measures would not bring any positive change in the region. Instead, the Islamic Republic should enter into negotiation with these groups." 27 Subsequently, the concerned authorities realized that as it was anticipated by a small group of the educated Baloch, government's policies in this respect did not produce any remarkable development. Thus, state's concerned authorities changed their policy of military approach and so chose a soft approach or negotiation.

Therefore, in order to approach the insurgents diplomatically, government formed some institutions such as a number of intelligence units. Besides, the
Islamic Republic established an office in Balochistan known as Daftar-e Namayandegi-e Vali-e Faghih or a branch of Leadership Office, which is located in Zahedan. In fact, the Central Office of Leadership holds various divisions throughout the country. In all governmental organizations or institutions such as universities and administrative units, leadership has appointed its representatives to look after the concerned matters. This office in Balochistan also deals with the affairs of the Sunni Baloch population of Sistan & Balochistan. Reportedly, the office which is a religious, cultural, and political establishment acted to negotiate with the Baloch insurgents through the intelligence departments. In the meantime, some of the major oppositional escapee figures (Iranians) who were residing in Europe and used to financially support a number of the Baloch tribal chiefs or other Baloch leaders, realized that their apparent vandalized operations are not going to shake the pillars of the Islamic Republic, nor can force the Islamic government to change its policies. Thus, they began to minimize their financial back up (here, it should be noted that in this period all Baloch insurgents did not enjoy financial support from these political or foreign sources, rather a number of them fought independently without political motives. Usually on such matters military confrontation took place between Baloch smugglers and government forces based on non-political issues such as drug-trafficking). On the other hand, as noted above, the Islamic Republic and the Baloch insurgents entered into negotiations. Mostly, they met each other outside Iran e.g. in countries such as Pakistan or the Gulf States. They debated over their differences and finally after much talk that involved face to face meetings between Baloch insurgents and the intelligence agents, the Islamic Republic guaranteed their safety in Iran. So, a number of Baloch insurgents returned to Iran and received some privileges such as agricultural facilities, etc. It has been claimed, even a number of these people began to serve and work as spies for the Islamic Republic. For instance, some of the insurgent-turned-agents were sent to assassinate a number of leading Baloch insurgents who turned down the government’s offer of their
promised safety in Iran. In this regard, Mohammad Khan Lashari’s case might be taken as an example. He was a Member of Parliament under the regime of Shah, but later on took asylum in Pakistan where escaped two assassination attempt, and finally took a political asylum in London (however, this is a claim, and it is not certain whether Mohammad Khan Lashari's assassination attempts, were carried out by Baloch or by non-Baloch agents of the intelligence). Likewise was the case of Abdol Malek Mollazadeh (a Baloch cleric) who was assassinated in Karachi. However, a number of them received amnesty from the Islamic Republic and returned to Iran. In this regard, there was a claim rumored in Balochistan among several Balochi tribes that some of these runaway Baloch leaders like Khalil Khan Gamshadzahi who received amnesty and returned Iran and stayed in Balochistan had been subsequently assassinated secretly by the intelligence service. But, life for some others such as the family of Eido Khan Rigi was favorable under the Islamic Republic. Of course, it must be noted, almost all those who did not engaged militarily the Islamic Republic or did not criticize the fundamental policies of the regime, could be safe and secure from government side.

As stated earlier, under the Pahlavi regime Baloch tribal leaders (mediation between the Baloch masses and the central government) who used to hold a sense of belongingness to the regime of Shah, after the Islamic Revolution gradually lost their political bases. The Shia clerics could not tolerate tribal chiefs’ role under the Islamic Republic. Thus, despite the efforts of a number of Baloch tribal chiefs to establish good ties with the Islamic state, their approaches were turned down by the concerned authorities and so their old traditional/political role was eliminated. On one hand, the Islamic state as a new establishment in the first ten years or so could not understand well the psychology of the Iranian Baloch. On the other hand, the existence of a long war (1980-1988) with Iraq, which took place within the first decade of the Islamic Republic and the preoccupation of
the Islamic Republic with foreign threats, could not allow the central government to focus fully on Baloch and Balochistan in Iran. These factors can be regarded among the major reasons that why in the first decade of the Islamic Republic, there could not be certain effective diplomatic contacts between Baloch and the central government.

