

An Analytical Study of the Punjab Boundary Line Issue during the Last Two Decades of the British Raj until the Declaration of 3 June 1947

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Abstract

The Punjab partition in 1947 did not appear abruptly but it had been evolved for the last two decades. During this, political consideration among Indian political figures as well as the British officials groomed that idea which also developed the sketch for the expected boundary lines for the partition of the Punjab. The negotiations that were held to finalize partition plan for the declaration of June 3, 1947 further crystallized boundary lines to divide the Punjab. Therefore, there was absolutely no need to constitute any Boundary Commission to demarcate boundary lines for the partition of the Punjab, as its demarcation had already been crystallized. Nevertheless, the British planned it as a political diplomacy just to keep the Sikhs quiet on the last leg of their Raj. Because, there were reports that on the emergence of the real Punjab partition, the Sikhs would certainly react barbarically. The British diplomacy succeeded in this regard but the masses of the divided Punjab had to face its harsh consequences at the end of their Raj.

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Introduction

The British annexed the Punjab with British India in 1849 and consolidated its boundaries, as the Maharaja Ranjeet Singh never ruled in Cis-Sutlej Regions. Ironically, the British could not preserve its consolidation at the end of their Raj. However, this study tries to state that the Hindus, the Muslims, the Sikhs and the British had started considering for the Punjab partition since the third decade of twenty-century. The Hindus began to propound it since the first decade of the twenty-century. The Sikhs originated this idea in 1923. The Muslims started to consider separating its Ambala Division from it since 1926. The Congress began to refer Punjab partition indirectly since its Nehru Report in 1928. The British began to value such consideration since their holding of Round Table Conferences in 1930-31. This idea with itself also groomed the sketch of boundaries lines for the division of the Punjab. Thus, this study tries to conclude that on the declaration of 3 June Partition Plan in 1947, the boundary line issue for the partition of the Punjab was a settled fact. The British could enforce it on District or Sub-District basis even without getting mutual understanding of concerned parties. As debate of decades on the idea of the partition of the Punjab had already cleared expected boundary line in case of its partition. Therefore, there was absolutely neither any justification nor need to constitute any Boundary Commission for the Punjab partition in 1947, which further intensified prevailed communal aggression in the Punjab. Because the formation of the Boundary Commission created many wrong hopes among the contesting parties that, they could snatch more territories by their jugglery advocacy before the commission but in vain. However, under partition plan, the British planned to form a Boundary Commission as a strategy just to avoid immediate Sikh riot. Because there were secret reports that on the appearance of actual plan for partition of the Punjab, the Sikh as whole would react brutally. Therefore, instead of persuading the Sikhs that they should accept it as their leaders had accepted it and as it was the nearest to their

demand for 14 eastern Districts for the East Punjab or instead to plan strategy to crush any Sikh aggressive reaction in this regard. The British envisaged strategy to engage the Sikhs through the diplomacy of Boundary Commission on the last leg of their raj. The British remained successful by envisaging such strategy to avoid Sikh immediate aggression on the last leg of their raj. However, its outcomes further enhanced Sikh desperation that culminated into the Punjab holocaust at the end of British Raj in August 1947.

Evolution of the idea of Punjab Partition as well as Demarcation 1909-1940

During Mughal era the Punjab remained divided in the regions of Sirhind, Lahore and Multan. The Sikhs ruled the Punjab from 1799 to 1849 but not in Cis-Sutlej regions as during this, the Punjab remained divided between Cis-Sutlej and Trans-Sutlej regions.¹ The British annexed it in March 1849 and consolidated it into a province whose boundaries were expanded from Delhi to Peshawar. However, in 1901, the British separated its five frontier districts to constitute North West Frontier Province (Now KP). Then in 1911, they separated Delhi district from the Punjab to form Delhi Capital but from onward throughout the British Raj, the rest of the Punjab remained intact.

The Punjab intelligentsia began to forward schemes for the partition of their province since 1909 to solve communal problem in the North West of India. Bhai Parmanand (leader of the Punjab Hindu Sabha) was the first Punjabi who in 1909 presented idea for the partition of the North West sub-continent to ensure Hindu control.² Then, the Sikh press began to follow it by stating a Sikh State in the Punjab in

¹ The Territory, which was situated between Jumana River and Sutlej River, was called Cis-Sutlej whereas, the areas West North of Sutlej River was called as Trans-Sutlej.

² Ian Talbot, *India and Pakistan* (London: Arnold, 2000), 119. K.K. Aziz, *A History of the Idea of Pakistan*, Vol. 1 (Lahore: Vanguard Books Ltd., 1987), 79-80. Ian Talbot and Gurharpal Singh, *The Partition of India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 42.

1923.³ During this, growing communal consciousness enhanced tension among communities and there were a number of communal riots erupted at many places in 1923-1924. One of the most appalling was a Hindu-Muslim riot at Kohat in North West Frontier Province on September 10, 1924.⁴ Accordingly, as remedial measures for communal riots, Lala Lajpat Rai (A veteran Punjabi Hindu leader) suggested dividing the Punjab into the East and the West Punjab because eastern part of the Punjab was predominantly non-Muslim.⁵ Then, in 1927, G.D. Birla (A renowned Hindu industrialist) while supporting the Punjab partition said to Madan Mohan Malavia (A veteran leader of Hindu Mahasabha) that he did not know whether the people would like splitting of the Punjab and Bengal but he would personally welcome it.⁶ Perhaps due to this, the Congress too referred Hindu Zones in Bengal and Punjab Muslim majority provinces in its Nehru Report in 1928.⁷ Then, on the eve of the Round Table Conferences, the Sikhs began to discuss partition of the Punjab with Mahatama Gandhi and Lord Irwin in 1930.⁸ On the following year, they discussed it with Lord Willingdon.⁹ During this, Allama Muhammad Iqbal delivered his presidential address at Allahabad. He too suggested exclusion of Ambala Division and some other eastern districts from the Punjab where non-Muslims were

³ Akhtar Hussain, "Muslim-Sikh Relations in the British Punjab after the Lahore Resolution of 1940" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, 2011), 398.

⁴ Kirpal Singh, ed., *Select Documents on Partition of Punjab-1947* (New Delhi: National Book Shop, 1991), XII.

⁵ Singh, ed., *Select Documents on Partition of Punjab-1947*.

⁶ Meha Malik Kudaisya, "G.D Birla, Big Business and India's Partition," in *Freedom, Trauma, Continuities Northern India and Independence*, eds., D.A. Low and Howard Brasted (New Delhi: Sage Publication, 1998), 218.

⁷ Sikandar Hayat, *The Charismatic Leader* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2008), 330.

⁸ A.B. Rajput, *Punjab Crisis and Cure* (Lahore: The Lions Press, 1947), 99-100.

⁹ Rajput, *Punjab Crisis and Cure*.

predominant as it could make the Muslim state territorially small but population wise large.¹⁰

Then, during the Round Table Conferences in London, in order to solve communal tangle in the Punjab, Sir Geoffrey Corbett¹¹ suggested separation of Ambala Division from the Punjab to make it as one community dominated province.¹² However, the Sikh delegates rebutted this scheme by submitting their own proposals.¹³ Therefore, there was no further development in this regard. Anyhow, while suggesting two federations to solve communal tangle in 1938, G.D. Birla again propounded partition of the Punjab and said to Gandhi that the Muslim Federation should be composed of all provinces or portions of provinces, which contain more than two thirds of Muslim population.¹⁴ During this, the author of the Regional Federal Scheme proposed to treat the Punjab inclusive of Hindu tracts of the Ambala Division, Kangra District, Una and Garhshankar Tehsils of Hoshiarpur District and all the Punjab non-Muslim states as one regional unit.¹⁵ Then, the author of "Confederacy of India" discussed division of India into five federations in early 1939. It's "Indus Region's Federation" necessitated either creation of a new Punjab province consisting of its Ambala Division, Kangra District, Una and Garhshankar tehsils of the Hoshiarpur District, and the chief commissioner's province of Delhi, etc. or inclusion of all these Hindu areas into the

¹⁰ Singh, *Select Documents on Partition of Punjab*, XIII.

¹¹ Sir Geoffrey Corbett served in the Punjab as Financial Commissioner. At that time, he was Secretary of the Indian Delegation for the Round Table Conference, London.

¹² Singh, *Select Documents on Partition of Punjab*, XIII.

¹³ The Sikhs demanded that the Rawalpindi and Multan Divisions excluding Montgomery and Lyallpur District should be separated from the Punjab to amalgamate this area with the North West Frontier Province or to form a separate province. Singh, *Select Documents on Partition of Punjab*, XIII.

¹⁴ Kudaisya, G.D. Birla, *Big Business and India's Partition*, 219.

¹⁵ K.L. Gauba, *The Consequences of Pakistan* (Lahore: Lion Press, 1946), 80.

United Provinces.¹⁶ Thus, by 1938 and 1939, the partition of India had become a fashionable idea.¹⁷ Consequently, Lord Linlithgow too broached this subject with Gandhi on 15 March 1939 who responded that, “even if Pakistan admitted of realization, it would never settle the communal question in India”.¹⁸ All this enhanced Sikh perturbation therefore, on 10-11 February 1940; they held an All India Akali Conference at Attari (about 15 miles east of Lahore) where they expressed their deep concern about the growing endeavors of certain Muslim quarters to convert the Punjab into a part of Pakistan. Accordingly, they unanimously claimed that partition of the Punjab alone would solve their problems as well as of other minorities.¹⁹ Interestingly, the Sikhs claimed partition of the Punjab to solve their problem several weeks before the Muslim League’s Lahore Resolution on March 23, 1940, in which the League too demanded independence Muslim State in the Muslim majority areas including the Punjab to solve their problems.

Under Lahore Resolution, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar (Scheduled Castes Leader) discussed boundaries in the Punjab to segregate Muslim and non-Muslim. He stated that the Muslims had majority in 16 western districts and the non-Muslims in 13 eastern districts therefore, these two set of districts would form two separate areas, which provided natural segregation of the Hindus and the Muslims in the

¹⁶ Gauba, *The Consequences of Pakistan*.

