

EXPLOITATION OF STRATEGICALLY PIVOTAL GEOGRAPHIES FOR CONSOLIDATION OF BRITISH ADMINISTRATION IN BALOCHISTAN

Aurang Zaib¹, Azharudin Bin Mohamed Dali², Tabinda Zahoor³

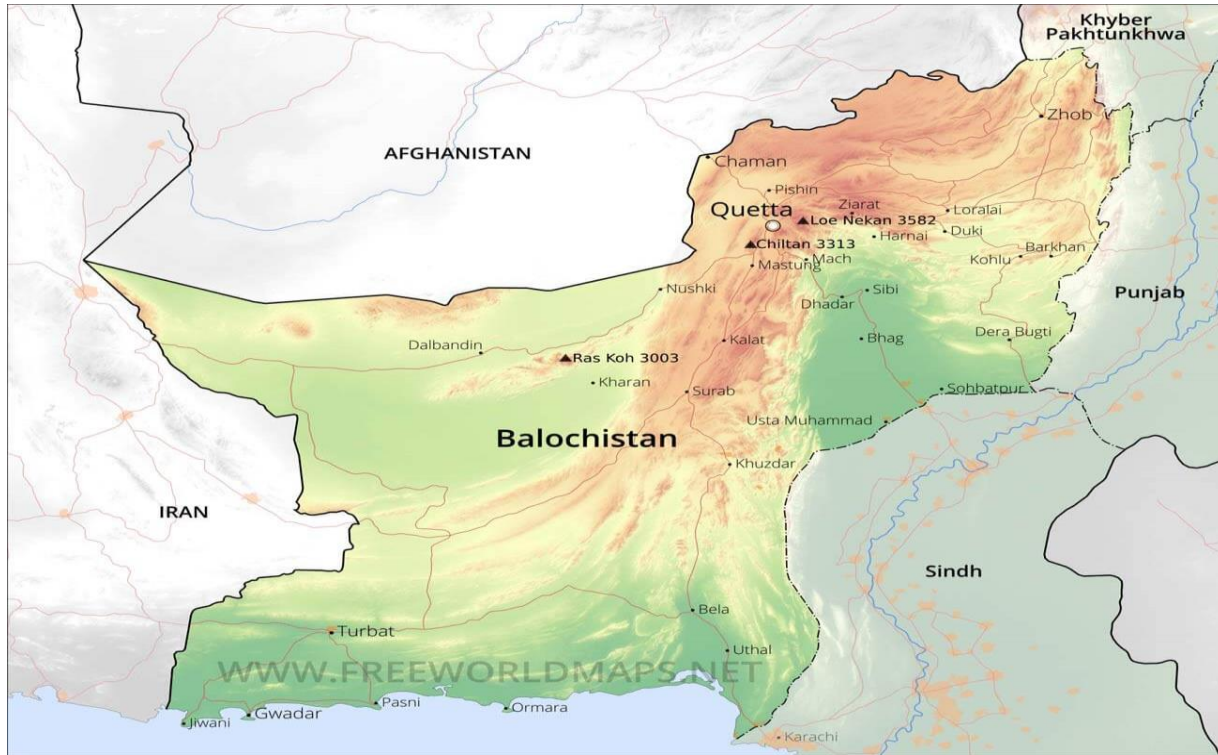
ABSTRACT

Balochistan, the province of Pakistan has always been given attention in international politics due to its geo-strategic significance. Similarly, the British administration had developed immense interests in the province. They wanted to develop it as a buffer zone in the extreme north-western frontier regions of India to protect the perceived Russian threat to the British Empire. They wanted to safeguard a passage for military engagements to Afghanistan through Balochistan. Their administrative efforts under Robert Sandeman Canning's policies to establish Khanate of Kalat as a buffer state was followed by stiff Baloch resistance. This paper focusses on the British administration's development of the region that was carried out under the treaty of 1841 followed by severe defeat in the First Anglo-Afghan war. The status of Balochistan was recognized in the treaty of 1854 followed by a strategy of "Closed Border" till 1872, then it was replaced by the "Forward Policy".

Keywords: Balochistan, British advent, closed border strategy, forward policy and its aftermaths.