BALOCH IN THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN 1990-1999

In the second decade, the central government reviewed its policies and pursued the policy of 'absorption'--- making Baloch dependent on the Islamic Republic through the establishment of various structures, which was a success for the regime. Government also learned that due to the typical traditional Balochi society of Iran, the total elimination of Baloch tribal chiefs especially in security matters of Balochistan could be against her own interests. Thus, though the leading meditative role of tribal chiefs declined considerably, as far as the political security is concerned their presence in Balochistan is still of major importance for the Islamic Republic. As noted earlier, the Islamic Republic established an organization in Zahedan, the provincial capital of Sistan & Balochistan. This organization is called the Leadership Representative Office in the Affairs of Balochistan (Daftar-e Namayandegy-e Nahad-e Rahbari Dar Omoor-e Balochistan), which enjoys full authority within the province. This organization is more powerful than the Governor House, which is regarded as the highest governmental institution in the province. The Leadership Office receives its instructions directly from the Central Leadership Office in Tehran, and likewise reports its activities directly to the center. This organization can be regarded as a major structure or official channel of communication between Baloch and the central government. Leadership Office receives its budget directly from its main office in Tehran, and thus not from the government’s budget. Therefore, no independent Public Investigation Institution such as Iran’s Inspection Office
(Bazrasi-e Kol-e Keshvar) and Tribunal Account Department (Divan-e Mohasebat) can inspect or supervise over the administrative and financial affairs of the Leadership Office. The Central Leadership selects the provincial Head, who is also a Shia clergy. This organization is divided into different parts such as administrative and financial section, cultural and social section, and political section. Besides, there are other different subordinate divisions, which deal with different issues. For instance, one division deals with the matters concerning Baloch tribal chiefs, one deals with those issues that are related to Baloch Sunni clerics, and another one deals with affairs relevant to the common Baloch, etc.

The other major structures of political communication between Baloch and central government are a number of organizations and institutions, which are affiliated either with the Internal Police Department (Nirooy-e Entezami-e Kol-e Keshvar), or the Army of the Islamic Republic (Artesh-e Jomhoori-e Islami-e Iran), or the Revolutionary Guards (Sepah-e Pasdaran). All these organizations are military political, which investigate major security and political matters of Balochistan and beyond its borders. The Governor House is another major organization. Unlike other institutions such as Ministry of Intelligence or Revolutionary Guards, which organize their meetings with the Baloch elite in private, Governor House usually organizes its meetings publicly and not confidentially. These organizations, however, are not allocated only for the Baloch, rather various units exist in other parts of Iran. Apart from their routine activities, these organizations are in contact with the Balochi population of Iran including businessmen for their business projects; clerics for their religious issues; intelligentsia for their educational issues; students for their academic matters such as student's national seminars; and tribal masters for security developments. The concerned authorities are there in different cities of Balochistan to meet and take down complaints, and report them to the higher authorities in the center. Although these organizations may also play a direct or
indirect role in socio-cultural issues of the Baloch, a number of other related organizations do exist for the purpose. For example, on non-political matters like economic, social, and cultural, there are concerned organizations such as Governor House, Agriculture Department, Commerce Department, and the Islamic Culture & Guidance Department, to look at various demands of the Baloch and if authorized fulfill them, otherwise may report them to the central administration for assessment. For instance, on the issue of vital demands like enormous loans from banks or foreign trade, the matters would be reported to the center for further investigations.

Another major political structure for communicating purpose between Baloch and central government is the existence of Intelligence Ministry’s division (Vezarat-e Etellaat) in Zahedan. As stated before, Balochistan shares a long border of more than 1300 km with Pakistan, Afghanistan, United Arab Emirates, and Oman. Thus, its strategic situation matters much for Iran. This division, which is known as the General Office of Intelligence (Edareh-e Kol-e Etellaat) holds its respective sub-divisions in large numbers throughout Balochistan and plays a vital role in the political and security issues of the region. Intelligence Division has almost a total control over the province of Sistan & Balochistan. Any threat potential or otherwise can be investigated and reported to the Intelligence Ministry in Tehran. This organization collects its data and information from various sources including Baloch informers and spies, who are employed to report and inform the concerned authorities of any kind of threat to the security of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Balochistan.

In this decade, as mentioned earlier, tribal chiefs’ power gradually was declining. Many of them become powerless, old-age men and many others such as Karim Bakhsh Saidi passed away. Some of them like Taghi Khan Rigi died in Pakistan and their bodies returned and buried in the Iranian Balochistan.
Compare with the first and third decades, in the second decade except occasional conflicts that exchanged between Baloch drug traffickers and government forces, Balochistan relatively faced less with political turbulences. Drug trafficking, of course, has always been one of the core issues in the Iranian Balochistan, which particularly in the third decade it has assumed a political color. Both the Islamic Republic and the relevant international organizations have been concerned about this phenomenon. Since Balochistan is geographically situated in a particular sensitive region, illegal trade has become an issue of concern. Illegal trade in Balochistan is of two types. The first included various goods such as consumer goods and non-consumer goods. The second type is of drug trafficking. Antonio Maria Costa (Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs & Crime) says, the total amount of opium being harvested in Afghanistan “remains shockingly high.” During 2007, over one-hundred-ninety-thousand hectares were under poppy cultivation, yielding an estimated nine-thousand tons of opium in Afghanistan, which share a long border with Iran. According to Kurt Volker (U.S. Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European & Eurasia Affairs), “Afghanistan is the number one supplier of opium and heroin to Europe.” Mainly from Afghanistan the international drug traffickers carry drugs via Balochistan and south of Khorasan to other parts of Iran, as well as, to the Western countries. Under the regime of Shah, there used to be a number of Baloch who were guided and supported by some high-ranking Iranian officials to transit drugs to the West via Turkey. In the process insignificant amounts of drugs could be absorbed and spread in Iran itself including in Kerman province. That’s why, at that time in Kerman drug was consumed more than in Balochistan. Despite its closeness with Afghanistan, as well as, its drug trafficking route Balochistan used to have insignificant number of drug consumers. However, subsequently under the Islamic Republic the number of drug consumers gradually began to increase to a large extent. One of the major reasons that resulted in such unfavorable
condition among the Iranians including the Baloch was the severity of the government. For example, after the Islamic Revolution, state took some intensive measures to fight against drug trafficking. As a result, drugs could not be transported easily out of Balochistan or out of Iran and thus remarkable amount remained and spread in Balochistan as well as in the country, which ultimately made many people drug addicted. Although it has been claimed by some unofficial local sources that a number of state authorities are also involved in this business, such sources have not been able to substantiate the claim. In addition, because of unemployment and severe drought that hit Balochistan, considerable number of the unemployed Baloch youth has been absorbed by both international and internal Mafia bands to deal in such business. Civil wars in Afghanistan and its subsequent effects like Afghani illegal migration into Balochistan of Iran, as well as, miscalculation of the policies of the Islamic Republic have further intensified the problems. During this decade at times armed conflicts took place between Baloch drug traffickers and government forces. It was mainly in this decade that government forces were militarily engaged with a number of Baloch drug traffickers, most notable among them were people like Hamid Nohtani and Eidok Bameri. Although they did not demand political rights, their vandalizing activities were somewhat troublesome for the Islamic Republic. Ultimately, the intelligence units terminated both.