¹⁷ Gauba, *The Consequences of Pakistan*, 80.

¹⁸ B.R Nanda, “Tragedy and Triumph: The Last Days of Mahatama Gandhi,” in *Pangs of Partition*, Vol.1, eds., S. Sattar and Indira Baptisa Gupta (New Delhi: Manhor and Indian Council of Historical Research, 2002), 49-51. Amirck Singh, ed., *The Partition in Retrospect* (New Delhi: Anamika Publishers & Distributors, 2000), 57. Thus, Gandhi had discussed Pakistan scheme with the Viceroy before Khaliqzaman’s discussion with Lord Zetland on March 20, 1939 in which he suggested partition of India to separate Muslim majority regions. Chaudhry Khaliqzaman, *Pathway to Pakistan* (Lahore: Longmans, 1961), 207.

¹⁹ Rajput, *Punjab Crisis and Cure*, 101-102.

Punjab.²⁰ At the same time, the author of "Tragedy of Jinnah" criticized Lahore Resolution by stating Punjab partition that the separation of preponderating Hindus and Sikh areas of Ambala, Jullundur Divisions and Amritsar District would leave the Punjab economically ruined and crippled. Therefore, according to him, "Mr. Jinnah may then send the Nawab of Mamdot, Mr. Aurangzeb Khan and Sir Abdullah Haroon to gulp the sands of Sind with all their vitamins and to take exercise by breaking their heads against the rocks of Baluchistan".²¹ Thus during 1909-1940, Indian politicians, intellectuals, writers as well as the British administrative hierarchy considered partition of the Punjab as well as its boundaries to solve communal tangle in this province.

Pakistan Idea in 1941-1942 and Punjab Demarcation

After passing its Lahore Resolution (Pakistan Resolution) in March 1940, the Muslim League began to consider boundaries for its Pakistan. A confidential memorandum, "what is Pakistan" was prepared for M.A. Jinnah in February 1941. It suggested that Ambala Division should be excluded from the Punjab as it had majority of Hindu and Sikh population as well as it was a fiscal liability for the rest of Punjab. Therefore, according to Stanley Wolpert, from this date at least, it was clear for the League leadership that they would have to consider necessary readjustment for Punjab's territorial boundaries.²² Perhaps due to this, on January 17, 1942, M.A. Jinnah disclosed to Prof. R.G. Coupland his readiness to cede Ambala Division from the Punjab into United Provinces.²³ Accordingly, Muslim

²⁰ B.R Ambedkar, *Thoughts on Pakistan* (Karachi: Royal Book Company, 2008), 107-109, 355. Also, see maps, which he attached, as Appendices.

²¹ Durlab Singh, *The Valiant Fighter Master Tara Singh* (Lahore: Hero Publications, 1942), 131-132.

²² Stanley Wolpert, *Jinnah of Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1989), 189.

²³ R.J-Moore, *Escape from Empire* (Oxford: Larendon Press, 1983), 54. For Bengal, he also showed his readiness to cede its Hindu Western Districts to Bihar provided it acquired Assam. *Ibid.*

League's study circles began to emphasize that Ambala Division was predominantly a Hindu area that could be merged into U.P. or joined Delhi as a new province. Moreover, exclusion of Ambala Division with princely states of Patiala, Nabha, Jind and Faridkot as well as the states of Simla Hills, Sirmur Kalsia would reduce population of the Punjab by 7 millions. That would raise proportion of Muslim population from 57 percent to 66 percent in the rest of the Punjab.²⁴ The Muslim League's propaganda to cede Ambala Division from the Punjab into U.P. was not a new one rather it had been considering in Muslim League circles since 1926.²⁵ Perhaps due to this, Allama Muhammad Iqbal too addressed this subject in his historical Allahabad address.²⁶ Thus, during 1941-1942, the Muslim League circles propagated in detail their readiness to exclude Ambala Division and other non-Muslim majority districts from the Punjab before the arrival of Cripps Mission that also developed the idea of boundary lines for the Punjab partition.

The Sikhs' Request for 14 Districts in 1942 and Punjab Demarcation

Sir Stafford Cripps arrived with his mission to solve Indian constitutional problem and held meetings with Indian political parties. His discussions too cleared boundaries for the Punjab partition as in their presentation to him, the Sikh leadership requested to divide the Punjab by giving them only 14 eastern districts. They asked for the redistribution of provincial powers between the East and the West Punjab.

²⁴ S. Shamsul Hasan, *Pakistan and Muslim India* (Darya Gunj Delhi: Muslim League Printing Press, 1942), 125.

²⁵ In his welcome address at the eighteenth Annual Session of All India Muslim League in Delhi in 1926, Khan Bahadur Pirzada Mulvi Muhammad Hussain Arif who belonged to Rohtak District presented demand for the separation of Ambala Division from the Punjab. Professor Manzural Haq Siddiqui, *Tehrik-I-Pakistan Mein Rohtak Ka kirdar* [Urdu: Rohtak's role in Pakistans Movement] (Lahore: Pakistan Movement Workers Trust, 1998), 244.

²⁶ S. Hashim Raza, ed., *Mountbatten and Pakistan*, with an Introductory by Sharif al Mujahid (Karachi: Quaid-I-Azam Academy, 1982), 21.

Master Tara Singh emphasized that only partition of the Punjab would satisfy the Sikhs in any new scheme. He elaborated that by dividing the Punjab, the whole area South of Sutlej plus the districts of Lahore (less Lahore City), Amritsar, Gurdaspur, Jullundur, Hoshiarpur and Kangra districts should be merged into a separate province.²⁷ The Sikhs All Parties Committee also asked Cripps that they should divide the Punjab to constitute a new province comprising of Ambala and Jullundur Divisions with three districts of Amritsar, Gurdaspur and Lahore.²⁸

Master Tara Singh also made it clear to Sir Cripps that only the Muslim League would object to divide the Punjab as had been proposed by the Sikhs. However, he emphasized that, "if the British Government be prepared to accept this proposal of the Sikhs, there is a likelihood of the final solution of the communal problem". He added that in that case, "I may be able to persuade the Congress and the Hindu Mahasabha to agree to the communal solution outlined in your proposals, as amended by the Sikh proposal".²⁹ Thus, during Cripps Mission in March 1942, the Sikhs were ready to take 14 eastern districts less Lahore city. They also asserted that on this provision, they would persuade the Congress and the Hindu Mahasabha to accept Punjab partition.

²⁷ Nicholas Mansergh, ed., *The Transfer of Power* Vol. I (London: Her Majesty's Stationery office, 1970), 496, 564.

²⁸ Mansergh, ed., *The Transfer of Power* Vol. I, 587. Later on, during his research, Kirpal Singh concluded that, "Significantly enough this demands for the demarcation of the boundary with the districts of Amritsar, Gurdaspur and Lahore was partially satisfied by the Radcliffe award". Singh, *Select Document on Partition of Punjab*, XIV.

²⁹ Mansergh, *The Transfer of Power*, Vol. II, 27; Penderel Moon also said to an Akali leader at Amritsar in 1942 that on the creation of Pakistan, the Punjab would be divided on population basis by a line down the middle so the Wagah Rest House would make the dividing line. Penderel Moon, *Divide and Quit* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998), 35-36.

Sir Chhotu Ram's Claim for 13 Districts & Punjab Demarcation

Sir Chhotu Ram who was a powerful minister in the Unionist Government also claimed only 13 eastern districts for the Hindus. The Muslim League's desire for Pakistan perturbed him. Therefore, he asked his premier that, "if the League wanted Pakistan in the Muslim majority provinces because they did not have faith in Hindu community, the Hindu will be forced to make a similar claim on the Punjab" as it had as many as 13 with Hindu or Sikh majorities out of 29 districts.³⁰ Accordingly, Sikandar Hayat Khan presented his formula to divide the Punjab between the Muslims and non-Muslims to solve communal tangle in this province.³¹ Regarding this formula, the Governor Glangy opined that by assuming the district as a unit the Ambala, Jullundur Divisions and the Amritsar District would cede to the Punjab but "if a smaller unit such as tehsil was taken then possibly certain other areas would also disappear from the province".³² However, Jinnah asserted on this formula but due to political reason did not mention Sikandar's name in this concern.³³ Thus, Sir Chhotu Ram as a leader of Hindu agriculturist community also forwarded their claim but only for 13 eastern districts to counter Muslim claim, which cleared that in case of Pakistan, the Muslims would have to lose 13 eastern districts in the Punjab. This too cleared that where would be the boundaries for the Punjab partition.

The Sikhs' Azad Punjab Scheme and Punjab Demarcation

Pakistan issue perturbed the Sikhs so much that they too continued their propaganda for the partition of the Punjab. They held an All India Akali Conference at Vihala

³⁰ Hayat, *The Charismatic leader*, 154.

³¹ Lionel Carter, *Punjab Politics 1940-1943* (New Delhi: Manhor Publishers & Distributors 2005), 317.

³² Carter, *Punjab Politics 1940-1943*, 314.

³³ Carter, *Punjab Politics 1940-1943*, 333.

Kalan in Lyallpur District in July 1942 and passed resolution to re-adjustment boundaries of the Punjab to protect their community.³⁴ They suggested a dividing line from north to south right across the Lahore Division to divide the Punjab.³⁵ Giani Kartar Singh's group published a booklet, "Taqsim-i-Punjab" to advocate formation of a new province consisting of Ambala and Jullundur Divisions and the districts of Lahore, Amritsar and Lyallpur.³⁶ The Shiromani Gurdwara Parbhandak Committee in its meeting at Amritsar on February 27, 1943 stated that the establishment of Pakistan would be detrimental to the Sikhs so Muslim majority areas of the Punjab should be separated from the Punjab to protect the Sikh community.³⁷ Meanwhile, the Sikhs also formulated an Azad Punjab Scheme by dividing the Punjab to protect their community. This scheme included Ambala, Jullundur and Lahore Division, Lyallpur and Montgomery Districts along with a portion of Multan District of Multan Division.³⁸ The Shiromani Akali Dal passed a resolution on 7 June 1943 to establish Azad Punjab Scheme.³⁹

³⁴ Rajput, *Punjab Crisis and Cure*, 105.