INTRODUCTION

Balochistan is one of the four provinces of the "federating units" of Pakistan. Its geo-strategic significance could be traced from exploration of its history, particularly concerning "The Great Game" where Russia, Britain and France were the key players. It acceded to Pakistani federation right after the inception of Pakistan in 1947. The word "*Balochistan*" is basically a combination of two words "*Baloch*" and "*Istan*", however, "*Baloch*" means the local i.e., indigenous people and "*Istan*" is a Persian word which means living place or habitat. Thus, "*Balochistan*" is geographically scattered on a strategic location in South Asia. Moreover, it is bordering with the south eastern part of Iran, Afghanistan on the southern tip along which makes up the entire south western part of contemporary Pakistan (see map below). Nevertheless, this region is known for its unique geostrategic location and diversely scattered geography. But it is necessary to be made clear from the outset that this paper particularly focuses on the colonial history and their policies in using this region as a buffer zone or jumping pad against external onslaughts. Balochistan initially lacked geostrategic, economic, administrative, and political importance for the Europeans world during their quest for colonial advancement in the South Asian region.



Source: Geostrategic Map of Balochistan, Source: Google Map

While keeping in view the influence of Russia and Britain, France was also a fervent party wanting control of the region (Javaid and Jahangir, 2015:93). These developments became more striking as a result of Napoleon Bonaparte's invasion of Egypt in 1798. As a result of that the French had already lost their previous glory in India with defeat in Indian territories. Following his triumphed invasion of Egypt and Syria, Napoleon had decided to send his military support to the Qajar Shah of Iran. M. Jaubert the chief envoy had convinced the Shah of Iran on a mission to annex Georgia from Russia. For this reason, Napoleon had sent a military mission to Iran in the form of indirect support to train their Army. Taking the benefit of logistic support from the French, Qajar Shah of Iran had eventually decided to initiate his mission of engaging in wars against Russian. In 1807, contrary to their successive wars the Iranian army had lost control of many areas to the Russians which was indeed a great set back to the aspiration of Napoleon's interests in the region. This defeat on the part of the Iranian army had led to the French and Iranian authorities parting away that eventually was followed by Britain's alliance with Iran. Nonetheless, here Iran once again gave diplomatic support to Britain in order to limit Russia's advancement in the region. This in turn, led the British to strategically employ a dual policy, to weaken Iran by Russian attacks in order to counter any threat of Iran to British colonial advancements in the Persian Gulf, Afghanistan and India (Javaid and Jahangir, 2015:91-94).

Following their colonial advancements in the Indian subcontinent, the British had paid little attention to Balochistan other than the north-west frontier regions. But with the passage of time the geostrategic position of the area became important to international players such as France, Russia and Iran which led to a change in the official British position towards Balochistan. In the beginning they had to face two challenges, firstly to counter the "French Intrigue" in Iran and secondly to safeguard the boundaries of British India against the invasion of Czarist Russia

(Breseeg, 2004:207). Keeping in view the scenario of the region they had decided to establish diplomatic relationship with the Shah of Iran in order to counter French influence. Similarly, in 1807, a commission was dispatched to Iran from London to convince the Shah for an alliance. Thus, the commission's persuasion of Iranian authorities had borne fruits with the accomplishment of a strong alliance in the shape the Treaty of Tehran in 1809, later called as "Anglo-Iranian Alliance" (Lambick, 1975:407). This alliance was a turning point in the advancement of the British in the northwest frontier regions of British India.

Furthermore, on the other hand the British had to safeguard their empire from Czarist invasion too. For this reason, it was necessary for the British government to install a monarchic approachable government in Afghanistan (Lambick, 1975:409). Prior to the aforesaid attraction to this region especially Balochistan did not gain importance in the affairs of British India until the First Anglo-Afghan War (1839). Similarly, this region was not on the priority list of colonial powers in terms of strategic importance till the mid-1850s. Keeping in view the increasing significance of Balochistan, by that time most of the western mountainous regions of Sindh and Punjab were under the control of Khanate of Kalat (Brahui-Ahmedzai) rulers. Despite the fact, this region was stated by the British as Balochistan and not Brahuistan (Breseeg, 2004:264). The British officials were reluctant to recognize the suzerainty (feudal overlord) of any tribe in order to avoid any untoward situation which was against their interest.

Keeping in view the Czar's threat, the British had ultimately decided to make friendly relationship with the Khan of Kalat in 1838. Moreover, the purpose of making friendly relations with feudal overlord in Balochistan was to utilize the region as a buffer zone in order to improve its route of communication with Afghanistan. Indeed, a defused Afghanistan was part and parcel of the British policies in the region. Therefore, they supported the Shah Shuja an old king of Kabul to the throne of Afghanistan although he was on exile for almost thirty years (Nasir, 1954:121). These developments led to the formation of the united forces of the British and Shah Shuja in a grand march from Sindh to Kandahar through the Bolan Pass. The Bolan Pass was an important pass in the Baluch frontier especially in the history of British campaigns in Afghanistan and the pass also played an important role in connecting the region. In addition, for a safe passage of British forces to Afghanistan via Balochistan it was necessary to take the Khan of Kalat in confidence. Thus, a treaty was signed with Mehrab Khan who was the Khan of Kalat from 1817 till 1839 (Khan & Muhammad, 2018:6).