As stated before, during the first decade of the Islamic Republic, government ignored tribal chiefs’ role. Thus, this group’s deletion from political scene caused power vacuum or leadership crisis among the Baloch. This situation had also its own effect on government in the sense that government could not tackle security matters in Balochistan without the presence of a strong Balochi meditative role. Therefore, central government’s attention focused on the educated Baloch and the Baloch clerics. Even though it was expected that both groups could fill the political vacuum, each of them had their own specific
problems. For example, during the early months of the Islamic Republic, a number of the educated Baloch actually were involved in anti-clerical campaigns. Although this problem was there and government was suspicious of them, generally government regarded them favorably. Nevertheless, the educated Baloch could not fill power vacuum, because they did not have a popular base in Balochistan. But, contrary to the educated Baloch, Baloch clerics have been enjoying a popular base in Balochistan, though they had some fundamental ideological differences with the Shia regime of Iran. It is not certain for sure who first initiated to absorb the other. Either the policy makers of the Islamic Republic who were quite aware of such disturbances tried to win the side of the Sunni Baloch clerics or vice versa. However, records indicate during the early years of the Islamic Republic, a number of Baloch clerics have been active in politics of Balochistan. For example, some Baloch clerics from Balochistan represented the Baloch at the Islamic Consultative Assembly. In the first course (1980-1984) of the Islamic Consultative Assembly, cleric Hamed DamenI represented the people of Khash; cleric Nazar Ahmad Didgah represented the people of Iranshahr; and cleric Mohammad Is-haaq Madani represented the people of Saravan. But, such an active political presence of Baloch clerics did not last for a long time rather soon began declining. It was mainly because of the religious differences. The practical policies of the state authorities who did not consider the Sunni faith as equal to the Shia faith resulted in a minimal participation on the part of the Baloch clerics. Their role lessened to such an extent that they confined themselves only to several annual important meetings with the concerned officials, especially on security issues.  

However, the fall of the direct political participation on the part of the Baloch clerics did not lessen their popular bases in Balochistan, rather increased it further.
Anyway, after several years once again in the 1997 presidential election Baloch emerged from their political passive status and reappeared in politics. Such development, of course, had its roots in the personality of cleric (Shia) Khatemi, one of the presidential candidates, whose charming mottoes and moderate gesture made almost the entire Iran including its Sunni population such as the Baloch to vote for him. Therefore, in 1997 the Baloch clerics and the educated Baloch as leading figures along with the (Baloch) masses made a strong political appearance in Balochistan and propagated and voted all together for their reformist candidate cleric Seyed Mohammad Khatemi. Because of his attractive slogans such as liberty and equality, Baloch favored Khatemi. Under the administration of President Khatemi, the political face of Iran changed remarkably. 31 It was after 1997 when Baloch began organizing some meetings mainly among themselves, discussing on social and political matters. Such official and unofficial meetings usually used to take place at the residence of several notable Baloch figures. Meetings were usually attended by students, academicians, and of course, the clerics. As was the case with the entire Iran, in Balochistan too, activists began to write and criticize high-ranking provincial officials.

