



<https://jwr.bwo-researches.com>

[jwr.bwo@gmail.com](mailto:jwr.bwo@gmail.com)

International “Journal of World Researches” (JWR) Vol. 3, No. 2 (2023)

ISSN Print: 2791-0962 & Online: 2791-0970

## THE BRITISH POLITICAL & DIPLOMATIC POLICY REGARDING PUNJAB-BALUCHISTAN BORDER

**Dr. Abid Hussain Abbasi,**

Assistant Professor, Department of Pakistan Studies, NUML Islamabad

[abid.abbas@numl.edu.pk](mailto:abid.abbas@numl.edu.pk)

**Dr. Saad Jaffar,**

Lecturer, AUST, Hazara, KPK, Pakistan

### Abstract:

*With the beginning of the great game, the British government felt a threat from the northwest border and decided to cross the Indus in 1839 and reach Kabul. With the death of Ranjeet Singh colonial government also occupied Sindh in 1843. In Punjab, the Sikh government lasted its breath. The British government decided to take over Punjab. So the British won the First Sikh War and similarly won the Second Sikh War and annexed Punjab to the British Government. In Dera Ghazi Khan, the British government faced stiff resistance from the Baloch tribes. The English army used artillery in war with the tribes. The British government tried to control the Baloch tribes by force but failed and the advance towards Balochistan slowed down. In these circumstances, the government took care of administrative matters through various policies. The advance towards Balochistan was stopped and the closed border policy was implemented, but later Sandeman negotiated with the tribes and subdued them first under the reconciliation policy and then under the principle of divide and rule by introducing the Tamandari system and subordinating them to the Tamandars. Implemented to make the forward policy successful. Sandeman's policy was successful and British rule extended to Balochistan. The English government confined the people in grip through Tamandars, as well as administratively Deputy Commissioners, Revenue Officers, Collectors, and Patwaris. And his strategy to go beyond the Punjab-Baluchistan border was successful. Sandeman proved that the state could be extended not only by force but also by diplomatic policy and his conciliatory policy was well received. This research article explains and highlights the strategies and policies adopted regarding expanding British rule from Punjab to Balochistan.*

### Keywords:

British, Policy, Balochistan, Sandeman, Derajat

<p><b><u>Journal title, Vol., Issue, and Page Numbers:</u></b> (JWR) In Journal of World Researches, 3(2), 9-16</p>	<p><b><u>Subject Areas for JARH:</u></b> (1) History (2) Social Sciences</p>
<p><b><u>Timeline of the Paper at JARH:</u></b> Received on: 20-07-2023, Revision Completed on: 15-11-2023, Accepted on: 10-11-2023, Online on 31-12-2023:</p>	
<p><b><u>QR Code for the Paper:</u></b></p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div>	<p><b><u>Published by BWO Researches INTL.:</u></b></p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p><b><u>License:</u></b></p> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p><a href="https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/">Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International License</a></p> </div>

## Introduction

East India Company started its government from Bengal and then it continued to expand. In 1803, Delhi was also under the control of the English government. But the threat felt from the north-west caused the English government to worry. During the days of the Great Game, British troops crossed the Indus and marched towards Kabul. In those days, Punjab had the status of a buffer state and the Sikh government was established here under the leadership of Ranjit Singh. British India also perceived the same security threats in the wake of rising Russian expansion to these borders through Central Asia. Afghanistan became the arena of their struggle for power since the time of Peter the Great (1672-1725). The Russians were desperately looking for access to warm water. After the humiliating defeat in the first Afghan War (1839-42), the British felt the strategic importance of Sind and Baluchistan and the adjoining tribal areas of Dera Ghazi Khan District, predominantly inhabited by Baloch tribes in terms of logistics (M.E. Yap, 1980) The British consolidated their influence in Balochistan by concluding treaties with rulers of Kalat in different occasions (Aitcheson, 351). They annexed Sind in 1843 and Punjab in 1849. Traditionally the limits of the western borders of British India had been the river Indus. However, there were strong feelings among the British strategists to move forward beyond the trans-Indus regions. Thus, in subsequent years two strategic schools of thought competed to define British India's Imperial Policy in its North West frontier including Kalat. The close borders policy school argued against British expansion in the North West Whereas the Forward Policy School, in turn, urged active engagement in establishing a network of friendly tribes in the North West of the sub-continent (Bruce, 1977) Eventually both policies were deployed alternatively to the plains of Derajat during the 19th century. This is an attempt to study the main contours of the British policy. The geographical focus of this study is the middle Indus region, an area stretching 200 miles along the right bank of the Indus from the Derajat to upper Sind. Though an area of mixed