Nevertheless, the Khan was failing to maneuver the conditions of the treaty in order to ensure internal control and authority of his territory. His failure in fulfilling the terms of treaty was not acceptable to the British authorities which eventually lead to British punitive expedition to Kalat in November 1839. This attack was initiated on the eve of British withdrawal from Kandahar in 1839 and Mehrab Khan was also killed due to his rejection to any form of submission (Khan Baluch M. A. Y., 1975:85). The death of Mehrab Khan had also deprived his son from the throne because the British had appointed their own patron. However, the exploitation of the traditional authority in Balochistan did not meet the conditions of the British administrative policy (Closed Border) of divide and rule due to the reluctance of the installed Khan. Therefore, they decided to revisit their old policies. Thus, turmoil resulted in the termination of their old policy along with the removal of patron (Khan) from the throne. In addition to that, the British eventually appointed Mehrab Khan's son as a new Khan following the conditions of the 1841 treaty (Khan Baluch M.

A. Y., 1975:97). It is said that the treaty of 1841 is historically proved to be a game changer in the advancement of the British imperial rule in Balochistan (Khan G. , 2014:170-179).

THE BRITISH LEGACY AND ADMINISTRATIVE DEVELOPMENT IN BALOCHISTAN

The British debacle in Kandahar resulted in their tragic defeat in First Anglo-Afghan war. With the conclusion of this war, they recognized the significance of Balochistan for the future of British imperial existence in the Indian subcontinent. Moreover, they had also operated in redefining the ostensible role of the Kalat in their frontier policy (Khan & Muhammad, 2018: 6). Being at the juncture of international connection between the east and west, the strategic importance of Balochistan increased for the British. Furthermore, the policy makers had eventually opted for a policy to recognize the traditional authority of the Khan and made him the sovereign ruler of Kalat state. Indeed, the logic behind the aforesaid measures was to use Balochistan as buffer zone in order to curb threats to their imperial rule in the entire subcontinent. Thus, in the Treaty of 1854, the British had approved the independent status of Kalat on par with Afghanistan (O'Balance, 2002:8).

Similarly, the policy implication of the British in the northwest frontier region is viewed by two schools of thought. The first school of thought argued the three pronged "Closed Border Policy" in which first thing was to cultivate friendly relationship with local rulers to best protect the frontier regions of the British empire. Secondly, the development of the local population and improving the infrastructure protected the British empire from external threats. Thirdly, the improvement and encouragement of trade between Central Asia and India strengthened the British dominance in the region (Shukla, 2018:135-163). Contrary to that, the second school of thought "Forward Policy" urged for an active maneuvering of the situation by establishing a network of friendly states in the northwest regions of the subcontinent. However, these states were dependent on the British in terms of defense and economic assistance. The subjugation of Khanate of Kalat in Balochistan was purposely intended in order for the British to have an indirect control of Afghanistan and Persia against Russian threat. Czarist Russia was always in a position to extend their influence towards the Arabian Sea in south Asia. Indeed, Russian incursion was presumably viewed to be a great threat to the British Indian Empire. Thus, two types of policies were applied alternatively that eventually paved the way for successful rule over Balochistan.

The British's successful advancement could be explored in two phases in terms of distinctive policy strategies. Firstly, they had pursued a "Closed Border Policy" from 1854 to 1872 (Chawla, 2012:81-106). However, the intention of pursuing this policy in the first phase was to establish a military presence comparable to the power and status of Khan (Khanate of Kalat). The British officials had successfully curtailed the traditional authority of the Khan under the tribal system. However, the power and status of the Khan was eventually revived and restored by the British, for the Khanate to be authorized as the sole representative of all tribes in Baluchistan. Furthermore, various treaties were signed with the Khan to ensure the interest of the British was protected in the region and it was not challenged. Similarly, it was part and parcel of the British policies to reduce the ultimate authority of the Khan to bring him equal to the other tribal leaders in order to ensure easy access to the region. In addition to that, Khan's authority was reduced when the British empowered the tribal leaders of various tribes. This was predominantly aimed to intervene in the traditional affairs of Balochistan. Thus, the diplomatic policies as well as the

rejection of the Khan to the agreements made with the British gave the British an opportunity to directly intervene in the internal affairs of Balochistan (Charkvarty, 2002:105).