³⁵ Gauba, *The Consequences of Pakistan*, 123-24. Rajput, *Punjab Crisis and Cure*, 105-106.

³⁶ Dr. Riaz Ahmad, ed., *The Punjab Muslim League 1906-1947, Secret Police Abstracts* (Islamabad: National Institute of Historical and Cultural Research, Quaid-i-Azam University, 2008), 122. Jugal Kishor Birla and K.M. Munshi of Hindu Mahasabha suggested in December 1942 that Pakistan should be in those portions of the Punjab and Bengal where Muhammadans had majority. Akhtar Hussain Sandhu, "Azad Punjab Scheme of the Sikhs", *Pakistan Journal of History and Culture* XXXI, no. 2 (July-December 2010): 55.

³⁷ Singh, *Select Documents on Partition of Punjab-1947*, 11.

³⁸ Sandhu, Azad Punjab Scheme of the Sikhs, 43, 45, 46, 53. However, the Sikhs of Rawalpindi Division as well as Central Akali Dal were against this scheme. Sandhu, Azad Punjab Scheme of the Sikhs, 43, 45, 46, 53. Baldev Raj Nayar, *Minority Polities in the Punjab* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), 84.

³⁹ Rajput, *Punjab Crisis and Cure*, 107.

Raja Formula, Gandhi-Jinnah Talks and Punjab Demarcation

Mr. C. Rajagoplachari (a top ranked Congress leader) got Gandhi's consent in July 1944 and presented his formula, which too discussed partition of the Punjab. It proposed that the Muslims could get contiguous absolute Muslim majority districts in the Punjab for their Pakistan.⁴⁰ The formula excluded twelve districts of the Punjab (the whole of the Ambala and Jullundur Divisions plus the district of Amritsar) from Pakistan area.⁴¹ However, the Muslim League rejected it categorically. The Sikhs too rejected it, as it could give 17 districts to Pakistan and only 12 districts to India.⁴² Then, M.K. Gandhi attempted to solve communal problem by holding talks with M.A. Jinnah in which he too considered partition of the Punjab as well as India. For north-west zone of Pakistan, he offered that Jinnah could take Baluchistan, Sind, North-West Frontier Province and absolute Muslim majority areas in the Punjab. Jinnah rejected this offer by stating that this would maim and mutilate Pakistan beyond redemption and would leave the Muslims only with husk.⁴³ The talks ended in failure.

British's Considerations for Genuine Muslim Areas & Punjab Demarcation

Lord Wavell held conference of Indian political leaders in June 1945 at Simla to solve Indian political stalemate but in vain. After this failure, the British began to consider about

⁴⁰ Carter, *Punjab Politics-January 1944-March 1947*, 113. Tai Yong Tan and Gyanesh Kudaisya asserted that Rajaji pointed out to Jinnah that his claimed Pakistan contained large portions of non-Muslims who would loathe their inclusion into Muslim State. Tai Yong Tan and Gyanesh Kudaisya, *The Aftermath of partition in South Asia* (London: Rutledge Taylor and Francis Group, 2002), 108.

⁴¹ Carter, *Punjab Politics-Jan. 1944-March-1947*, 96.

⁴² Sandhya Chaudhri, *Gandhi and the Partition of India* (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Ltd. 1984), 112. Virendra, *Pakistan: A Myth & a Reality* (Lahore: Minerva Book Shop, 1946), 108.

⁴³ S. Qaim Hussain Jafri, ed., *Congress Leaders Correspondence with Quaid-i-Azam* (Lahore: Aziz Publishers, n.d. [1997]), 88, 91, 94, 100.

genuine Muslim areas for Pakistan, which further lessened ambiguities regarding the boundaries for the partition of the Punjab. The Governor Glancy stated that the exclusion of Ambala and Jullundur Divisions with the district of Amritsar from the Punjab would deflate Pakistan theory, as there did not exist any Muslim majority district.⁴⁴ Evan Jenkins⁴⁵ prepared a memorandum "Pakistan and the Punjab". He concluded that partition of the Punjab with the boundary running through the Lahore Division would lead to endless minority problems in the two new units. He strengthened this stance by referring Prof. Coupland who too wrote that Lahore and Amritsar cities had the distance of 25 miles so to plan the boundary of two sovereign states between them would be an extremely awkward and perhaps an impossible arrangement. Therefore, Evan Jenkins suggested that there should be a thorough enquiry into the practicability of Pakistan theory.⁴⁶ Consequently, Lord Wavell prepared a note on "Pakistan theory" and sent it to the Secretary of State who circulated it in India and Burma Committee for further considerations.⁴⁷

V.P. Menon (Constitutional Commissioner) prepared a detailed study of Pakistan as K.H. Panikkar (Prime minister of Bikanir state) had sent a memorandum to him on 10 October 1945. Panikkar stated that H.M.G. must accept the principle of a Muslim homeland subject to territorial adjustment to meet the claims of the Sikhs and Hindus in the Punjab and of Hindus in Bengal. He recommended that

⁴⁴ Carter, *Punjab Politics, Jan.1944 to March 1947*, 142. Nehru too said at Lahore that on the creation of Pakistan, there would be a partition of the Punjab and Bengal to join Hindu population into Hindustan. Sucheta Mahajan, *Independence and Partition* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2000), 289. Virendra, *Pakistan: A Myth or a Reality*, 50.

⁴⁵ At this time, he was working as Private Secretary to the Viceroy but later, he became B.J. Glancy's successor as Governor of the Punjab in April 1946.

⁴⁶ Z.H. Zaidi ed., *Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah Papers* Vol.1, Part, II (Islamabad: Quaid-i-Azam Paper Project, National Archives of Pakistan, 1993), 507.

⁴⁷ Zaidi ed., *Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah Papers* Vol.1, Part, II, 511.

there should be a commission of impartial experts to settle the boundaries of the new states. Even Jenkins remarked that he did not believe that a Muslim homeland would be possible so he proposed a commission of experts to consider and report on the possibilities of such idea.⁴⁸ He emphasized that if there would be a possibility of a union of the Muslim majority provinces then there should be a definite partition of the Punjab, Bengal and Assam to make Pakistan small, weak and unattractive for the Muslims. He believed that in the end, the Punjab and probably Bengal might join the original Federal Union, as the prospect of partition would be less attractive when it would become imminent. Therefore, he asked V.P. Menon to chalk out further details.⁴⁹ While considering "Pakistan Issue", Mr. George Abell opined that if the Muslims would insist on self-determination in genuinely Muslim areas, this must be conceded, as there could be no question of compelling large non-Muslim populations to remain in Pakistan against their will.⁵⁰

Meanwhile on 10 December 1945, special correspondent of API interviewed M.A. Jinnah. By stating Pakistan area, Jinnah said that there would definitely a frontier adjustment for Hindu and Muslim majority areas contiguous to the Hindustan or Pakistan states. However, until then the present provincial borders should be taken as the boundaries of the future Pakistan.⁵¹ Regarding this, Lord Wavell wrote to the Secretary of State that Jinnah contemplated minor adjustments whereas the Congress had expectation for almost half of provinces. The Secretary responded that Jinnah's statement for frontier adjustment was a move in the right direction as, "if we do come to

⁴⁸ Zaidi ed., *Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah Papers* Vol.1, Part, II, 520-523.

⁴⁹ Muhammad Iqbal Chawla, *Wavell and the Dying Days of the Raj* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2011), 229.

⁵⁰ Mansergh, *The Transfer of Power* Vol. VI, 650.

⁵¹ Zaidi ed., *Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah Papers* Vol. I, Part II, 539.

having Pakistan, considerable adjustment of that kind seem to me to be inevitable". Anyhow, he directed Wavell to send his actual proposals for defining genuine Muslim areas, as there would be a lot of need to think about it.⁵²

Consequently, V.P Menon and B.N. Rau sent their note "demarcation of Pakistan Areas" to Mr. George Abell on 23 January 1946. They suggested that Western Zone of Pakistan should consist of Sind, the North-West Frontier Province, and British Baluchistan with the Lahore, Multan and Rawalpindi Divisions of the Punjab. However, this zone had the district of Amritsar, which was not only predominantly non-Muslim but also particularly sacred to the Sikhs. Therefore, they emphasized that exclusion of Amritsar and Gurdaspur districts from the western zone of Pakistan would resolve the objection of the Sikhs as these two districts formed a compact block. According to them, inclusion of existing Lahore, Rawalpindi and Multan Divisions would include about 2.2 millions Sikhs in Pakistan and would leave about 1.5 millions in Hindustan. Whereas exclusion of Amritsar and Gurdaspur Districts of Lahore Division from Pakistan would make the corresponding figures vice versa. Therefore, Menon and Rau recommended that Western Zone of Pakistan should have Sind, North West Frontier Province, British Baluchistan with Lahore, Rawalpindi, and Multan Divisions of the Punjab minus the districts of Amritsar and Gurdaspur from Lahore Division.⁵³ George Abell thanked V.P. Menon for this top secret about a possible demarcation of the Pakistan areas and sent this note to John Thorne⁵⁴ for his comments. He

⁵² Zaidi ed., *Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah Papers* Vol. I, Part II, 538-540. In between on 8 January 1946, in his talks with Woodrow Wyatt, Jinnah stated that, "he did not envisage predominantly non-Muslim areas like the Ambala Division remaining in Pakistan but insisted that Pakistan must be a living state economically and culturally". *Ibid.*

⁵³ Zaidi ed., *Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah Papers* Vol. I, Part II, 542-545.