population, when the British arrived, the people of the region were predominantly Baloch and Pukhtoons. The Baloch predominated in the hills to the south (upper Sind and Dera Ghazi Khan District) which is the primary focus of this study (Burgess, Jass1977) The British devised and experienced a new kind of Administration in this region which is known as political administration. The success and failures of this system have been analyzed in this study at a greater length. Looking back to the main contours and characteristics of political control of the British through special laws sometimes, opposite to ordinary laws of administration in the middle of the 19th century till the establishment of the North-West Frontier Province in 1901, with special reference to the Baloch tribes of D.G. Khan. The short-term and long-term implications of this system of administration which later on was known as the political administration, has also been discussed (Caroe, 1973). Due to the intense hatred and contempt for the British in Balochistan, rebellion started, so Robert Gross Sandeman was sent to Balochistan to deal with this situation. Although the Balochs were fed up with the persecution of the British, they were not united among themselves. Robert Sandeman, taking full advantage of the conflicts, social weaknesses, and economic depression of the Baloch tribes, signed an agreement among the Baloch tribes, which is known as the 'Mustang Agreement'. Under it, all the chiefs of the tribes unanimously decided that in case of conflict or dispute between the Khan Baloch (Chief) and the chiefs of the tribes, the arbiter or umpire would be the government of Great Britain. Thus the Baloch practically came under the control of the British and the tribal chiefs became a separate administrative unit (Ihsan-2005) Rai Bahadur Hatto Ram writes in his book 'Tarikh-i Balochistan', "It was named Levi after creating a local force. By giving jobs in levies, monthly stipends, and other privileges, the Baloch rulers were made so independent that decisions from marriage to employment and salaries were made by the chiefs. In many areas of Balochistan, this custom has been established in one form or another till today

(Hutto Ram, 1982) it seems that history is repeating itself. Our tribal borders had become a flash point for our internal as well as international security. Can we learn some lessons from the British experience? Or is it because of the political vacuum which the British left in these areas? In this study, an attempt will be made to answer the questions of that kind. The system practised by the British in these areas has highly is praised as a success story among the British, as well as them, admires.

### **Research Methodology**

The Methodology of this system is based on the Historic Method. It's a descriptive study and it tries to make use of all primary and secondary sources available on the subject. The use of quantitative data has also been made to understand the point of discussions, wherever necessary.

### **Review of the Literature**

Though much has not been written, however, the material available on the subject is mostly written by British writers. Their accounts are available in the form of the administrative correspondence of the Deputy Commissioners to the Punjab Government. English Record Room in the Deputy Commissioner Office of Dera Ghazi Khan and Rajanpur has been very useful in this regard as the primary source. Since the British tried to tame the wild Baloches of the frontier through agriculture and by building canals, the record of irrigation and as well as the Revenue Department has also helped in writing this thesis. The district Gazetteers of Dera Ghazi Khan, Dera Ismail Khan, and Imperial Gazetteers of Balochistan which had been regularly maintained and updated by the British, were also of great help. However, these writings had an in-built bias against the natives; therefore, the writings of the native writers have also been consulted. The Ballads of the Baloches which have been compiled by the British as well as the natives were also a rich source material for the early history of the Baloches when the Baloches have not been able to develop their manuscripts. Along with Government records, contemporary works on this topic include the political biographies of Sir Robert Sandeman by Thomas

Hennery Thornton (1895) and, John Jacob of Jacobabad by H.T. Lambrick, both these figures played an important role in devising the British policies during those days. Mr. R.J. Bruce, Assistant Commissioner Rajanpur and a very close associate of Sandman has also written valuable books entitled, *The Forward Policy and its Results*, and *Notes on the Baloch Tribes of D.G. Khan* also helped in the accomplishment of this study. Similarly, Herbert Edward's, *A Year on the Punjab Frontier in 1848-49* in two volumes also helped a lot in understanding the contemporary situation of the time. Among the native writers Munshi Hukam Chands, Tawareekh Zilla Dera Ghazi Khan (1876), and Rai Hattu Ram's *Tareekh-e-Baluchistan 1882*, both of them served as Extra Assistant Commissioner (Settlement) respectively.