Moreover, in the first phase of direct involvement in Kalat, the British had initiated an efficient, centralized, and inexpensive political structure. Also, a full fledged support was given to Nasir Khan II and Khudadad Khan from 1841-93 subsequently to ensure the centralization of their authority in Kalat. Owing to that, British had signed a treaty with Khan of Kalat on 14th May 1854, at Mastung, “where the British began to assume the status of power broker between the Khan and his sardars, and the Anglo-Kalat relations increasingly defined internal politics of the Khanate [Kalat]. By entering into agreement of 1854, the Khan had put himself in a position [in] which he had accepted the British more than to the Sardars. The consequences of this policy manifested themselves in general insecurity which led to a permanent quasi-state of war among the tribes and, in the process, weakened both them and the Khan militarily and economically” (Axmann, 2008:29). Furthermore, the Khan was purposely employed to take the local population in confidence for the best interest of the British imperial authority. Indeed, he retained control over Marri and Bugti tribes which were already settled in leased territories of British India (British Balochistan). However, in return the British had assured economic support of Rs. 50,000/- along with military help in case of any foreign threat (Axmann, 2008:29). Keeping in view the scenario for an effective suzerainty over the entire region, Khan had proposed an independent political structure and a military force irrespective of the tribal set up. However, this mercenary force basically consisted of members from the British officials where majority of the members on Sardari ranks were particularly employed from the royal family who were already loyal to the British imperial authority (Charkvarty, 2002:115).

Nevertheless, on the eve of British further advancements they had miscalculated the power and status of Sardars. Their traditional principle of tribal federation and customary authority was given to Khan that eventually resulted in the growing agitation of relationship Khan with the British officials (Syed, 2007:69) It is argued that the British authority was the power broker in the traditional tribal system of Balochistan. Moreover, their manipulation aggravated the sardars that ultimately lead to a chaotic situation in the early phase of British intervention especially in Balochistan. Eventually, they experienced a huge resentment in the region. In fact, the situation was getting out of the Khan’s control because according to the conditions of 1854 treaty he had to be more disposed to the British. Due to the aforementioned poor policy implications the Khan was losing his confidence on sardars that inevitably resulted in hostilities in the region. Thus, the Khan’s incompetency was endangering British interest both economically and militarily in Balochistan (Ewans et. al, 2001:62). This situation eventually led to British direct intervention in the affairs of Balochistan.

Keeping in view the scenario of the region, the British changed their ongoing strategies. However, it had become part and parcel of their policies to empower the Khan along with his subjects (Sardars). In the meantime, the British also anticipated a Russian threat followed by a new treaty in 1862, predominantly based on the demarcation of a boundary between Balochistan and British India (First Administration Report of the Baluchistan Agency, 1886:4). This finally recognized Kalat as a neighboring state of British India with a substantial increase in financial support. The treaty aimed to strengthen the frontiers of British Empire. Similarly, the Khan of Kalat signed another treaty in 1863 in order to ensure the security of British installations in the

region. In return the British authority opted to pay a handsome amount of 20,500 rupees per annum to the Khan for peaceful trade in Balochistan (First Administration Report of the Baluchistan Agency, 1886:4). The position of the Khan was inevitably boosted following the affairs of the state. According to Syed Javed Haider (2007:61)

“In this year, the Khan received further boost from the death of Kabul’s ruler, Amir Dost Mohammad Khan. In fact, the British Agent in Qandahar reported to the government that Khan of Kalat, Mir Khudadad Khan (1857-1893) had offered the province of Shal (Quetta) to the ruler of Qandahar if the latter would assist him in consolidating his position at Kalat.”

Furthermore, for an effective rule in the region it was important for the Khan to have the confidence of the tribal sardars. Because of the Khan’s approachable association with sardars could help him properly maneuver the demands of the British government. Nevertheless, the British officials had already felt the need to change their stance of dealings with local authorities in Balochistan. As their peaceful penetration in the region was totally associated with peaceful solution to tribal conflicts however, in so doing it closed the border areas of British India. Moreover, there was also a dire threat of foreign incursions such as from Czarist Russia who could directly intervene in the region. Thus, the British authorities once again opted to take an active part to bring about a solution to conflicts between sardars and Khan. In addition to that the British authorities changed their stance of encroachment in Balochistan with a provocative modification in the previous policy. Therefore, the administrator from Sindh Sir William Mereweather was against the policy of direct interference in the affairs of Kalat instead he encouraged the British officials to strengthen the power of the Khan at the cost of his own confederates in the Khanates (Ewans et.al, 2001: 61-64). On the other hand, the administration in Punjab was in favor of direct intervention which was eventually accepted by the British authority in light of the “Forward policy” (Bruce, 2002:329). However, the viewpoint of this policy was to directly interfere in the internal affairs of Kalat. This new forward policy was quite effective and ensured the establishment of a military base in Quetta under the condition of a new treaty in 1876 (Treaty of Kalat) with the continuation of terms and conditions of the treaty of 1854 (First Administration Report of the Baluchistan Agency, 1886:55).