⁵⁴ Mr. John Thorne was a Member for Home Department in Viceroy's Executive Council.

asked him that Jinnah should be told that, "if the demand for Pakistan is pressed HMG cannot in any case agree to more than the area demarcated going into Pakistan". However, it might be less because it would be necessary to decide the Sikh question on which negotiations between the parties would be essential.⁵⁵

Meanwhile, the Secretary of State again asked Wavell for genuine Muslim areas.⁵⁶ Accordingly, I.D. Scott prepared a draft for the demarcation of the Pakistan area based on Menon and Rau' recommendation. George Abell again sent it to John Thorne and V.P. Menon for their comments. Menon did not make any comments on the western zone of the draft. Regarding eastern zone, he commented that, "Dinajpur [A Muslim majority district in west Bengal] has 50.2 percent and it is a nice question whether it should be included in Pakistan or excluded. Since we have excluded Gurdaspur from the western zone of Pakistan, we might well include Dinajpur in the eastern zone".⁵⁷ Thus, while sending his recommendation for genuine Muslim areas on 6 February 1946, Wavell stated that Western Zone should include Sind, N.W.F.P., British Baluchistan and the Rawalpindi, Multan and Lahore Divisions of the Punjab less Amritsar and Gurdaspur districts. He elaborated that under this demarcation, Gurdaspur that had 51 per cent Muslims would not go into Pakistan. It must go with Amritsar for geographical reasons and Amritsar being sacred city of Sikhs must stay out of Pakistan. He made it clear that Lahore district had been irrigated by upper Bari Doab Canal, which had its head-works in Gurdaspur district that would be out of Pakistan but there was no solution that could avoid all such difficulties. He concluded that the greatest difficulty was the position of the Sikhs with their homelands and sacred places on both sides of the border however "this problem is

⁵⁵ Zaidi ed., *Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah Papers* Vol. I, Part II, 554-555.

⁵⁶ Mansergh, *The Transfer of Power* Vol. VI, 860.

⁵⁷ Zaidi ed., *Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah Papers* Vol. I, Part II, 565.

one which no version of Pakistan can solve” but under the proposed scheme 1461 thousand Sikhs would be in Pakistan and the rest in Hindustan.⁵⁸ According to Patrick French, Wavell’s this telegram was one of the most important documents in the history of the transfer of power in India as it was the first official attempt to show boundaries for Pakistan.⁵⁹ The Secretary of State circulated these proposals of demarcation in India and Burma Committee and said that, “I do not think that any better division than the one the Viceroy proposes is likely to be found”.⁶⁰

Indian Leaders’ Consideration for Genuine Muslim Areas

Cabinet Mission Delegation arrived in India in March 1946. During its deliberations, the Indian political leaders showed their consideration for genuine Muslim areas that further cleared expected boundaries for the Punjab partition. In his interview with Arthur Moor on January 22, 1946, M.A. Jinnah said that actual frontiers would be decided later but currently Pakistan would be based on the existing Muslim majority provinces. Necessary adjustments in the existing provincial frontiers would be settled in the spirit of give and take, as the Muslims would not be unreasonable in this regard.⁶¹ Regarding Pakistan Area, Nehru too wrote to Sir Stafford Cripps on 27 January that large portions of non-Muslim majority areas of Punjab and Bengal would not be included in Pakistan. Thus, the crux of the Pakistan issue was that a Pakistan consisting of only part of the Punjab and part of Bengal or no separation at all.⁶²

⁵⁸ Mansergh, *The Transfer of Power* Vol. VI, 912-913.

⁵⁹ Patrick French, *Liberty or Death* (London: Flamingo, 1997), 221, 277.

⁶⁰ Mansergh, *The Transfer of Power*, Vol. VI, 944, 951, 1004-1005.

⁶¹ Mansergh, *The Transfer of Power*, Vol. VI, 877. Arthur Moor sent note of this interview to Prime Minister Attlee who forwarded it to the members of India and Burma Committee for further consideration.

⁶² Mansergh, *Transfer of Power*, Vol. VI, 851-859.

During this, George Abell met Gandhi at Bombay on March 13, who said that, "Jinnah could certainly have for his Pakistan the genuine Moslem areas".⁶³ Then, during his discussions with Cabinet Mission Delegation, Gandhi reaffirmed his readiness to accept the truncated Pakistan that he had conceded during his talks with Jinnah.⁶⁴ At the same time, Sardar Patel said that the League could be accommodated by reorganizing the provinces and giving possible full autonomy to the areas in which the Muslims had their predominant majority.⁶⁵ Nehru again said on April 1946 that by separating the Hindu and Sikh majority areas from the Punjab and divesting Bengal of Burdwan and part of presidency Division four Muslim provinces would be created i.e. NWFP, West Punjab, Sind and East Bengal to placate Muslims.⁶⁶ Devdas Gandhi visited Mr. Arthur Henderson on May 2, 1946, to refer a formula for modified Pakistan in Muslim Majority Areas, which his father had put forward to Jinnah at the time of Simla discussions.⁶⁷ While commenting on the Cabinet Mission Plan, Gandhi wrote to Sir Cripps on May 8 that, "This is really worse than Pakistan". It too showed that his vision about original Pakistan was so much crystal that he considered Cabinet Mission Plan worse than that of Pakistan.⁶⁸ Interestingly, Sir

⁶³ Mansergh, *Transfer of Power*, Vol. VI, 1208.

⁶⁴ Moore, *Escape from Empire*, 84. Surprisingly in his interview with Woodrow Wyatt, Gandhi agreed on 13 April that, "It would be much better for Congress to concede Pakistan than for the British. If Congress conceded it, it would be something much more glorious". *The Collected Works of Mahatama Gandhi*, Vol. L XXXIII [83] (Ahmadabad: The Publications Division, Government of India, 1981), 441. Nehru also offered a "diluted Pakistan" but under the suzerainty of a strong central Congress Government. Syed Sharifuddin Pirzada, ed., *Foundations of Pakistan* (Karachi: National Publishing House Ltd., 1970), 507.

⁶⁵ Pirzada, ed., *Foundations of Pakistan*.

⁶⁶ Sarvepalli Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru: A Biography*, Vol., I (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1985), 315.

⁶⁷ Mansergh, *The Transfer of Power* Vol. VII, 402.

⁶⁸ *The Collected Works of Mahatama Gandhi* Vol. LXXXIV [84], 122.

Cripps responded that it would not be worse than Pakistan.⁶⁹ Thus, during Cabinet Mission deliberations, Congress leaders' consideration further cleared boundaries to divide the Punjab into two parts. Their statement that Cabinet Mission's recommendations would be worse than Pakistan strengthened the stance that there was a clear-cut version of Pakistan boundaries.

The Sikh leaders also visited Cabinet Mission on April 5, 1946 and proposed a Sikh state consisting of Jullundur, Lahore and Ambala Divisions (except Gurgaon and Rohtak Districts of Ambala Division) along with the Montgomery and Lyallpur Districts of Multan Division. However, according to Baldev Singh, Khalistan consisting of Ambala, Jullundur and Lahore Divisions was the smallest one but they could contemplate it.⁷⁰ Nevertheless, Sir Cripps noted that western zone of Pakistan should include the Divisions of Rawalpindi and Multan along with the districts of Lahore, Sialkot, Gujranwala and Sheikhupura of the Lahore Division. Whereas the two districts of Gurdaspur and Amritsar would be in doubt but the rest of the Punjab would fall within Hindustan.⁷¹

Offer of Smaller Pakistan or Larger Pakistan and Punjab Demarcation

Cabinet Delegation ascertained the views of Jinnah on April 16, 1946 and offered him a smaller Pakistan with full sovereignty whose western zone would be consisting of Sind, North-West Frontier Province and British Baluchistan along with the Muslim majority districts of the Punjab except Gurdaspur. Otherwise, there would be a larger Pakistan consisting of six Muslim majority provinces but under Indian Union that would control only foreign affairs, communications

⁶⁹ Mansergh, *The Transfer of Power* Vol. VII, 466. Sir Cripps and Pethick Lawrence argued with Gandhi that would not the division of India into two into states and the Creation of Pakistan be much worse than this? Sudhir Ghosh, *Gandhi's Emissary* (Bombay: Rupa & Co., 1967), 136.

⁷⁰ Mansergh, *The Transfer of Power* Vol. VII, 140-142.

⁷¹ Mansergh, *The Transfer of Power* Vol. VII, 178.

and defense department.⁷² Jinnah neither rejected smaller Pakistan nor accepted larger Pakistan in Indian Union but said that they would insist for economically, politically and strategically viable Pakistan.

The Congress Elaborated Punjab Demarcation in Jan.- March 1947

The Congress had reconciled itself for the partition of India by December 1946.⁷³ Therefore, there were continuous discussions in its High Circles between January and March 1947 for the Punjab partition that further elaborated boundaries for the divided Punjab. M.K. Gandhi gave instructions to the Congress Working Committee on December 28-30, 1946 that under Cabinet Mission Plan, the members of section A would prepare a full constitution. However, B and C-sections of the Mission Plan would frame their constitution except Assam, NWFP, and the Sikhs in the Punjab and might be except British Baluchistan. Thus, according to him, the Congress would offer Jinnah a universally accepted and inoffensive formula for his Pakistan.⁷⁴ Anyhow, by excluding the Sikhs from the Punjab, Gandhi again made it clear that Jinnah could take only Muslim majority areas of the Punjab. Consequently, under Gandhi's instructions on January 6, 1947, the Congress considered difficulties of Assam, NWFP, Baluchistan and the Sikhs under Cabinet Mission Plan. Therefore, it stated that there should be no compulsion for a province and rights of the Sikhs in the Punjab too should not be jeopardized. It emphasized that otherwise a province or part of a province would have the right to take such action as might be deemed necessary in order to give effect to the wishes of the

⁷² Mansergh, *The Transfer of Power* Vol. VII, 284.

⁷³ H.V. Hodson, "The Role of Lord Mountbatten," in *The Partition of India-Policies and Perspectives 1937-1947*, eds., C.H. Philips and Mary Doreen Wainwright (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd. 1970), 117.