Under such a relative open atmosphere, where Baloch elite among themselves had a chance to confront each other and freely discuss on various socio-political issues, gradually some differences of opinion emerged between the intelligentsia and the clerics. In this regard, the issue of parties (centralized political parties) or civil institutions as favored by the Khatemi’s administration was conflicting between the educated and the clerics. The educated Baloch including a number of academicians, lecturers, professors, and state employees were attracted by President Khatemi’s fascinating talks. For them establishment of civil institutions, as was a part of Khatemi’s plans, could be for the benefit of the entire Balochi society of Iran. Thus, they looked upon such institutions as
the ladder of progress. On the other hand, a number of leading Baloch clerics viewed the 1997 onwards as a favorable opportunity to re-organize themselves and demand for more and more religious freedom, for example, to expand further their Sunni missionary activities in Sistan & Balochistan. This view can be backed by the active support of Baloch leading clerics, who called (Baloch) people to vote for cleric (Shia) Khatemi. But, later on under the presidency of Khatemi they (Baloch leading clerics) came across the concept of civil institutions such as NGOs or the idea of centralized political parties in which a number of the educated Baloch had membership in them. Although these civil institutions were very basic and inexperienced, within the Balochi society of Iran Baloch clerics hardly could tolerate the independent existence of such institutions. Because, for many years Sunni clerics used to enjoy their religious and traditional sources of power in Balochistan, thus, emergence or presence of such modern institutions could be regarded as a threat to their own strong social bases. At a meeting in Zahedan (2008) between Baloch clerics and Baloch students, cleric Abdol Hamid Ismaelzai (the religious leader of Sunni Baloch in Iran) had asserted, "political associations are good, but in Iran such associations can be considered a failure. They have failed to get their due rights. Although in Iran we talk of freedom, we have not been able to enjoy full freedom. Therefore, for us (Sunni Baloch) the best option is to meet and discuss with each other under the aegis of religion (Sunniism)." However, President Khatemi's administration failed to bring about the promised changes as expected by the people of Iran. As a matter of fact, had President Khatemi been successful in his policies, the Sunni clerics gradually could have lost their popular bases. The promised reforms (social and political liberties) by Khatemi, though could empower the Sunni clerics to have a better maneuver, similarly could have enlightened the other sections of the society such as common masses and the students, whom could be absorbed to the modern civil institutions of the government. In
turn, this could have undermined gradually the leading status of the Sunni clerics in Balochistan.

Another major disagreement between Baloch intelligentsia and Baloch clerics was about the role of the intelligentsia in religious institutions such as mosques and Sunni schools. In this respect, a few number of university professors demanded from clerics to permit them occasionally use mosque’s microphone and pedestal so that they may be able to speak to thousands of Baloch masses who regularly visit mosques for prayer. The attempt was to discuss on major social and cultural matters of Balochistan. This request, however, could not be acceptable to the Baloch clerics. Mainly because, the Baloch clerics considered mosques as praying sites only. In addition, permission to such request could gradually undermine clerics own traditional influence and stability within the Balochi society of Iran.

In short, despite the presence of centralized political parties in Balochistan where a number of the educated Baloch hold their membership; the ideological differences with the ruling Shia; and despite the presence of some civil institutions in Balochistan; Baloch clerics still could enjoy their religious and traditional sources of power. Their presence in the social and political security of Balochistan, have been always helpful for the Islamic Republic. In a number of cases such as kidnapping foreign tourists or government authorities, the state security organs have failed to solve the matters independently, rather they have approached either key tribal chiefs such as Rigi leaders or influential Baloch clerics such as Molavi Abdol Hamid Ismaelzai to take necessary measures and calm the crisis. Indeed they have had played a major direct and indirect role in the politics of Balochistan. Their role continued and extended into the third decade without major differences.
Although the utilization of Baloch clerics as mediators between Baloch masses and central authority was in many cases beneficial to the Islamic Republic, it must not be forgotten that such policy has been reluctantly adopted by the establishment, as the only available choice, which in turn has strengthened further the religious and traditional foundation of Baloch clerics in Balochistan. Such state of affairs has in fact made government distance itself from its main goals.\(^{35}\)