In the second phase of British advancement in Balochistan, Robert Sandeman a representative of the Governor General was deployed. The Treaty of Kalat in 1876 aimed to manipulate the situation in the best interest of the British. For this reason, the Treaty of Kalat was enforced on the Khan of Kalat which directly change the situation following a better recognition of British power than it was envisaged during or after the 1857 uprisings. Nevertheless, the treaties were done without consultation of the local sardars (Bruce, 2002:355). Thus, the deployment of a military officer Major Robert Sandeman proved to be a game changer in the eventual curtailment of the traditional political structure of Balochistan (Syed, 2007: 62). Indeed, the “Forward Policy” of Sandeman had proven to be very fruitful for the British in terms of peaceful rule and proxy war with Russia.

Furthermore, to increase the influence of Sandmenization (Forward Policy) the British authorities increased the payment to the Khan to rupees 30,000 per annum (Bruce, 2002: 18-93). Major Robert Sandeman a competent deputy Commissioner in Dera Ghazi Khan was given the

task to ensure the making of Quetta as the British military garrison. Indeed, he proved to be very influential in terms of positioning the aforementioned policy and was successful in establishing the Balochistan Agency (British Balochistan a colonial agency of British India) on 21st February 1877 (Breseeg, 2004:175). Furthermore, Quetta was declared the headquarters with the appointment of Sandeman as the agent to the Governor General. He was given the task to establish peace and order with interference in the local system. He was also required to facilitate the local tribesmen and chiefs to cooperate with the British government. Furthermore, he was also asked to encourage trade, develop communication, improve irrigation system, preserve forests and above all provide medical assistance to establish British direct control in the region (Caroe, 1976:376). Thus, Sandeman realized that this could only be possible through the preservation and support of the traditional tribal system in Balochistan (Ahmad, 1992:76).

Furthermore, Sandeman was of the view that once the tribal leaders had confidence in him, they would be the best granters of peace and order in the region. So, he maintained the traditional hierarchical structure of the tribal system of Balochistan. These measures were only taken on the pretext of safeguarding British interests. Nevertheless, in order to avoid any threat, Sandeman used the policy of divide and rule among the local tribes. Furthermore, he manipulated the intra-tribal tensions to empower other personalities in the tribes who, if necessary, may be used as tool in case of emergency in the future (Ahmad, 1992: 99). Ram (1977:220) further illustrates this point and he says:

“In general, the British despite all their appeasing dealings and their equal political and economic subsidies to the tribes were designed to retain the balance of power. But at the same time, they were quite skillful of keeping old inter-and intra-tribal feuds alive and using them to achieve certain objectives without engaging themselves militarily. Substantially, the British could not directly intervene into the regional and military affairs. For the achievement of their secret purposes and some obvious aims they had to follow the policy of divide and rule at one level and rule at another. In fact, the continuous inter-tribal and intra-tribal wars would legitimize the British interference in the region on the one hand and would keep a constant check on the tribal leaders on the other hand. Here the British had to preserve balance of power between the Sardars and the Khan. For this arrangement they had to provide certain privileges to both the poles, so that they would be able to mark their hold over the region to attain their enduring goals.”

Indeed, the British had extended their hegemony to Quetta and Bolan Pass and the authority of the Khan was reduced to a show piece (Titus and Swidler, 2000:48).

In addition, the Second Anglo-Afghan War had changed the British stance in Balochistan. The employment of a new Viceroy had added fuel to the rhetoric when he demanded a position for the British at the court of Amir of Kabul in Afghanistan. The refusal to British encroachment in the court of Kabul resulted to the Second Anglo-Afghan war in 1878 and the eventual destiny of Balochistan was tide to British adventures in the aforementioned war in 1878, under the provocative role of Sir Henry Rawlinson. Therefore in 1886, he advised his government to annex the territory of Quetta which purposely meant to gain control of the Afghan areas to defend the Amir in Kabul to install a permanent British Mission in Kabul to counter the Russian further influence forever. The occupation of Quetta was an indispensable indication of launching another punitive war against Afghanistan (Syed 2007: 66). Owing to that, on the eve of Second Anglo-

Afghan War, the British invasion of Afghanistan was again the continuation of previous policies of countering Russian threat. They wanted to feed the authority in Kabul with the fear of Russian threat with the aim to build a strong, friendly and united government in Afghanistan for future fortunes. Thus, the British wanted to use this region as a buffer zone in order to counter the Russian threat forever (Syed Fakher Uddin Shah, 2013:24-25).