⁷⁴ *The Collected Works of Mahatama Gandhi*, Vol. LXXXVI [86], 286.

concerned people.⁷⁵ By mentioning compulsion and right of the Sikhs, the Congress emphasized on the partition of the provinces where compulsion was happening and rights of the Sikhs had become jeopardized. Accordingly, Hindus and Sikhs of the Punjab and Bengal began to raise clamor for partition. They declared that, "if the sub-continent had, really to be divided, then there must be a division of their provinces" as Muslim majority in these provinces was small. Therefore, inclusion of very recalcitrant non-Muslim citizens permanently in Pakistan would be impossibility.⁷⁶

During this, V.P Menon held a secret meeting with Sardar Patel to discuss partition of the Muslim majority provinces to give them moth-eaten Pakistan. Menon said that, "If we agreed to partition, Jinnah obviously could not ask for those portions of the Punjab, Bengal and Assam which were predominantly non-Muslims".⁷⁷ Accordingly, Patel visited Wavell on February 17, 1947 and the former was quite prepared to "let the Muslims have the western Punjab, Sind and N.W.FP if they wished to join, and Eastern Bengal".⁷⁸ Three days later, Nehru too discussed partition of the Punjab and Bengal with Wavell.⁷⁹ He also wrote to Krishna Menon that League's boycott of the Constituent Assembly would make partition of Bengal and the Punjab inevitable to bring the richer parts of these provinces into the Indian Union. Thus, the truncated Pakistan would hardly be a gift worth having.⁸⁰ He also said to Gandhi that those parts of Bengal and Punjab that were fully represented in the

⁷⁵ H.N. Mitra, ed., *The Indian Annual Register* Vol. I, 1947 (New Delhi: Gian Publishing House, 1990), 115.

⁷⁶ Ian Stephens, *Pakistan* (London: Ernest Benn Limited, 193), 159.

⁷⁷ V.P. Menon, *The Transfer of Power in India* (New Delhi: Orient Longmans, 1957), 358.

⁷⁸ Penderel Moon, *Wavell the Viceroy's Journal* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1997), 421.

⁷⁹ Mansergh, *The Transfer of Power* Vol. IX, 785.

⁸⁰ *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru* Vol. 2 (New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund 1984), 54.

Constituent Assembly would be parts of the union. That meant a partition of Punjab and Bengal so, "it is unlikely that Jinnah or the Muslim League will agree to this truncated Pakistan which can never succeed economically or otherwise". In the end, he asked Gandhi for his advice as the meeting of the Congress Working Committee would be held on 5 March.⁸¹ Whereas, Gandhi wrote to Nehru that the statement of 20 February might lead to Pakistan for those provinces or portions that would want it.⁸² Surprisingly at the same time, in his discussion with Sudhir Gosh in London, Sir Cripps too said that, "the Pakistan they are likely to get would be very different from what they wanted and it may not be worth their while".⁸³ Patel also wrote to Kanji Dwarkadas that alternative of League's insistence for Pakistan would be division of the Punjab and Bengal.⁸⁴

In such scenario, the Congress passed its Punjab partition resolution on March 8, 1947.⁸⁵ On the next day, while proposing a proper and fair solution of the Punjab problem, Nehru wrote to Wavell that the Punjab should be divided into Muslim and non-Muslim areas.⁸⁶ At the same time, while discussing partition of India with Lord Mountbatten on 13 March, Krishna Menon conveyed to him that Pakistan based on British provinces would be impossible. Therefore, western Pakistan should include the

⁸¹ *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru* Vol. 2, 53-54.

⁸² *The Collected Works of Mahatama Gandhi*, Vol. LXXXVII [87], 12-13.

⁸³ Gosh, *Gandhi's Emissary*, 202.

⁸⁴ Kanji Dwarkadas, *Ten Years to Freedom* (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1968), 207-208.

⁸⁵ Regarding this resolution, Alastair Lamb writes that Nehru and Patel knew the contents of Wavell's this letter therefore, in the light of that knowledge, "the decision of the Congress Working Committee of 8 March was drafted". Alastair Lamb, *Incomplete Partition, The Genesis of the Kashmir Dispute 1947-1948* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2002), 33-34.

⁸⁶ Singh, *Select Documents on Partition of Punjab 1947*, 26.

Muslim majority districts of the Punjab and rest of it should go to India.⁸⁷

Meanwhile, the new Viceroy relieved Lord Wavell who too reported to the India and Burma Committee that Nehru was advocating Punjab partition that would involve great difficulty whereas Jenkins did not regard this as an impossible solution.⁸⁸ Thus, on Lord Mountbatten's arrival, the Congress High Circles had finalized boundaries for the Punjab partition and the British High Circles too had clear vision about their views in this regard. Therefore, boundaries to divide the Punjab into two parts had become a settled fact that could be implemented without the formulation of any Boundary Commission, as there did not exist any complexity in this concern.

Briefing to the last Viceroy for Boundaries to divide the Punjab

On the commencement of the year 1947, the British circles continuously remained considering boundaries in case of Punjab partition. Even Jenkins wrote to Lord Wavell on February 18, that this province had five Divisions and its Rawalpindi and Multan Divisions were Muslim country, the Jullundur and Ambala Divisions were non-Muslim country; the Lahore Division was common ground and within territory largely occupied by the Sikhs. Therefore, excluding the possibility of civil war and conquest, there were only two long-term alternatives of Punjab problem (a) united Punjab not under Muslim domination, but under Muslim Leadership and (b) partition into two or possibly three states.⁸⁹ He again analyzed boundaries to divide the Punjab on March 7, 1947. Interestingly, he sent a detailed reference of Gurdaspur District that had only 30,000 more Muslim population than the non-Muslims' as well as its Pathankot Tehsil had non-Muslim majority. By quoting that crude population figures

⁸⁷ Mansergh, *The Transfer of Power* Vol. IX, 948.

⁸⁸ Mansergh, *The Transfer of Power* Vol. X, 39.

⁸⁹ Carter, *Punjab Politics Jan. 1944-March 1947*, 356.

should not necessary criterion for partition, he tried to conclude that the non-Muslim had the right for Gurdaspur District along with Amritsar.⁹⁰

Meanwhile, the Secretary of State while presenting his Memorandum, "Transfer of Power to More Than one Authority in India" to India and Burma Committee said that the Committee should consider this subject with Lord Mountbatten before his leaving to India. Because, there was a problem that should we separate the predominantly Hindu areas in the West and East of the Punjab and Bengal provinces or not.⁹¹ The British Cabinet too held its meeting on March 13, in which Lord Mountbatten and his nominated senior staff members i.e. Lord Ismay and Eric Mieville also participated. In this meeting, Mountbatten asked that if there would be no agreement between the rival communities then it would be for him to initiate or permit discussion for the redrawing of boundaries the Punjab and Bengal on communal basis. He was told that the Indians themselves were already exploring this possibility however; he should certainly give his attention to this matter.⁹² Consequently, Mountbatten and his team even before their coming to India in March 1947 evaluated all recommendations and homework for boundaries to divide the Punjab.⁹³ Moreover, on Mountbatten's arrival as the last Viceroy, the relieving Viceroy too briefed him regarding the partition of the Punjab as well as Bengal in detail.⁹⁴ Thus, the new Viceroy and his team, on their taking charge had clear vision without any ambiguities regarding the expected boundaries for the partition of the Punjab. Consequently, he and his team immediately started their work to solve Indian and Punjab

⁹⁰ Carter, *Punjab Politics March-May 1947*, 61-65. Singh, *Select Documents on Partition of Punjab 1947*, 20-21.

⁹¹ Mansergh, *The Transfer of Power* Vol. IX, 840-850.

⁹² Mansergh, *The Transfer of Power* Vol. IX, 942-943.

⁹³ Madhau Godbole, *The Holocaust of Indian Partition* (New Delhi: Rupa & Co., 2006), 14.

⁹⁴ Mansergh, *The Transfer of Power* Vol. IX, 1011.

communal problem on these basis.⁹⁵ All this too supported the version that the boundary line issue for the Punjab partition was not a complicated one but the rival communities had clear ideas that what areas they would have in case of Punjab partition.

Boundaries for the Muslim Punjab a Briefing for Jinnah

Lord Mountbatten immediately started his meetings with Indian leaders. His staff prepared a special briefing for him to discuss Indian as well as Punjab problem with M.A. Jinnah. Interestingly, this briefing too left no doubt that where would be the final demarcation between the East and West Punjab. It stated that,

....What case could be made out which would justify H.M.G. in handing over to Pakistan the areas contiguous to Hindustan in which there is a non-Muslim Majority? These areas amount to thirteen districts (Hissar, Rohtak, Gurgaon, Karnal, Ambala, Simla, Kangra, Hashiarpur, Jullundur, Ludhiana, Ferozpur, Amritsar and Gurdaspur) in the Punjab....Is not the claim for the whole of the Punjab and Bengal simply a claim to non-Muslim territory. The Congress has said that they are ready to concede the Muslim majority districts. On what principle do you base your demand for the addition of Sikh and Hindu territory?⁹⁶

Thus, it revealed that just within ten days on their arrival in India, his staff categorically stated that the Congress had conceded the Punjab for the Muslim league except 13 eastern districts including Amritsar and Gurdaspur. Then, within this briefed period, they made decision to bestow Gurdaspur a Muslim majority district to India as well as they contemplated questions to ask Jinnah that why should it not be given to India. Surprisingly, no such briefing was prepared for the Congress leadership, which too revealed that the British and they had understanding for Punjab demarcation. However, Jinnah was the main obstacle in this regard so Lord Mountbatten was given the task to surmount that obstacle. He arrived on 22 March but he held his first meeting with Jinnah on April 5. He continuously held six

⁹⁵ Mansergh, *The Transfer of Power* Vol. X, 15-16.

⁹⁶ Mansergh, *The Transfer of Power*, 99-100.

meetings with him until 11 April. During these discussions, Jinnah argued to demand his Pakistan consisting of six Muslim majority provinces. Mountbatten diverted his attention toward the partition of the Punjab and Bengal. Jinnah responded that it would make his Pakistan truncated and moth-eaten so requested for viable and workable Pakistan. Mountbatten denied full Pakistan and said that in fact Sind, half of the Punjab, probably NWFP and half of Bengal would form Pakistan. At this, Jinnah became more distressed and displeased so he appealed to save the unity of Bengal as well as the Punjab. He bitterly complained that the Viceroy was ruining his Pakistan by cutting out half of the Punjab as well as Bengal including Calcutta.⁹⁷ All such negotiations too strengthened the stance that Punjab demarcation was a settled issue before the declaration of 3 June Partition Plan.