The British extended this kind of experience to the North Western areas inhabited by Pathan tribes with little variations, which have become flash points of terror and war even today. Similarly, this system was extended to Balochistan also. The implication of this kind of administration to the people administered was far-reaching. This system has its successes and failures too. A critical reappraisal and evaluation of this system is extremely useful for our understanding of this phenomenon. The system of dual government introduced by Lord Clive, the first British Governor General, remained the principal guidance for the subsequent administrators of India. According to the system, the actual administration remained in Indian hands but for 'Superintendence purposes', Clive appointed a person of his confidence, in Darbar, who was called 'Dewan' or 'the Nawab's Deputy'. The East India Company by practising the same principle in Mughal Darbar acted in the name of the Emperor and used Indian personnel of their confidence as 'Naibs'. Thus the resulting system of administration remained largely Indian in pattern but turned British in subsequent years. It was paternalistic and hierarchical (Baloch, 1973). The Emperor was replaced by the "Mystical Entity", the Governor General in the centre, governors in provinces, Deputy Commissioners in districts, and Political Agents

or Assistant Political Agents in semi-autonomous 'Princely States' as Residents. The working of the state apparatus was therefore increasingly based on the collective administrative wisdom gathered over years and even in generations. The officers in the districts performed excellent feedback function through a network of friendship with each other and with those with the secretariat, much in the tradition of Lord Wellesley's Kindergarten of the early 19th century (Muhammad, 1989) Expert opinions about various regions evolved into concepts such as Oudh Construct, Punjab Creed, and Sandeman System. Thus the system of administration practiced by the British in India in the early 19th century was the same around all territories of British India on one hand but, on the other hand, it was much more complex and diverse in culturally different and diverse regions of India. In the early 19th century, a great debate went on in Britain about the nature of the government of India. The East India Company wanted India to be regarded as a field for British commercial exploitation, with the company holding the administrative whip with one hand and exploiting with the other as an extension of this, the new regime introduced in India could be regarded as a law and order of police state. However, there was a school of thought in England who believed that Britain was responsible for India's moral and spiritual welfare as well, they were mostly Evangelist. They were reinforced in this way by the rising group of free-thinking utilitarians, followers of Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill, who were influential in the company's service and who wished to use India as a laboratory for their theories. There was another group who were called 'Radical Rationalists' who had borrowed the doctrine of Human Rights from France and wished to introduce them to India (Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol 21, P. 81) When British India expanded beyond its Company borders both North West and the North East during this initial phase of Crown Rule, the turbulent tribal frontier to the North West remained a continuing source of harassment to the settled British rule. Pathan raiders served as a constant lure and justification to champions

of the 'Forward School of Imperialism' in Calcutta, Shimla, and Whitehall. Russian expansion into Central Asia in the 1860s provided even greater anxiety and incentive to the British Rulers in India, as well as at the Foreign Office in London. They decided to advance the frontier of the Indian empire beyond the Hindu Kush and even up to Afghanistan's Northern border along the axis. Lord Cannings (1856-1862) however was far too occupied to restore peace and order in India itself. Viceroy Lawrence (1863-68) continued the same border pacification policy and resolutely refused to be pushed into Afghan politics (Edward, H. B, 1960) The relevance of the vast territory of Balochistan and the area connecting Balochistan to the British Empire became manifest during the first Afghan War (1839-42) which was fought to protect Afghanistan from Russian influence. Since Balochistan provided easy access to Kandhar and Herat, the geo-strategic significance of the Balochistan and the Indus plains of Derajat increased. Thus, the prime interest of the British in these areas was strategic rather than colonial. The British officials in India proposed to identify independent buffer states in the extreme northwest of the continent that would serve to protect the British Indian Empire from foreign invasion. By the conquest of Sindh in 1843 and the annexation of Punjab in 1849 the North West frontier of British India expanded beyond its company borders. India advanced across the river Indus to the foot of the rocky mountain ranges that separate the plains of the Indus valley from the higher plateaus of Afghanistan and Kalat (Leghari, 1987) These mountain ranges-together with an offshoot of the western Himalayas on the east side of the Indus (known as the Black mountain)-formed a vast irregular of belt on independent or semi-independent territory, extending from the Khagan Glen, immediately west of Kashmir, round the British district of Peshawar Kohat and Bannu and then in a long stretch southward down the Indus valley to the Sindh seaboard near Karachi, measuring including the deflections of about 1200 miles. The belt of territory above