Nevertheless, the new Amir of Afghanistan in 1879, Amir Yaqub Ali Khan was inclined to British policies in terms of further containment in the region. He gave in to the British supremacy with a new treaty on the 26th of May 1879 name as “Gandamak Treaty”. In return he was funded 600,000 rupees per annum as a stipend following the sanctioning of Khurram, Sibi, and Pishin districts to British India (Ewans et.al, 2001:63). Moreover, he had also given control of the most significant strategic Pashtun territories of the Khyber, Michni, and Loralai to the British. Moreover, these areas were so close to the northwestern border areas of Quetta (Caroe, 1976:375). On the eventual materialization of this treaty, British influence surged to include Afghan areas. Thus, British power directly extended to Kabul restricting the Amir not to be involved with any foreign power. In fact, the traditional authorities in Balochistan for example the Khan and Sardars were sandwiched between British India and the British in Balochistan. In fact, the entire region in the vicinities of Qandahar from Khujak range to Chaman had become a frontier of British India. In order to have easy access to these formidable frontier areas they had constructed railway lines by building tunnels in hilly areas (Syed, 2007: 65). This advancement of the British particularly in Balochistan was the long-lasting repercussions of the “Forward policy”. Indeed, Sandeman was the milestone forerunner of British triumphant hold of the region.

MAJOR ROBERT SANDEMAN: AS A PSEUDO-ARM OF THE BRITISH IN BALOCHISTAN

The Treaty of 1876 eventually recognized the indirect rule of the British in Balochistan. Moreover, Khanate of Kalat the main authority in the region was dependent on British subsidies. The old-style traditional status of the Khan and Sardars system was replaced by the “Sandeman System” followed by a balance of power sharing among various tribes (Syed Fakher Uddin Shah, 2013:24-25). Thus, Balochistan emerged as a haven for the British administration in countering the Russian threat. The forward policy of Sandeman had extended the authority of Sardars at the local level and with that reducing his reliance on tribal support bringing him close to the status of the Khan too. Indeed, the power politics of the British in curtailing the main authority eventually led the Khan to become in a sense equal to Sardars (Zaib, & Dali, 2019:19). Their administrative policy was purposely aimed to pacify the land for further development in the region. Furthermore, they wanted to safeguard freedom of movement following indirect rule without military engagement and if a chance arose, they could seize the whole territory for a longer time keeping in view its strategic importance to the British (Hassan, 2016:44). Major Robert Sandeman’s diplomatic and extra ordinary skillfulness had paved the way for British success in the region. Thus, he achieved this goal by pursuing three main administrative measures.

Firstly, he manipulated the authority of chieftains with financial support, and sardars were entrusted with administrative responsibilities. The sardars who were already thirsty for power and zeal were fascinated with decorative sounding titles provided with additional laudable privileges. In addition to that, backwardness of the region and lack of political awareness was making it easy for the administration of Sandeman to manipulate the situation in ways that favored him (Axmman,

2008:35). Secondly, he had introduced a productive Jirga System (inter-tribal councils of heads) among the local Baloch to use it as a tool for peaceful settlement of old tribal blood feuds (Luni, 1992:262). The settlement of these feuds was inevitably significant for the long-lasting existence of the British in the region. Thirdly, Sandeman had introduced a “Levies System” an administrative machinery (police) consisting of local warriors from the tribes. Undeniably, the obligation of this system was to inculcate a sentiment of judicial responsibility among tribal leaders (Zaib & Dali, 2019: 18). Furthermore, the best part of his policy was to ensure there was law and order in Balochistan. Thus, these three types of administrative measures implemented in Balochistan were quite successful and was result oriented in terms its set aims. It had also ensured the possibility for the British to scrutinize the mainstream authority structure of the Khan and Sardars .

The deployment of Sandeman in Balochistan was tremendously successful and therefore he was overwhelmingly praised by the British administration. He not only settled the conflicting local interests but also ensured the security of highways under the custodianship of the tribes. In fact, the local tribes transformed to consider themselves as the godparents of peace and order in their vicinities (Zaib & Dali, 2019: 16-17). Moreover, chiefs were paid well but sometime fined if found guilty of acting against the interest of the British government. In addition to that, his policy basically produced a politically segregated Balochistan with division of the main authority such as Khan being just one of them. The fragmented tribal society was a significant means in achieving the goal to keep them dependent on British to preserve peace and order. Indeed, it was an interdependent relationship, and they even supported the British stance to a great deal in terms of increasing administrative influence in the region.