Outlining Partition Plan and Punjab Demarcation

Mountbatten's staff immediately started their work to outline Partition Plan. During this, their discussions with Congress leaders as well as their minutes of meetings too verified the fact that they both had clear vision about Punjab demarcation. On April 10, after discussing with Nehru as well as the Congress Working Committee, Gandhi drafted a partition formula which he sent to the Viceroy that,

So far as Pakistan is concerned and so far as the Congress is concerned nothing would be yielded to force. But everything is to be forcibly taken, it should be open to any province or part thereof to abstain from joining Pakistan and remain with the remaining provinces. Thus, so far as the Congress is aware today, the Frontier Province is with it (Congress) and the Eastern part of the Punjab where the Hindus and the Sikhs combined have a decisive majority will remain out of the Pakistan zone....⁹⁸

This formula was the essence of Raja's formula as well as Gandhi's offer to Jinnah during his talks in September 1944. However, it again pointed out that the Congress would not give to the League more than the Muslim majority areas.

⁹⁷ Mansergh, *The Transfer of Power*, 186-187.

⁹⁸ *The Collected Works of Mahatama Gandhi*, Vol. LXXXVII [87], 246.

Gandhi also stated to the Congress Working Committee that East Punjab and West Bengal, along with Assam and NWFP would remain out of Pakistan. Interestingly, Mountbatten's original partition plan was too outlined on April 10, 1947. It envisaged partition of the Punjab and Bengal based on Indian and Pakistan dominions.⁹⁹ On the same day, Ismay sent a draft to V.P. Menon to put some flesh upon it to set partition of the Punjab, Bengal and Assam.¹⁰⁰ On 12 April, Mountbatten said to his staff that he would put two plans (Plan Union and Plan Balkan) before Jinnah for acceptance, which in fact, would be an un-truncated Pakistan with a small centre or a truncated Pakistan. On the same day, he discussed his both plans with Gandhi. Meanwhile, Lord Ismay reported to Mountbatten that he had just completed his draft in consultation with Sir Eric Mieville, George Abell and V.P. Menon. He added that acceptance of plan Balkan might have to be decided upon quickly so they had to fly to London to get H.M.G.'s approval immediately. Consequently, to reach on quick decision, Mountbatten decided to have the support of the Governors and Residents.¹⁰¹

In Governor's Conference on April 14, by describing the demands of the Sikhs and Hindu Jatts of the Punjab, Even Jenkins gave full explanation of the difficulties that were inherent in Punjab partition. He emphasized to obtain agreement for the Punjab partition from all interested parties otherwise there would be fighting on a large scale. To this, Mountbatten directed Ismay and Jenkins to consider together in detail the procedure for the partition of the Punjab.¹⁰² On the following day, Jenkins sent note "The Partition Problem" to Mountbatten. He stated that the Punjab would be divided between Muslim and non-Muslim majority districts but adjustments could be made by agreement in

⁹⁹ Sucheta Mahajan, "Congress and Partition of Provinces," in *The Partition in Retrospect*, ed., Amirk Singh, 233-235.

¹⁰⁰ Mansergh, *The Transfer of Power* Vol. X, 193.

¹⁰¹ Mansergh, *The Transfer of Power* Vol. X, 222-223.

¹⁰² Mansergh, *The Transfer of Power* Vol. X, 254.

respect of tehsils contiguous to the Muslim or non-Muslim areas that had Muslim or non-Muslim majorities. He suggested constituting neutral Boundary Commission consisting of two Muslim and two non-Muslim members selected by Members of Punjab Assembly.¹⁰³ On the second day, Jenkins repeated that Boundary Commission under a British Judge of the High Court should be set up to play down the new boundary line. He concluded that possibly a month would have to be fixed to obtain agreement by the different parties to the suggested boundary.¹⁰⁴

Meanwhile, Nehru, Patel and Kirpalani repeatedly said to divide the Punjab and Bengal into predominantly Hindu and Muslim areas to give some kind of Pakistan.¹⁰⁵ Consequently, Mountbatten told Krishna Menon that he might have to yield to a truncated Pakistan who replied that the Congress would not resist it.

Consideration for Gurdaspur District and Punjab Demarcation

Gurdaspur was a Muslim majority district but at the same time it was sacred to the Sikhs as well as it was situated on the way to the Kashmir State from Indian side. Therefore, it became crucial in the Punjab demarcation. Consequently, there was a detailed consideration for its allocation during the outlining of partition plan, which too made it clear that where Gurdaspur District would fall at the end of the Raj. During his discussion with Mountbatten, Rajendra Prasad pointed out that Gurdaspur had nominal majority of 51.14 percent so it should be considered keenly in the partition of the Punjab.¹⁰⁶ Some non-Muslim MLAs in their submission to Lord Ismay examined boundaries for the partition of the

¹⁰³ Carter, *Punjab Politics March-May 1947*, 135.

¹⁰⁴ Mansergh, *The Transfer of Power* Vol. X, 271.

¹⁰⁵ Mitra, *The Indian Annual Register* Vol. I, 1947, 56. *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru* Vol. 2, 91. Mansergh, *The Transfer of Power* Vol. X, 268-269. *Ibid.*, 308.

¹⁰⁶ Latif Ahmad Sherwani, *The Partition of India and Mountbatten* (Karachi: Council For Pakistan Studies, 1986), 122.

Punjab. They requested for Gurdaspur by saying that although it had 51 percent Muslims however out of total annual land revenue i.e. Rs.17, 77,562, the Muslims paid Rs. 6, 16,193 whereas the non-Muslims paid Rs. 11, 61,369.¹⁰⁷ Sardar Swaran Singh, Harnam Singh and Lala Bhim Sen Sachar visited the Governor. They stressed that it would be grossly unfair to the Sikhs to hand over marginal district such as Gurdaspur to the Muslims because of its inaccurate figures. They said vehemently that Gurdaspur was a non-Muslim district.¹⁰⁸ Tarlok Singh (Nehru's Private Secretary) asked Mountbatten's Deputy Private Secretary that there were large number telegrams, which Pandit Nehru received from Gurdaspur District to stress a plebiscite for the allocation of this district. He replied that Mountbatten would not be impressed by such show of telegrams.¹⁰⁹ Baldev Singh asked Mountbatten that due to mere difference of populations, the Gurdaspur should not be included in the West Punjab. It would cut the root of the entire economy and communication of the district, which was vitally dependent on Amritsar District. It would isolate the predominantly non-Muslim area of Kangra valley etc. Therefore, it would be quite unjust to separate it from the East Punjab even in the notional division.¹¹⁰ Giani Kartar Singh and Sardar Ujjal Singh visited the Governor to discuss some parts of Gurdaspur and Lahore districts that were socially and economically one with the Tarn Taran and Amritsar tahsils of Amritsar District. However, according to them, it was difficult on any population basis to get these areas into one state.¹¹¹

Then, Mountbatten and his staff came at Simla. Nehru and Krishna too arrived there. Jenkins also reached there. Here, Mountbatten discussed the problem of Punjab partition

¹⁰⁷ Singh, *Select Documents on Partition of Punjab 1947*, 55.

¹⁰⁸ Singh, *Select Documents on Partition of Punjab 1947*, 64-65.

¹⁰⁹ Singh, *Select Documents on Partition of Punjab 1947*, 71. Sherwani, *The Partition of India and Mountbatten*, 122-123.

¹¹⁰ Singh, *Select Documents on Partition of Punjab 1947*, 76.

¹¹¹ Carter, *Punjab Politics March-May 1947*, 173.

with Nehru and Jenkins to make it acceptable to all parties. During discussions, Nehru said that the Congress had agreed that the rough line of demarcation must be between the Muslim and the non-Muslim majority areas. It agreed that landed property should not be a basis to proceed in this concern but there were Sikh shrines in some of the predominantly Muslim areas that should be born in mind. At this, Jenkins said that it would be very difficult to consider this point during demarcation as the real Sikh Holy Land was in Amritsar, which would in any case fall to the Sikhs. To this, Mountbatten said that the Boundary Commission could be instructed to consider Sikh religious interests. Nehru also raised the case of the Gurdaspur district to ask that whether it would not be possible to divide it even for the purpose of notional partition. Jenkins considered it impossible as the Muslims were fairly equally mixed throughout the district. Nevertheless, he foresaw that the Boundary Commission might well divide both Gurdaspur and Lahore Districts. To this, Nehru stated another possibility to divide Gurdaspur for notional partition that its Hindu and Sikh representatives should vote with the representatives of East Punjab and the Muslims with those of the West Punjab. At this, Mountbatten said that:

He was in favor of making some such gesture to the Sikhs. Perhaps a clause could be included in the Draft Announcement to the effect that any districts where the population was so evenly divided that there was less than 1 % difference in the number of Muslims and non-Muslims—for example in Gurdaspur—the representatives should be divided for voting purposes as suggested by Pandit Nehru.

To this, Jenkins said that he would agree to such a suggestion so long as the party leaders accepted the general plan.¹¹² However, regarding the division of Gurdaspur representatives, I.D. Scott conveyed to Mountbatten that any departure from the principle of clearly defining the notional boundary line between the Muslim and the Non-Muslim majority areas would lead to a spate of other

¹¹² Carter, *Punjab Politics March-May 1947*, 305-308.

demands for other departures. Mountbatten responded that he had no intention to incorporate the suggestion for Gurdaspur made on the previous day. However, the Boundary Commission would be instructed to handover from one side to the other of any area within border districts where there was clearly a majority of the opposite community.¹¹³ All such discussions too strengthened the idea that boundaries for the Punjab partition were a deciding issue. Even Gurdaspur District that later became controversial between India and Pakistan in the context of Kashmir problem, had been discussed in detail during the formation of Mountbatten's partition plan so there was no ambiguity in this concern.