described was inhabited by the fierce marauding tribes, amounting in all to nearly 200,000 fighting men armed with bucklers, swords, and matchlocks, often at war with each other, hounding the plains of the Punjab and Sindh. They created the constant terror of the trade caravans and for the plains of settled districts of British India (Revert, 1976). To manage these tribes, the British evolved and adopted a kind of administration with little variations in Sind and the Derajat of Punjab. This administration is purely militaristic in Sind, whereas in the plains of Indus and tribal areas of Punjab, it was partially militarist, and partially civilian. In subsequent years, the political system evolved by Sir Sandeman in D.G. Khan District is called the Sandeman System, which even expanded to Balochistan. This kind of administration has its successes and its failures. The British hailed this kind of administration as a big success for their colonial and geo-strategic interests. However, others considered this system as retrogressive and backward (Hutto Ram, 1982).

### Discussion

When the British came into D.G. Khan the area was in a state of mess and confusion because of the internal strife of different Baloch tribes. The Khan of Kalat was also struggling to tame the Baloch Sardars in the neighbouring Kalat State, which has its fallout on Sind and the plains of D.G. Khan. The British successfully restored peace and order in this area which were welcomed by the tribes of D. G. Khan. The British Policy directly dealing with the Sardars changed the internal power structure of the tribal organization. Though The Chief or The Tumandars of different tribes used to enjoy this status by descent, it was conditional on their innovative methods to protect their tribes from outside threats and to extend their means of livelihood. The chief who failed to perform his duties was sometimes defeated by the Mokadams of that tribe. The British made this institution so powerful that it almost assumed hereditary status. Their political position was now guaranteed by an overarching power, and therefore no longer dependent on tribal allegiance. The British liberated them from their dependence on their

tribe and thus created the pre-requisite for a quays-feudal system which was largely unknown to the tribes of Dera Ghazi Khan. The Political and Economic increase in the Sardari power by outside assistance resulted in conflict and opposition. The British made sure to remain at the level not to convert in wars. Thus, the Sandeman Policy produced a politically fragmented tribal organization (Oliver, Edward E., 1977). The British constructed roads and railway lines for purely strategic reasons, to secure the logistic support for the military in the whole length of the Afghan Frontier. They did not correspond with the population requirements nor did they connect the traditional population centers of the mountain territory. Thus the socio-economic development was accordingly, asymmetric. The decline in Caravan transportation meant the loss of a significant source of income for numerous tribes. There was a rise in Sedentarization. Many new villages were founded and the number of nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes declined. The population in the urban centres rose at the cost of peripheral areas. In the minds of the British, images of the tribal Baloch associate him with Pastoralism and raids in the Indus plains. When the British established their control along the Indus frontier in the 1840s and 1850s, their approach reflected a vision shaped largely by their self-image as colonial rulers and their image of the pastoral Baloch. They view the frontier as a moral divide separating the advance of civilization from the tribal part of Baloch "marauding". They decided to transform the wild tribal Baloch by settling him into the Indus Basin. Thus, the transformative vision of agriculture settlement increasingly played an important role in the British Frontier Policy. For John Jacob of Sindh, the demarcation of a clear moral frontier between civilization and the roving cattle keepers of the hills was important not only in controlling the frontier but also in defining the legitimacy of British power. Thus, water and agriculture became the main instrument of political control of the wild Baloch tribes. For the British, both in a physical and moral sense, only the complete immersion of formally hill Baloch in irrigated agriculture