For example, one of the major goals has been to eliminate the mediation and instead get in contact with the masses directly. The Baloch clerics have become influential and powerful players within the traditional Balochi society of Iran. In socio-political matters they and their institutions such as religious schools still can be regarded as the major source of decision-making in the general social affairs of the society. During the presidential election of 1997, tens of thousands of Baloch masses were mobilized and encouraged by Baloch clerics to vote for Khatemi. In regard with parliamentary election, after the official approval of the candidates by Guardian Council, whosoever enjoys support from the influential Baloch clerics can win the election. Example can be taken of some Baloch parliamentary members, who have been elected in 2004 and 2008 within Balochistan, especially those of Zahedan. In this regard, Ghasem Siasar (an Iranian writer) elaborates that on one hand the influential Baloch clerics request and try their best to motivate Baloch masses to participate in elections, and on the other hand, given their strong popular bases in Balochistan, out of approved Baloch candidates they handpick some favorable ones and exercise their influence over the masses to vote only for those who have remained faithful and loyal to the wish of the Sunni clerics. This practice does not provide a favorable democratic situation for the Baloch, simply because they fail to choose and willingly vote for their own candidates. Therefore, the Baloch vote apparently in a democratic way, yet they don’t chose their candidates themselves.\(^{36}\)
practice, as far as the politics of election is concerned, has made the common Baloch unenlightened and careless. Generally speaking, the educated Baloch too, are under the influence of Baloch clerics. Two major reasons have caused this phenomenon. First, commonly the educated Baloch are mentally dependent on their religious traditional society, meaning that the roots of religion and tradition had been indoctrinated in them since the beginning of their political socialization process. Thus, to break away from such mental connection and leaning towards a liberal way of thinking is difficult, because liberal ideational inclination cannot emerge overnight and therefore needs its own long process. Furthermore, such inclination if happens can marginalize them from their traditional Balochi society of Iran. Second, many educated Baloch understand well that opposing the Balochi clerical system cannot be to their interest. On the other hand, the educated Baloch lack that much unity, which exist among the Baloch clerics, it is due to number of reasons, such as their ideational differences. Most of those educated Baloch who are in governmental service and occupy satisfactory offices such as those of directorship have turned into conservative figures especially under the administration of President Ahmadinejad. Perhaps because, after occupying such offices which normally are obtained through lots of filters or approaches, for fearing loss of position, these people may remain conservative in order to not give pretext to the concerned authorities, who supervise over their activities. In general, the educated Baloch are looking for a way to make their presence more meaningful. It also seems that the Baloch clerics do not mind to make themselves socially more powerful. Today, Molavi Abdol Hamid Ismaelzai and his team as the most influential religious figures in Balochistan have been regarded important for both the Balochi society and the state administration. Interestingly, the philosophy of this group’s importance is not because of the mere Balochi popular support, rather initially it is because of policies of the regime itself. The mystery of this popular base in Balochistan is as a result of lack of proper
policies of the central government in Balochistan. For example, a failure to absorb the Sunni Baloch into the political system of the Islamic Republic is enough to lead the Baloch conclude that the Shia state of Iran does not regard for their political rights. Or for that matter, the occasional insulting lectures by a number of hardliner Shia clerics such as Mehdi Daneshmand, who constantly attacks the belief of the Sunni in his various online lectures, have made the common Baloch think that all Shia hold similar attitudes against the Sunni. Although the ruling Shia do not agree with fanatical clerics like Daneshmand, central government have not been very much successful in preventing such developments. A number of similar incidents have marginalized the common Baloch; they have become directionless and helpless to the extent that their only hope has become the Sunni clerical establishment. Therefore, this situation has turned Molavi Abdol Hamid and his team into a powerful organization in Balochistan. As far as the Balochi society of Iran is concerned, for the time being social and cultural conditions are not sided with other Baloch elites of Iran such as the intelligentsia (who do not hold a concrete base and are unable to fill the power vacuum) to break the status quo, therefore it is expediential for them to maintain their relationship with Baloch clerics, but in the meantime, they (Baloch intelligentsia and Baloch clerics) should balance each other's views and thoughts so that minimize their differences.

City Councils in Balochistan can be regarded as another sphere of politics. City and Village Councils are local councils which are elected by public vote in all cities and villages throughout Iran. The members of a council in each city or village are elected by direct public vote to a 4 year term. According to Article 7 of the Iranian constitution, "these local councils together with the Parliament are decision-making and administrative organs of the state. The councils are in charge of electing mayors, supervising the activities of municipalities; study social, cultural, educational, health, economic, and welfare requirements of their
City councils can play their important role towards development of Balochistan. In Balochistan, as has been stated every so often, there are different major stratifications such as the clerics, the intelligentsia, tribal chiefs, and students. Each of these sections maintains respective ties with common masses, and each holds its own way of influence over the city councils. In this regard, Dr. Nader Setodeh, the former Head of Iranshahr’s City Council, says "in a city like Zahedan which is ideationally dominated by Baloch clerics who also hold good ties with the Baloch youth, one can observe that the City Council is dominated by the (Sunni) clerics. In cities such as Konarak and Chabahar, City Councils are more influenced by the tribal chiefs. In cities like Iranshahr and Saravan a mixture of the educated, clerics, and perhaps tribal chiefs are influential over the City Councils. Even though in Balochistan such councils are traditional and primary, they play a vital role. For example, after candidates’ official recognition, people can elect their candidates. This, itself, is a democratic function which as a practice is useful for the Baloch. Besides, these elected councils can also participate in social, political, and economic issues for the good of the society. After all, such developments can be seen as some signs of modernity within the traditional Balochistan. Encouragement and support in cultural and social activities is the legal responsibility of these councils. For instance, two percent of the total budget of municipality can be allocated to city councils to spend the fund on cultural issues in the respective cities. Interestingly, a considerable number of Baloch namely around 90% have occupied city councils throughout Balochistan." 38