Gandhi, Jinnah and Patiala' Satisfaction for 12 Vs 17 Districts

Then on Lord Ismay and George Abell's departure to England on May 2, 1947, there was a long debate in the Indian press for the Punjab. It had been divided between 12 non-Muslim and 17 Muslim districts. The Hindu newspapers reported that partition plan completely. The Hindustan Times questioned partition plan that had divided the Punjab into 12 non-Muslim and 17 Muslim districts as it dealt like a blow to the Sikh interests.¹¹⁴ Gandhi also criticized such leakage to the press but he made it clear that the Hindu and Sikh majority areas of the Punjab and Bengal could not be included in Pakistan.¹¹⁵

The Sikhs were perturbed over proposed notional partition of the Punjab that had provided 12 Eastern districts to India. Therefore, Baldev Singh objected this provision and reiterated Sikh demand for 14 eastern districts. However, Maharaja Patiala had accepted the principle of notional partition as had been stated in the plan.¹¹⁶ Anyhow, Master

¹¹³ Mansergh, *The Transfer of Power* Vol. X, 781.

¹¹⁴ Mansergh, *The Transfer of power* Vol. X, 781.

¹¹⁵ *The Collected Works of Mahatama Gandhi* Vol. LXXXVII [87], 406, 432.

¹¹⁶ Mansergh, *The Transfer of Power* Vol. X, 520-521, 645-646.

Tara Singh, Baldev Singh and Swaran Singh wrote to the Secretary of State and other British politicians that provision of 12 districts to the Sikhs and the Hindus was causing consternation. Therefore, they demanded boundary line along the Chenab River with the provision for exchange of population and property.¹¹⁷

In this scenario, Mountbatten directed Eric Mieville to get Jinnah's viewpoint regarding partition of provinces. He met Jinnah and reported on the same day that he had the belief that Jinnah was quite ready to accept the division of the Punjab in spite of his recent statement to the contrary in the Press. After receiving this report, Mountbatten informed Ismay that certainly in recent conversations, which Mieville and he had held with Jinnah; Jinnah did not appear seriously to contest the need for partition but seemed even grateful for the provision of 17 districts in the Punjab.¹¹⁸ Thus, all such minutes of conversations and correspondence shed light that Jinnah, Gandhi and Patiala were ready to accept partition of the Punjab based on 12 and 17 districts respectively even on May 5, 1947. Therefore, there was absolutely no need to constitute any commission in this regard.

Consideration for Demarcation downward to Girdawar Circles

Demarcation for the Punjab partition was so much debated issue during the formation of Mountbatten's Partition Plan that it was considered downward to the level of Girdawar Circles. It was the lowest practicable area on an average at least 30 villages. The Muslim League did not make any agreement for the partition of Punjab and Bengal. However, according to it, if this fateful decision would have to be taken then demarcation should be drawn based on Girdawar circles.¹¹⁹ Whereas, Baldev Singh demanded to omit Girdawar circles level altogether for demarcation in the

¹¹⁷ Mansergh, *The Transfer of Power* Vol. X, 781, 660.

¹¹⁸ Mansergh, *The Transfer of Power* Vol. X, 629, 631.

¹¹⁹ Mansergh, *The Transfer of Power* Vol. X, 852.

Punjab as it meant that the boundary line would go up to the Sutlej River.¹²⁰ Regarding this, Nehru too supported Badev Singh and rejected provision of Girdawar Circles in the partition plan.¹²¹ Consequently, the British omitted provision downward to this level to divide the Punjab. All such considerations too revealed the fact that boundary line issue for the partition of the Punjab was settled issue.

Crystallization of Punjab Boundary Line in mid May 1947

During Simla Parleys with Nehru, Lord Mountbatten suggested that districts like Gurdaspur in which communal strengths were approximately equal should be examined specially by the proposed Boundary Commission. Accordingly, Even Jenkins sent his detailed report to consider demarcation in the Punjab on 13 May.¹²² Surprisingly, on this date, his keen examining for Punjab demarcation had crystallized the expected boundary line between the East and the West Punjab. Specially, his observation regarding Ferozpur and Zira tehsils of Ferozpur District had knitted these two tehsils with the portion of Kasur tehsil of Lahore district to provide it to the East Punjab. Interestingly, later sketch map story disclosed that the boundary commission had awarded Ferozpur and Zira tehsils to Pakistan but the same map had showed that portion of Kasur tehsil in India. Whereas, according to Jenkins's this report, in such situation it was very difficult to award these two tehsils to the West Punjab. Because these two tehsils were bound to go with the portion of Kasur tehsil that already had been awarded to the East Punjab by Cyril Radcliffe (Chairman of the Punjab Boundary Commission). Thus, decision to award Ferozpur and Zira tehsils to India had already been considered but later awarding of these two tehsils to India was just a political diplomacy.

¹²⁰ Mansergh, *The Transfer of Power* Vol. X, 865.

¹²¹ Mansergh, *The Transfer of Power* Vol. X, 868.

¹²² Carter, *Punjab Politics, March-May 1947*, 177-179.

Then, on 19 May, Even Jenkins while discussing partition of the Punjab with Master Tara Singh made it clear that, "I did not see how the non-Muslims could possibly get more than the Ambala and Jullundur Division, the Amritsar district and perhaps parts of Gurdaspur and Lahore districts".¹²³ Surprisingly, Jenkins stated this demarcation on May 19, even before Mountbatten's discussions for his partition plan in London but it was the exact boundary line, which later Cyril Radcliffe as the Chairman of the Boundary Commission declared for the Punjab Boundary Award. All this too proved that boundary line issue for the partition of the Punjab was an agreed and established fact whose implementation could be finalized formally on table. Therefore, there was absolutely no need to constitute any Boundary Commission to demarcate boundaries in the Punjab.

Threat and Persuasion to Jinnah for Punjab Partition

Then, all the British secrets reports and discussions with all top leaders had disclosed that they were satisfied with the expected demarcation. It too revealed that there did not exist any ambiguity in this regard. Therefore, expected boundary line was an established reality. Nevertheless, the British superior officers had fears that Jinnah would not accept partition of provinces. Interestingly, they had no such fears from the Congress as well as the Sikhs. Because their secrets reports stated that the Hindus and Sikhs were saying that, "Partition is inevitable", but the Muslims were strongly opposed to partition and were unlikely to change their views except under the instructions from Jinnah.¹²⁴ Therefore, Mountbatten asked Liaquat Ali Khan, whether they were going to accept partition of the Punjab and Bengal who responded that, "we shall never agree to it but you may make us bow to inevitable".¹²⁵ Accordingly, in his staff

¹²³ Carter, *Punjab Politics, March-May 1947*, 203.

¹²⁴ Mansergh, *The Transfer of Power* Vol. X, 197.

¹²⁵ Mansergh, *The Transfer of Power* Vol. X, 197.

meeting, Mountbatten stated that the League appeared to accept the partition plan but it was not willing to state its agreement in writing. At this, V.P Menon said that Nehru and Patel had accepted the plan so there would be a trouble if the League rejected it. Mountbatten replied that he had already threatened Jinnah that power would be demitted to the Interim Government if he did not agree. However, he took this threat calmly as he wanted to become a martyr who had been butchered by the British on the Congress altar.¹²⁶ Anyhow, Mountbatten left for London to get approval for his plan. In his absence, Jinnah visited Eric Mieville once again to say that he should ask Mountbatten that the partition of Bengal and the Punjab would be a grave mistake.¹²⁷ At the same time, in his interview with the Reuters, Jinnah bitterly criticized partition of Bengal and the Punjab that it would weaken Pakistan to a certain extent.¹²⁸ The Muslim League circles remained reiterating their demand for full Pakistan.¹²⁹ Abdur Rab Nishtar said that they would continue to press for a Pakistan based on undivided provinces but, "if a truncated Pakistan is forced on the League, they will accept it".¹³⁰ Liaquat Ali Khan said to Jenkins that they would not agree to the partition of Bengal or the Punjab however, "Whatever decision H.M.G. announced should be enforced with the utmost firmness".¹³¹ Regarding this, Baldev Singh conveyed to Jenkins that the Muslim League would reject partition consequently; the Congress would withdraw its acceptance regarding this.¹³² Nehru too wrote to Eric Mieville that they had accepted partition but if the Muslim League did not

¹²⁶ Mansergh, *The Transfer of Power* Vol. X, 841-842.

¹²⁷ Mansergh, *The Transfer of Power* Vol. X, 916.

¹²⁸ Zaidi, *Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah Papers* Vol. I, Part I, 843.

¹²⁹ Ahmad, *The Punjab Muslim League 1906-1947*, 353.

¹³⁰ Ahmad, *The Punjab Muslim League 1906-1947*, 961.

¹³¹ Carter, *Punjab Politics, March-May 1947*, 213-214.

¹³² Carter, *Punjab Politics, March-May 1947*, 216.

accept it then there could be no settlement as; Congress was not prepared to have one-sided acceptance of that.¹³³

In this scenario, Lord Mountbatten visited Mr. Winston Churchill who asked him whether he had received acceptance of Dominion status from Nehru if power would be transferred this year. He replied in affirmative however, he pointed out that he did not obtain a similar written assurance from Mr. Jinnah. Therefore, he proposed to inform Jinnah that, "in that case we could go ahead with the transfer of power this year on a Dominion status basis for Hindustan". At this, Mr. Churchill thought for a long time and finally stated that, "To begin with you must threaten. Take away all British officers. Give them military units without British officers. Make it clear to them how impossible it would be to run Pakistan without British help". In the end, Mr. Churchill authorized Mountbatten to give his message to Jinnah that "This is a matter of life and death for Pakistan, if you do not accept this offer with both hands".¹³⁴ No doubt, Churchill's this message shook Jinnah that he could not look for any support in England, which was at the back of his mind the whole way through.¹³⁵ Then, India and Burma Committee also considered about Jinnah's expected refusal. Therefore, it recommended that it could be pointed out to him that present partition scheme was very unfavorable to the Sikhs however if he refused to accept it then it would be necessary to arrange it on a basis which would be substantially less favorable to the Muslims.¹³⁶ The committee reiterated this recommendation on 28 May that in case of Jinnah's intransigent, he might be induced by the suggestion that the consequences of refusal would be a provisional

¹³³ Mansergh, *The Transfer of Power* Vol. X, 990.