could achieve and assure their absorption into the British political order. Thus the British tried to subvert the Baloch from their distinctive ethnicity and identity, whereas the Baloch considered irrigation as a critical field of political negotiation with the British about their identity. The absence of extensive kinship or tribal organization favoured the development of nation-states in Western Europe. But in parts of the third world states face societies that maintain 'the persistence' of tribal structure the crucial importance of kinship and the limited individualization of property rights and land. Both Ibne Khuldoon and traditional anthropologists have seen tribes as before state or as a lower form of development. Tribes and states are best thought of as two opposed modes of thought or models of organization that form a single system. As a basis for identity, political allegiance, and behaviour, tribe gives primacy to ties of kinship and Patrilineal descent, whereas the state insists on the loyalty of all persons to a central authority, whatever their relation to each other. The tribal mode is socially homogenous, egalitarian, and segmented; the state is heterogeneous, stratified, and hierarchical. The tribe is within the individual; the state is external (Barnett R. Rubin). This view grants tribal people the power to choose between tribal and non-tribal modes of interaction, allowing for the possibility of a political transformation in which they act rather than only being acted upon. However, the strength of tribes or local strongmen (Tribal Chiefs) were often created or mobilized as agents of control by colonial states such as the British. In our case study, the British tried to impose a kind of administration that was paternalistic and heavily biased in favour of 'so-called' collective wisdom. This strategy gave rise to a special kind of thinking at the cost of individual dynamism. Thus, it can be concluded that 'the imposed' state engendered the imposed chief (Barnett R. Rubin)

#### **(Judicial Powers exercised through the Jirga system)**

The Regulation authorizes an additional district magistrate who has the powers specified in the part of schedule III to the code of criminal procedure and entitled "V" Ordinary powers of a

District Magistrate" and may invested by the local governments with powers to try a magistrate all writing, with all or any of the powers which may be exercised by the deputy commissioners under this regulation: The Deputy Commissioner can refer certain criminal and civil cases in a council of elders called Jirga for a finding. Hattoram writes, "Until British rule, Baloch chieftains ruled by appeasing political agents and being part of their policy of fight and rule. After the establishment of Pakistan, they passed through the alleys of politics and reached the halls of government, and instead of a tribe, they became the owners of the natural resources of the entire Balochistan or their region (Hutto Ram, 1982) On a Jirga finding in a criminal case, the Deputy Commissioner can award a sentence provided for the offence in the Indian Penal Code up to seven years. The regulation also authorizes all criminal courts in the district to pass a sentence, in certain cases, of whipping upon any person against whom the regulation may be put in force in addition to any other punishment to which he may be liable. It also authorizes the tender of pardon in all cases by those magistrates who are in power to tender pardons under section 337 of the code of Criminal procedure. Under this regulation, the women may be punished for adultery as well as the men, by death. Individuals and whole families can be put on security to keep the peace for three years. On a Jirga finding in a civil case, the Deputy Commissioners can pass a decree by the Jirga finding and such a decree can be enforced in the same way as the decrees of a civil court and The Political Assistant: In bordering districts the appointment of Political Assistant/Agent is made by the Governor General with the consultation of the British Foreign Ministry and the Indian Political Office. India Political Office was maintained by the British to record the experiences of the extraordinary nature of the civil servants regarding the administration and the relations with the neighbouring countries. It is usual in the Indian Political Departments for civil as well as military officers to draw up a full report of their labours and successes whenever they have