Khudadad Khan the then Khan of Kalat failed to strengthen his central authority which finally resulted in the loss of his earlier glory which led to the end of his central role. Furthermore, the British’s main policy focus was to curb the interests of local tribes as well as making them economically dependent. Moreover, they retained the balance of power in the maneuverings of tribal feuds. Similarly, their mediation role was given an official status through the appointed of British political agents into the Jirgas. The “First Administration Report of the Baluchistan Agency” in 1886 stated that:

“The Agent to the Governor General has practically taken the place of the Khan as head of the Baloch confederation. His Highness (Khan) is still the nominal head, the Sarawan and Jhalawan Chiefs still sit on his right and left hand in the *darbar* (court) as in past, and till he is invested by the Khan with the Khilat or mantle of succession, a Sardar is not to be legitimized as the representative of his tribe. But in the essential question of the nomination of the Sardars, the summoning of Jirga’s for the settlement of inter-tribal disputes and the general presentation of peace in the country, the Agent to the Governor General is recognized all over Baluchistan as having taken the place of the Khan, and his mandate naturally commands a great deal more aspect and obedience than it ever did that of his Highness” (Tanner, 2002:129).

Furthermore, the British containment policy of administrative control was steady in nature. The tribal sardars who were previously lower in ranking was brought to be parallel to the Khan. Moreover, the *Sandemanization* of Balochistan had generally divided the power and function of tribal chiefs. They possess nominal authority and act a showpiece (Syed, 2007: 67). It could be

argued that the British rule was not indirect however it had reduced the position of Khan to just being a ceremonial head with weak tribal political integration. Contrary to that, the real position of the Khan was supported in principle by the British to retain inevitable hegemony. Having said that, in 1877 the day Sandeman took over the charge as an agent to the Governor General the traditional authority of the Khan was left to act as no more than an overvalued Sardar. Nevertheless, Muhammad Sardar Khan Baluch in his book laments:

“The Baloch nationalist scholars mourn that Sandeman suppressed and bribed the chiefs at the cost of the people, and he recognized Baloch Sardars as hereditary instead of elected chiefs as well as converted the Baloch unwritten constitution into a new system of indirect British rule” (Khan Baluch M. S., 1947:116).

Thus, the forward policy of Major Robert Sandeman had far-reaching repercussions that had eventually ensured the rule of the British over the entire Balochistan.

Moreover, Sandeman’s policies had led to widespread intervention of the British in Balochistan. It was followed by the declaration of Quetta city as the main administrative hub due to its proximity to the Bolan Pass. Quetta was also regarded as a defensive and strategic pad since the First Anglo-Afghan war. This was finally firmed up by the British by persuading Khudadad Khan the Khan of Kalat to give Quetta up during the years of the Second Anglo-Afghan war in 1878 to 1880 which basically meant that the British had direct control of Quetta. It was followed by an agreement ensuring full British authority of civil and criminal jurisdiction in the area. Furthermore, the British had also started to collect taxes on all trade passing through Bolan Pass and in return a lump sum of rupees eighty thousand was paid to the family of the Khan for the above-mentioned rights accorded to the British. Syed Javed Haider in his article argues:

“It is interesting to note that, the way the British saw the role of the Khan of Kalat and the Balochi Sardars. In a memorandum, Sir Robert Montgomery described the political structure of Balochistan and advised the British Government to strengthen and secure the position of the Khan of Kalat. According to him, this would secure not only our borders of Sindh and the Punjab against the inroads of Baloch robbers, and the plunder of travelers and merchants to and from our territories to Central Asia but also to the protection of India itself against the possible dangers from the direct or stimulated advance of Persia. He conceded that the revenues of Balochistan were not enough for the Khan and the Sardars to effectively manage the affairs of the confederacy. But since there was the British Resident in Kalat, he suggested, “Would it not be possible to make arrangements for the subsidizing of inferior chiefs guaranteed and secured by English power, through English payment? It is my opinion that great political advantages may be gained by the extra grant of the subsidy to the Khan.” (Syed, 2007: 65-66).

Thus, Balochistan Agency was established with Quetta as its inevitable headquarters. Robert Sandeman was appointed as a serving Agent to the Governor General and Quetta finally became the first point of huge advance in the “*Sandemanization*” forward policy.

The British expansion in the region was followed by further annexation of border areas in Balochistan. At the conclusion of the Second Anglo-Afghan war the Afghan government had ceded Pishin, Thal-Chotiali North, Sibi and South of Quetta to the British which were previously

under the control of the Kandahar ruler. Indeed, the beginning of the 20th century saw the British influence further expanding in the region in terms of territorial annexations. In addition, for a complete control of the entire northern areas of Balochistan, they had to suppress a rebellious Apozai tribe for the establishment of a cantonment in Loralai in 1889 (First Administration Report, 1886:78). Moreover, it was followed by further concessions from 1894 to 1903 made by the Khan in order to recognize the merger of Bolan Pass to ensure the integrity of the region as well as to improve aggrandizement of trade between Afghanistan and British India. For further support in the flow of trade, a narrow strip of land was borrowed from the Khan of Kalat for the extension of the railway road connecting Sindh and Quetta. Furthermore, from 1880-87 the railway was completed up to Sibi and Quetta and then in 1888 it finally extended up to Chaman and Gulistan (Zaib & Dali, 2019: 20). Furthermore, the final fixing of borderlines the Durand Line and the Goldsmith Line with Afghanistan and Iran were carried out in the year 1886 (First Administration Report of the Baluchistan Agency, 1886:9) .