Except city councils and parliamentary politics, the Baloch constitutionally are not authorized to contest presidential elections, however they can vote for
presidential candidates. Though their number is not more than 3% of the Iranian population, if united with other Sunnis such as the Kurds of Iran, they cannot be overlooked. As it may be the case with other traditional societies, usually Baloch people are guided by their (Sunni) clerics, who can direct them for whom they should vote and for whom they should not vote. This has become more noticeable in the third decade of the Islamic Republic. Prior to the presidency of Ahmadinejad in 2005 the Balochi elitist society of Iran was in a dilemma; different groups of the Iranian Balochi society have been discussing and debating over the future President of Iran --- for whom they should caste their vote. They knew that Ahmadinejad was the previous mayor of Tehran and an unknown hardliner. Dr. Mostafa Moein, another candidate for presidency, was the previous Minister of Science & Technology and a reformist. He could be considered a good option, but he was not politically powerful like cleric Hashemi Rafsenjani (another candidate), the former President of Iran (a rich and influential figure). Besides, they discussed and scrutinized other candidates too. Finally, at a Balochi consultative assembly held in 2005 at Maki area in Zahedan, Dr. Mohammad Reza Taheri, brought up an idea. He suggested "the Sunni section of Iran all together can have a weight on the administration and so can collect remarkable votes. Thus, the authorities cannot overlook our presence. Therefore, we can enter into negotiations with each of the presidential candidates. We will remind them of the Sunni rights and will ask them if they can promise us better social and political conditions. Whoever recognizes our rights, ensured and promised such rights, and discussed our rights in the media such as newspapers and television networks, then Sunni people may vote for him. Besides, no matter if our candidate did not win the election, what matters is that it could be known to all that a presidential candidate who was filtered and approved by the Guardian Council had a recognition of Sunni rights. This phenomenon itself carries lots of meaning." 39 Afterwards, this suggestion would be accepted and the Balochi group would follow the same method. After
negotiations with different presidential candidates, the only candidate who agreed with the condition was Dr. Mostafa Moein who later on did not won the election, but had a total support from Balochi society of Iran. For instance, his votes were 100% more than cleric (Shia) Hashemi Rafsenjani, one of the most powerful figures in the Islamic Republic.

Before his presidency, Ahmadinejad, like Khatemi (the former President of Iran) talked in favor of liberty and justice. In his presidential campaign, Ahmadinejad took a populist approach, with emphasis on his own modest life, and compared himself with cleric Mohammad Ali Rajai, the second President of Iran. Ahmadinejad said he had plans to create an "exemplary government for the people of the world" in Iran. One of his goals has been "putting the petroleum income on people's tables", referring to Iran's oil profits being distributed among the poor, but when he chaired the power things become even worse. Ahmadinejad became the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran in August 2005 and since then most of the high-ranking reformist officials have been replaced by new hardliners. About the character of Ahmadinejad, Naji Kasra writes "Ahmadinejad and his team were of the opinion that the reforms of the previous eight years under Khatami's administration amounted to a serious deviation that shall never be allowed to happen again --- the reforms had to be rolled back and democracy was a Western import alien to their vision of Islam. They believe that Iran had to be militarily powerful and that the survival of the revolution at home depended on its spreading abroad… As Ahmadinejad repeatedly made clear, he believed he was divinely appointed to prepare both Iran and the world for the imminent return of imam Mahdi (as is believed by Muslims) Mahdi was to bring about a new global regime of peace and justice, and Ahmadinejad was driven by the belief that his politics and actions would make Mahdi's task easy once he arrived…." Right after the victory of Ahmadinejad as the President of Iran in 2005, major changes occurred in the country. In
Sistan & Balochistan Province for the first time since the Revolution of 1979, Dr. Dahmardeh, a local figure from Sistan, who does not enjoy a popular base in Balochistan, was appointed as the Governor General of Sistan & Balochistan Province. As a result, some Baloch parliamentary members (Namayandeh Majlis-e Shoray-e-Islami) such as Peman Forozesh from Zahedan and Bameri from Iranshahr applied for their resignations as a sign of protest, demonstrating why they have not been informed about the development. Immediately, Dr. Shahryari, the other parliamentary member of Zahedan who is also from Sistan (Zabol), along with a number of non-Baloch people went to visit Molavi Abdol Hamid Ismaelzai (the religious leader of the Sunni Baloch in Iran). Dr. Shahryari requested Molavi Abdol Hamid to calm down such Baloch parliamentary members (demonstrators) and in return he would repay his kind cooperation. Molavi Abdol Hamid and his team made some conditions. Reportedly, they discussed over the issue and agreed to end the protest by promising Baloch some governmental positions. Subsequently, some minor changes occurred but these changes did not happen as were promised to the Baloch i.e. within the political administration of Balochistan nothing remarkable occurred. In an interview with Radio Farda (a well known Iranian foreign based Radio Broadcasting Company) Mahmoud Berahoyinejad, a Baloch journalist has asserted, "according to the statistics, in Sistan & Balochistan Ahmadinejad's share of vote has been the least compared with other presidential candidates. After his victory as the President of Iran in 2005, Ahmadinejad chose Dr. Dahmardeh, who is a fanatical and prejudiced man, as the Governor General of Sistan & Balochistan." This Baloch journalist believes, in fact, appointment of Dr. Dahmardeh as the Governor General of Sistan & Balochistan was a politically motivated move of retaliation against the Baloch who did not vote for Ahmadinejad and that since his presidency the Sunni Baloch of Iran have been facing with a severe set of policies.
The nature of Baloch politics in Balochistan of Iran in the third decade of the Islamic Republic, has taken a more nationalist direction, though not to the extent which is visible in Pakistani Balochistan. As a result of the failure of central government to absorb the Sunni Baloch into its state structure, and as a result of Sunni cleric's powerful social bases in Balochistan of Iran, the Sunni-oriented tendency is glowing in the hearts and minds of the Baloch. If the current conditions continue without major changes, as it goes, it is likely Sunniism (as an ideology) may gradually replace Baloch nationalism. This tendency (Sunnism) has become more vivid in the third decade of the Islamic Republic. Between the two institutions, Baloch clerics emphasize on Sunnism rather than nationalism, whereas nationalists although insignificant emphasis on Baloch nationalism. Contrary to the former group, a number of the latter group is resided in Europe where they can speak out against the Islamic Republic.