completed any special duty with which they have been entrusted (Herbert, 1849) These Political Officers are the persons who were assigned special duties by the Indian Political Department. Among other duties, Political Officers are generally attached to military expeditions. They were to interpret the political views of the government in sending them. They were to be the medium of all negotiations. They were to assist the General with their local knowledge and local influence in a country so strange to the soldiers as India. This practice is not only advantageous but necessary. It is a mistake to suppose that accompanying armies into the fields is the only duty of an Indian Political Agent/Assistant. He has in general a far higher, more interesting, and less invidious career to run in his official life. Herbert B. Edwards shares his experiences as a Political Agent by telling his account of his trans-Indus labours. He says "It is sapphire of my duty to tell honestly about my trans-Indus experiences to my countrymen; the British Indian Government in the intervals of peace supplies to every busy-minded soldier like a pursuit more active, more directly useful, than the furbishing of the rusty arms; which opens to a field of distinction when that of war is closed; and sends him forth beyond our boundaries to be the pioneers of Christian Civilization in lands where Idolatry too often occupies the Temple, Corruption the Tribunal, and Tyranny the Throne" (Herbert, 1849) In the Political Administration the office of Political Agent is very important and central. In the areas controlled by the Agencies instead of districts the Political Agent is equal to the rank of a Deputy Commissioner and his Assistant is called the Assistant Political Agent. However, in the districts like D.G. Khan where the division of the administration is based on settled and tribal areas, the Office of the Political Agent is called Political Assistant. The Political Assistant is an Officer selected from the Assistant District Superintendent of the Province. As his Political Assistant, he exercises the powers of the Deputy Commissioners, Administrative as well as Judicial, mentioned above. As a Political Assistant, he exercises second-class magisterial

powers. He also enjoys the status of Deputy Commandant of the Border Military Police. There is also a native Political Assistant of the Tehsildar class, who is generally known as the Political Tehsildar. Working of the 1887 Regulation: About the working of the regulation C. P Thompson, While Robert Sandeman very cleverly made the chiefs the black and white masters of their clan by giving those privileges and powers, he also did a good job by making education free and compulsory for all the sons of chiefs and Nawabs. After the establishment of Aitchison College in Lahore, the children of Baloch chiefs were also given a place in this school.

### Conclusion

The encounter of the modern state, though colonial in nature, with the tribal system in our case study makes an interesting phenomenon. The stages of social development given by the interplay of the historical forces were denied to the people of this area by the overwhelming nature of the colonial state even though the tradition of Lord Wellesley's Kindergarten of the early 19th century. The British introduced the concept of a modern state such as the rule of law, order, responsibility, and discipline, to the natives. Since they were outsiders, they didn't interfere in the lives of the natives, which their local rulers used to enjoy. Relative peace and order increased trade and agriculture in the area which resulted in prosperity. The British tried to inculcate modern values through their educational institutions and facilitate the natives with dispensaries and hospitals. On the other hand, the British used these facilities as a political control for the natives. They strengthened the crumbling 'Sardari System' and used public funds as a bribe in this regard.

### References

- Aitchison, A Collection of Treaties, Vol. XI, pp 351-52
- Baluch, Mir Ahmad Yar Khan (1973) Inside Baluchistan Karachi.P.86.
- Bruce, Richard Issaq (1977) The Forward Policy and its Results, Quetta, P.34.
- Burgess, Jass (1976), Hand Gazetteer of India, Lahore, P.12

- Barnett R. Rubin (2002), *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan: State Formation and Collapse in the International System*, Oxford University Press Karachi, P. 10.
- Caroe, Olaf (1973) *The Pathans 550 BC-AD1957*, Karachi, P.4
- Davies, C. Collin (1975) *The Problem of the North-West Frontier 1890-1908*, London, P.37.
- Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol 21, P. 81.
- Edward, H. B, A (1960) *Year on the Punjab Frontier*, Lahore, P.114.
- Herbert B. Edwards, *A Year on THE PUNJAB FRONTIER (18848-49)* Vol. 1, p. VI
- Leghari, Abdul Qadir Khan (1987) *Tareekh-i-Dera Ghazi Khan*, Dera Ghazi Khan, P. 156
- M.E. Yap (1980) *Strategies of British India: Britain, Iran & Afghanistan (1799-1850)*, New York, P.5-14.
- Mohammad Waseem (1989) *Politics and the State in Pakistan*, Lahore, Progressive Publishers. P. 46.
- Oliver, Edward E, (1977) *Across the Border of Pathan and Baloch*, Lahore, 1977, P.126.
- Rai Bahadur, Hutto Ram (1982) *Tareekh-i-Baluchistan*, Lahore, P. 267
- Raverty, Major Henery George (1976) *Notes on Afghanistan and Baluchistan*, Lahore, P.3.