¹³⁴ Mansergh, *The Transfer of Power* Vol. X, 945-946.

¹³⁵ Larry Collins & Dominique Lapierre, *Mountbatten and the Partition of India March 22-August 15, 1947* (Singapore: Trans-East Distributing Company, 1982), 84.

¹³⁶ Mansergh, *The Transfer of Power* Vol. X, 955.

definition of boundaries in the Punjab, which would be less favorable from his point of view.¹³⁷

On his return, Mountbatten again recalled in his staff that Jinnah might be threatened that, "If he appeared likely to reject the plan, by a suggestion that the notional partition would be drawn more in favor of the Sikhs". To this, Ismay opined that such threat would be striking at the whole basis of the plan and that Jinnah would not be taken in by it. Whereas, Mr. Abell considered that it would be more likely to prevail upon Jinnah by a display of "hurt feelings" rather than by threats. The staff agreed with this view.¹³⁸ Accordingly, Mountbatten attempted to persuade Jinnah by hurt feeling rather than threat.¹³⁹ All this too proved that ultimately Jinnah was persuaded to accept the Punjab partition through the threat that otherwise it would be more favorable to the Sikhs than the Muslims would. This too proved that boundary line for the partition of the Punjab was a settled fact otherwise how could the British say that otherwise it would be less favourable to the Muslims.

No Upheaval over the Declaration of Notional Punjab Partition

Lord Mountbatten handed over his partition plan to the party leaders on June 2. They delivered their provisional approval in the same night so Mountbatten declared it on June 3, 1947. It divided the Punjab provisionally by awarding 17 districts to the West and 12 to the East Punjab by stating that the Boundary Commission would confirm the final boundaries between two parts. Provisionally, this plan awarded Rawalpindi and Multan Divisions with the Muslim

¹³⁷ Mansergh, *The Transfer of Power* Vol. X, 1014.

¹³⁸ Mansergh, *The Transfer of Power*, Vol. XI, 5.

¹³⁹ Draft of brief stated that, "That you will be much disturbed by the prospect of the partition of Bengal and the Punjab goes without saying, but.... If you should, at this stage, mention any reservations, it will give your opponents the opportunity of saying that they too are not prepared to accept this scheme, except as a final settlement: and we shall then be back exactly where we stand....A very heavy responsibility now rests with you". *Ibid.*, 9-10.

majority districts of Gujranwala, Gurdaspur, Lahore, Sialkot and Sheikhupura of Lahore Division to the West Punjab and rest of the Punjab consisting of Ambala and Jullundur Divisions with Amritsar district of Lahore Division to the East Punjab. Later, Punjab Boundary Commission finalized this provisional partition of the Punjab but it did not make any major changes in the notional partition. The Commission just took three tehsils i.e. Batala, Gurdaspur and Pathankot of Gurdaspur District and about half tehsil of Kasur from Lahore District to bestow these areas to the East Punjab and it kept the rest of the notional Punjab partition as intact. Thus with minor modifications, it was the same partition of the Punjab, which the Congress, the Sikhs, the British and somehow the Muslim League circles had been considering during the last two decades of the British Raj. Thus, Boundary line in the Punjab province in case of its partition was a settled issue on the declaration of Partition Plan on June 3, 1947. Therefore, there was absolutely no need to constitute any Boundary Commission for this purpose. Anyhow, its constitution created many hopes among the concerned parties that they might get more territory by their shrewd contesting before the Punjab Boundary Commission. Ironically, their efforts were bound to bring only minor changes in the notional Punjab partition but the results of their brought with them an unprecedented holocaust and great tragedy in the Punjab on the declaration of Boundary Award on 16 August 1947.

Why Boundary Commission was constituted?

There arose a huge and comprehensive question that when the outcomes of the Boundary Commission were the same then why its constitution was envisaged. What were objectives behind its formation? The simple answer is that it was framed to make a final decision for the notional partition of the Punjab. However, according to this research, Boundary Line issue was a settled reality so this was not the real objective of Boundary Commission. Therefore, its real goal was to provide shelter to the British provincial administrative hierarchy for the time being against the expected immediate Sikh reaction against the final partition.

Because according to secret reports that eruption of violence on the appearance of real partition of the Punjab was bound to happen. The notional partition had made them desperate so its immediate finalization could enhance their desperation. Consequently, as a reaction, they could create trouble to trample already disturbed law and order situation. The British had no desire to combat that Sikh violence on the last leg of their Raj. Therefore, they planned to engage the Sikhs by stating that this notional partition was a provisional one. The Boundary Commission had a lot of authority to amend it before its finalization. Therefore, the Sikhs should prepare their case with strong evidences and arguments to get more territory from the Commission. Regarding this purpose, the British created an ambiguous term of reference i.e. other factors for the Boundary Commission that it should consider other factors with population to make the partition final. There did not exist any agreed or definite definition of other factors and it was purely left on the judgments of Boundary Commission. Thus, this British's strategy remained successful as the Boundary Commission kept the Sikhs hopeful until the end of their raj. However, on the disclosing of its outcomes on August 8, 1947, which were not according to the Sikhs' expectation, they called cold steel to fulfill their desired expectations regarding Punjab partition. Thus a war of retaliation commenced in the Punjab that became a "Great Tragedy of the Punjab" on the end of the British Raj.

Regarding this British strategy, Lord Wavell had already referred in his recommendations on 6 February 1946 that to solve Punjab boundary problem, there should be a saving clause to prevent immediate Sikh violence. Therefore, the British should announce that modifications in provisional boundary line would be negotiated. Regarding this, no doubt, the Sikhs' interests particularly in such negotiations would be considered keenly and carefully. Wavell did not recommend any boundary commission but just referred to frame a saving clause to prevent immediate Sikh violence. Anyhow, his

saving clause device was adopted in Mountbatten's partition plan in the shape of Boundary Commission.

Interestingly, during the formation of partition plan on May 9, 1947, the Secretary of State too questioned about the role of Boundary Commission in the Partition plan. He said that no doubt, the Sikhs were a very dangerous element in the situation as they were asking that the Lahore Division should be kept out of partition. He added that perhaps due to this, the Viceroy proposed a pending boundary commission to consider such Sikh claims but their claims were not based on population. They were based on factors such as the economic position of the Sikhs in certain parts of the Punjab and religious sentiments applying to certain areas where there were Sikh shrines. Therefore, according to him, unless the Boundary Commission were told to give weight to such other factors it could not do more than making marginal adjustments in the provisional boundaries where the division by districts had included in the Muslim or Hindu areas small parts of districts in which Hindus or Sikhs or Muslims were in the majority. However, he said to the Viceroy that, "if you are satisfied that a Boundary Commission, with terms of reference such as will help to keep the Sikhs quiet until the transfer of power, can be set up without provoking the hostility of the two major communities". Regarding this strategy, the Secretary concluded that he would be ready support to envisage such views during discussion in his cabinet colleagues.¹⁴⁰ Then again, the Secretary wrote to Mountbatten on 13 June that the handling of Boundary Commission business was going to become crucial. As at this stage, the Sikhs might try to get back some of the ground, which they had surrendered over the declaration of the policy. He added that:

It is to be hoped that the staking out of claims, as, for example, for the River Chenab line, in advance of the findings of the Boundary Commission will not get out of hand since, once claims of this kind

¹⁴⁰ Mansergh, *The Transfer of Power* Vol. XI, 712.

have been staked out, withdrawal is apt to prove difficult without loss of face.¹⁴¹

Thus, the British planned to adopt the strategy of the Boundary Commission until the transfer of power to prevent immediate Sikh aggression and violence on the appearance of real partition of the Punjab. Otherwise, there was absolutely no need to constitute any such commission. The considerations for the partition of the Punjab by different parties as well as by the British superior officials during the last two decades of the British Raj had cleared the expected boundaries for the division of the Punjab. Interestingly, on the declaration of Punjab Boundary Award, some quarters also propagated that the actual boundary line had been drawn long before by the British Government with a view to strengthening the Sikhs and Boundary Commission was merely created in order to give the award a semblance of justice.¹⁴²

Conclusion

This study tried to state that the Boundary Line issue for the partition of the Punjab was a settled issue as partition did not appear abruptly. It had been considered among the Congress, the Sikh, the Hindu, the British and the Muslim League circles during the last two decades of the British Raj. These considerations for the Punjab partition appeared on different stages during this periods so it also developed sketch of boundary line gradually. The Hindu Sabha, the Congress and the Sikh leaders began to consider this issue since 1923-24. The Muslim League began to refer it since 1926. The British began to give their attention to this issue since 1930. Then during the formation of Mountbatten's Partition Plan, there held discussions for the Punjab partition that too did not leave any lacuna for the demarcation in the Punjab on its partition. Accordingly, until the declaration of the Partition Plan on June 3, 1947, the Congress, the Sikhs,

¹⁴¹ Mansergh, *The Transfer of Power* Vol. XI, 336.

¹⁴² *Disturbances in the Punjab 1947* (Islamabad: National Documentation Centre, 1995), 361.

the Hindus, the British and the Muslims all had clear perception that where would be the boundary line for the partition of the Punjab? Thus, it was a settled fact so formation of Boundary Commission in this regard was not a compulsory requirement. In other words, there was absolutely no need of any such commission. Anyhow, there were secret observations that the Sikhs would become desperate over the notional partition so they might react violently on the appearance of real boundary line. Therefore, instead of persuading the Sikhs that it was near to their original demand for 14 districts in the Punjab. The British adopted this Boundary Commission strategy as precautionary measures to engage the Sikhs in the last leg of their Raj. They planned to constitute a Boundary Commission until the transfer of power just to keep the Sikhs quiet. The commission strategy meticulously engaged them in the proceedings of Punjab Boundary Commission and consequently prevented British Raj from immediate Sikh violence. Anyhow, their successor governments on both sides as well as the poor masses of the divided Punjab had to face the music of that British strategy.