It has been generally agreed among the Baloch that the overall policies of the central decision making body towards Baloch have been unfavorable so far. As a result, this has made many Balochi groups to direct their dissatisfaction or to get things off their hearts and relieve themselves in different manners. For example, every year Baloch university students celebrate private graduation parties. Such parties are organized by the Baloch students and for the Baloch only and are different from those formal graduation parties, which are being held by university for a mixture of students. Baloch students are not authorized to celebrate Balochi graduation parties in the universities. It is because if Baloch were allowed to organize their own graduation parties, then other students such as Kurds, Turks or Arabs may take a similar action and celebrate their respective graduation parties separately, which is not logical and therefore unacceptable to the concerned authorities. Though obtaining official permission
is difficult, Baloch students manage to obtain such permissions with lots of problems. Concerning this, in 2005 a number of Baloch students of Sistan & Balochistan University approached concerned authorities to allow and provide them space to organize their celebration. In the beginning, their request was turned down, however finally the Islamic Guidance Organization permitted them to use its space for the purpose. In that celebration no one from invitee provincial authorities such as University Chancellor or Leadership Representative turned up. Baloch funded the party themselves, and many Baloch university professors, as well as, influential Baloch clerics attended the celebration. In that gathering, Molavi Abdol Hamid presented a lecture and emphasized on the core issue, which was the unity between the educated and the clerics. The second major outlet for Baloch to unleash their frustrations against the Islamic Republic is the presence of hundreds of electronic Balochi websites; most of them publish repelling and repulsive news and articles against the Islamic Republic. Majority of these website/blog organizers who residing within Balochistan appearing on internet with unknown or fictitious names and addresses to not leave any tracks. Many others, who propagate against the policies of the Islamic Republic using their original names and addresses are located mostly in Europe and America. The third forum is the presence of several Balochi political parties and military political organizations which all are based either in Europe, America, Pakistan or Afghanistan. The presence of minor parties, however, does not threaten very much the Islamic Republic, due to number of reasons. First, such Balochi parties are managed by insignificant number of Baloch who are not systematically organized or may not receive financial support from other major sources e.g. from their host countries. Second, they do not have any kind of media support except Internet where each of them hold its respective websites, thus their political activities are limited to the establishment of their electronic sites. On the other hand, in Balochistan majority of Baloch, because of unfamiliarity with this technology, do not have
access to Internet. Besides, within Iran security agencies have blocked politically oriented websites, which makes the access difficult. Such factors can be among the reasons that why these minor groups cannot penetrate their own Balochi society of Iran. However, a major blow to the Islamic Republic in Balochistan, is the presence of Baloch insurgency, which has recently resulted in execution of considerable number of Baloch youth, whom condemned to death by judicial institutions on having relationship with insurgents. To what extent these groups, as well as, Baloch elite of Iran can alter the political atmosphere, and to what extent their political future can be determined depends upon different theories, as shall be presented in the final chapter of this study.

Thus, the overall history of the Iranian Balochistan up to the beginning of Pahlavi dynasty indicates that the Baloch have not been active in politics and throughout the history they remained in the margin of political life. They were neither aware of nor had opinions about politics as a whole but only of the local community. There could be hardly any specialization of roles and therefore people were indifferent towards governmental authority in general. Gradually, under Pahlavi monarchy Baloch began to develop some primary awareness of the system yet essentially remained passive and inactive towards government’s decision-making process. Such orientation towards political participation more or less remained till the victory of the Islamic Republic. After the Revolution of 1979, Baloch turned into semi-active members in political activities of the Iranian society. Although Baloch become aware of central government, they have been deeply influenced by their tradition and still majority of them live under the supremacy of their religious elders and that the general socio-cultural structure is still authoritarian. In sum, the kind of political participation which is practiced by the Baloch in Iran simply can be referred as a formal form of participation. A minimal political culture has overshadowed politics in Balochistan of Iran.
REFERENCES & NOTES FOR CHAPTER FIVE

(1) Interview with Dr. Mohammad Reza Taheri (an Iranian Baloch History & Political Science Assistant Professor & the Head of Saravan's Agriculture & Natural Resources Faculty), on 04 and 06 July 2007. The interview was conducted by Ahmad Reza Taheri in Saravan, Balochistan, Iran. Balochi

(2) Ibid.

(3) Ibid.

(4) Ibid.


(6) Iran, Islamic Republic of Iran, the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran (with all amendments up to 1989), edited by directorate-general of International Agreements 1995, translated by M.Z. Samimi Kia, Office of Print & Distribution of D.G.S.L.R., p. 1.

(7) Interview with Dr. Mohammad Reza Taheri (an Iranian Baloch History & Political Science Assistant Professor & the Head of Saravan's Agriculture & Natural Resources Faculty), on 04 and 06 July 2007. The interview was conducted by Ahmad Reza Taheri in Saravan, Balochistan, Iran. Balochi


(9) Ibid., pp. 166-167.