The British monopoly in the region was due to a strong administrative system and the presence of more than 5000 soldiers in the Garrison at Quetta (Syed, 2007: 63). The British manipulated the traditional system for their own interests. However, all this development was made without the knowledge of the Sardars and the Khans whom the British installed. If they found them guilty of not adhering to their obligations, they were dismissed immediately. For example, Mir Khudadad Khan was dismissed on 29 March 1893 on refusal to accept his subservience to the British dummy Khan. He was later replaced by his son Mir Mahmud Khan II who was on the throne of Kalat from 1893 to 1931. In addition to that, he had guaranteed overwhelming support to the British and operated like a British Agent to the Governor General (Breseeg, 2004: 210-214). During his reign of about 38 years, he practically helped the British to successfully pass the orders of administration and Court.

The British received strong support from the local tribes during the 1st world war. The Khan of Kalat (Baluchistan's head) had successfully mobilized the local population to participate in a major uprising to give maximum support to Turkey during the First World War (Syed, 2007: 73). During the Third Anglo-Afghan war in 1919, the whole Pashtun belt adjacent to the Afghanistan border such as Qila Saifullah, Zhob, Loralai, and Sinjawi were in revolting against the British who were eventually suppressed through the support of the Sardars and the Khan (Ghour, 1995:12). Indeed, the Khilafat Movement and the Third Anglo-Afghan war which was a Pan-Islamic Movement had greatly influenced the local people especially the Pashtuns who were not willing to accept the British supremacy in the region anymore (Syed, 2007:72-74). The Bolshevik Revolution in 1917 had already changed the scenario of the Russian threat to the British Empire which was facing rebellions from the local forces of Balochistan. However, during this period from 1915 till 1919 the British experienced great uprisings especially from both Baloch and Pashtuns. Thus, it took about fifteen minor successful expeditions from the British to crush the disobedient local forces in Balochistan (Breseeg, 2004:190). These missions were successfully maneuvered on the back of British installed Chieftains, Khan and Sardars.

CONCLUSION

In summary, various conclusions could be drawn from the above discussion. This article dealt with the history of British policies in controlling Balochistan in its interest. To begin, the British had initiated their activities in Balochistan only to counter foreign incursions in order to protect the northwest frontier regions of British India. However, Balochistan being a part of the 'Great Game'

had always remained prey to three main players i.e., Russia, France, and Britain. As a result of that, the Great Britain had intervened in Balochistan resulting in widespread confrontations for about one hundred years. Noticeably, numerous external and internal powers in Balochistan resisted the British intrusions but eventually they were contained through various political policies of Sandeman through the exploitation of treaties and cash payments to local leadership (Khan/Sardars).

The British used the policy of “Divide and Rule” in order to subdue the traditional authority of the Khan, for that reason Robert Sandeman was deployed as an intermediary between the Khan and Sardar. In fact, the British agent sat beside the Khan and this was testimony to their acquired authority which they obtain by creating contradictory power distribution to manipulate the situation in the best interest of the British empire. Although, these policies led to their control and authority in the region but nonetheless this happened with great resistance from the various tribes settled in Balochistan.

The British had never lost sight of their ultimate objective to control Balochistan in order to safeguard their advantage and interest during military engagements in Afghanistan through the frontiers of Balochistan. In fact, this region was used as a jumping pad to counter any foreign threat from Iran and Afghanistan.

Above all, the Indian Muslims suffered from British colonialism because they wanted to circumvent them from developing relationships with the rest of the Muslim world. They took indirect control of Balochistan in order to contain any threat from neighboring Muslim countries especially from Afghanistan and Iran. For that reason, Balochistan was very important where the British intervened in the region to establish firm demarcation of boundaries at the most strategic points to ensure there was no threat to their colonization of the sub-continent.

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¹ PhD Candidate Department of History, Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences, University Malaya Kuala Lumpur Aurangzaibn@gmail.com

² Department of History, Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences, University Malaya, Kuala Lumpur Malaysia Azharud@um.edu.my

³ PhD candidate Department of History Quaid I Azam University Islamabad Pakistan.