(10) Interview with Dr. Mohammad Reza Taheri (an Iranian Baloch History & Political Science Assistant Professor & the Head of Saravan's Agriculture & Natural Resources Faculty), on 04 and 06 July 2007. The interview was conducted by Ahmad Reza Taheri in Saravan, Balochistan, Iran. Balochi

(11) For more developments and issues about the Muslim Unity Party (MUP), see, Hossainbor Mohammad Hassan, Iran & Its Nationalities: The Case of Baloch Nationalism, Pakistani Adab Publication, (Karachi, 2000), pp. 168-175.

(12) Ibid., according to the author of this book (Hossainbor Mohammad Hassan, Iran & Its Nationalities: The Case of Baloch Nationalism), "the interview was part of a series of articles done by Ayandegan on Balochistan on 22, 23, and 24 July 1979. These articles were originally published by joint Research and Service Near East and North Africa and then adopted and published by Review of Iranian Political Economy & History (RIPEH), 'Balochistan: its Political Economy & History,' 04, (spring 1980): 74-75."


(19) Ibid., p. 175.


(22) For the text of the manifesto of the BPDO, see, Baloch Akhardad, *Politics in Balochistan (Siasat Dar Balochistan)*, Privately publishes, 1361 A.H. Persian, pp. 75-81.


(24) Ibid.


(27) Interview with Dr. Mohammad Reza Taheri (an Iranian Baloch History & Political Science Assistant Professor & the Head of Saravan's Agriculture & Natural Resources Faculty), on 04 and 06 July 2007. The interview was conducted by Ahmad Reza Taheri in Saravan, Balochistan, Iran. Balochi

(29) Ibid.


(31) Ibid., pp. 101-102.

(32) Ibid., p. 103.

(33) This statement of cleric (Sunni Baloch) Abdol Hamid Ismaelzai was published by the official website of the Sunni Baloch of Iran (sunnionline.com), "The fourth Annual Seminar of the Iranian Sunni Students or Cha-haromin Hamayesh Saalaneh Daneshjooyan Aahl-e Sunat Iran," Year 2008 or 24 Ordibehesht-e 1387.

(34) A Baloch university (assistant) professor, Mohammad Reza Taheri, representing a group of educated Baloch demanded from the representatives of cleric Abdol Hamid Ismaelzai (the religious leader of Baloch in Balochistan of Iran), namely cleric Ahmad Narouri and cleric M. Ghasemi to permit them to use mosque’s microphone occasionally so that they may be able to speak to thousands of those Baloch masses who regularly visit mosques for prayer. The attempt was to discuss and share some major social and cultural matters of Balochistan. The issue was turned down by cleric Ahmad Naroufi. This meeting took place among a group of Baloch including students, clerics and professors in Dr. Azim Shirani’s residence (Teachers Residency, Zahedan), a Baloch university (assistant) professor in Sistan & Balochistan University in 2001. I (Ahmad Reza Taheri) was among the participants.


(36) Ibid., p. 106.

(37) Most of Mehdi Daneshmand’s (a Shia hardliner cleric) lectures are available either in the form of video CDs or on electronic media such as youtube.com/watch?v=H_eD95ZaXA4

(38) Interview with Dr. Nader Setodeh (the former Head of Iranshahr City Council, Balochistan of Iran), on 26 December 2007. The interview was conducted by Ahmad Reza Taheri in Zahedan, Balochistan, Iran. Balochi

(39) Taheri Mohammad Reza, My Political & Social Memoirs (unpublished, Zahedan 2007); At Maki Mosque a consultative assembly was held in 2005 among the Balochi Sunni elite of Iran such as the clerics, politicians, professors, and students. The agenda was to discuss and select one favorable candidate out of Iran’s presidential candidates. Dr. M. R. Taheri’s suggestion was finally approved. See, Maki Mosque notes, pp. 17-21 in 2005 or 25/03/1384. Persian

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(41) Ibid.

(42) This interview with Mahmoud Berahoyinejad (a Baloch journalist) has been published on zamanonline.blogfa.com. The interview was conducted by Behrouz Karooni representing *Radio Farda Broadcasting Company*, "A two year Report-Card of Ahmadinejad: a look at the political liberties or karnameh-y 2 saaleh Ahmadinejad: negahi amniati b azadihaye siasi," 2007 (04/04/1386). Persian

(43) In collaboration with a group of Balochi figures like university professors, clerics and musicians, a number of the Baloch students of Sistan & Balochistan University celebrated their graduation party in Zahedan, in 2005 (30/02/1384).

(44) There are many websites and weblogs (around 200, in 2008) on cultural, social and political issues that are managed by the Baloch of Iran. Some of them are: balochetawaar.com, balochistaninfo.com, balochistannews.com/, etc. Nearly, since 2000 these websites publish news and articles in English, Persian, and Balochi languages against the Islamic Republic of Iran.

(45) Almost all Iranian Balochi political parties or groups are minor establishments locating in Europe. For more information about them, see radiobalochi.org, balochunitedfront.org, zrombesh.org, and ostomaan.org.