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**The Politics of the Punjab Boundary Award**

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# **The Politics of the Punjab Boundary Award**

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According to the partition plan of June 3, 1947, the redrawing of the boundaries of the Punjab and Bengal was to be undertaken by the newly set up Boundary Commission after the provincial assemblies had taken a decision to this effect. Following assemblies decisions two commissions were established with Sir Cyril Radcliffe as the chairman of both commissions. The verdict of the commissions started an intense controversy. In many ways no man made boundary has caused so much troubles and effectively impeded the advent of peace in South Asia as has been done by the Punjab boundary resulting from the Commission's verdict. For both the Pakistanis and the Indians the boundary resulting from the partition of Punjab has proved to be a source of constant headaches and periodic convulsions. Just as the problematic border of the North Western Frontier Province (NWFP) elicited constant British vigilance, the Indo-Pak border in the Punjab area has kept the two nations continuously preoccupied throughout their independent existence. The hasty British departure along with unimaginative surgical partition of the Punjab left many complicated problems for the successor nations of British India. The inability of the British to partition the province in congruence with principles of justice and fair play produced unnecessarily a large pile of complex problems. What exactly happened during the partition processes revolving around the boundary question or the nature of policies that produced the existing borders is the endeavour of this article. Although, at the time of partition, Pakistan inherited insecure borders on both of its eastern and western wings, this article only concentrates on what was then known as the western wing and more specifically on the eastern border of its western wing. Pakistan inherited a long and exposed border with India. For the most part there are no natural barriers, like rivers and mountains to form the boundary as is the case with Afghanistan, Iran and China borders or was the case of the East Pakistan's border with Burma.<sup>1</sup> Lack of natural features of India-Pakistan border, the controversial Radcliffe award and abnormal

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<sup>1</sup> For details of exact physical locations and the nature of topographical terrain see Ahmad 1964:1-3.

start of India and Pakistan relations caused many border incidents generating and contributing a sizeable share of tension to the existing difficult and complicated relations between India and Pakistan. This article is an attempt to understand the basic principles governing the division of Punjab along with politics that caused the undesired departure from the adopted principles. In addition, efforts are directed to highlight the last minute changes loaded with far reaching consequences. What were the changes and who were responsible for such undesired alterations?

## BOUNDARY FORMATION PROCESS

Border formation process is a very complex undertaking. Not only the concerned governments have to agree on some imaginary line but the actual delimitation and demarcation often confront the involved countries with acutely complex issues and problems. Borders and boundaries are the lines that separate an independent sovereign country from its neighbours and indicate the exact horizontal limits of a nation's territory and political authority (for details see Pounds 1963: 56-57; Prescott 1972: 54-55). The boundary reflects not only the geographic limits of a nation's sovereignty but also happens to be a meeting point of two neighbouring sovereignties. Gone are the days when no man's land separated the territories and confronted the neighbours with a dilemma of whose authority is to be exercised over this unclaimed and unsettled piece of land. Now nations do not hesitate even to go to war over an inch of their territories. The practice of maintaining a "no man's land" into which people could intrude at times and over which neither of the neighbouring countries enjoyed exclusive control backed by legal claim, is no longer operative. Perhaps that is why modern boundaries are drawn and marked with greater precision and clarity. The formation of an international boundary involves three main stages; (a) allocation stage which involves a boundary treaty allocating the territories to the involved countries; (b) delimitation stage which is concerned with the selection of specific geographical site, and (c) demarcation stage which requires that the agreed boundary be marked on the ground in some form such as construction of small pillars or installing fences or erecting walls or other forms of marking-posts differentiating limits of respective countries (Razvi 1971: 4-7; Prescott 1972: 63; Pounds 1963: 65-66). It is possible that not all boundary formation processes would pass through all the above mentioned stages. In almost all cases, the most important stage is that of boundary agreement. This is especially important when a territory is divided between countries ignoring the cultural and ethnic realities of the area. Two types of situations often require agreements between nations in order to strengthen the legal sanctity of the boundary. The first situation is the one in which two nations advance their conflicting claims over a disputed territory which is resolved through an agreement between the involved parties. The other situation is the one in which a departing colonial power decides to divide certain territories in order to give due shares to their successors states. Once the agreement is signed, it is not essential that the boundary be specifically delimited and demarcated. If the natural barriers like mountain ranges and rivers or even the longitudes and latitudes form the border then states often consider that the delimitations and demarcations are unnecessary. Compared to a boundary treaty, delimitation of a boundary is a relatively complex process. A boundary agreement is often signed by people having limited firsthand knowledge of the actual physical terrain involved. The boundary treaty negotiators,

often decide with the help of specially prepared maps and reports about the people living in the boundary area. Perhaps that is why most boundary agreements are couched in generalised terms; the boundary shall run from point A to B, it shall keep so many miles from point X or from river Y; it shall follow river C or the crest of the chain of hills from D to E; it shall separate the two juxtaposed cultural groups or tribes etc. (Pounds 1963: 65-66). To translate the boundary agreement into an exact description of the landscape itself is commonly known as the delimitation of the boundary (Pounds 1963: 65-66; Razvi 1971: 5; Curzon 1907: 51). This task is often performed by a boundary commission consisting of representatives of both involves parties. In addition, the surveyors and small military force invariably assist the commission. Demarcation of boundary means actual laying down of a boundary line on the ground and defining it by some physical means such as boundary pillars, fences, walls etc.<sup>2</sup> Once all the stages have been completed, then the cartographer draws the map of agreed boundary between countries on the basis of available data.<sup>3</sup>

Issues relating to borders are often extremely sensitive and invoke relatively stronger reactions. Since international borders have given birth to many disputes, it is considered essential that extreme care should be taken in defining the boundary line. A faulty definition could complicate the situation. Borders agreed upon during the colonial periods have often been a source of frictions between the decolonised independent states. Most colonial borders were defined in accordance with the then strategic or resource needs of the paramount powers. Not much weight was attached to the aspirations of the people involved in the border areas. Perhaps that is why one finds that the boundaries of the British Indian territories ran through the cultural and ethnic groups of same stock; such as Pakhtoons cut off from Pakhtoons, and Baluchs cut off from the Baluchs, Bengalis cut off from Bengalis, Assamese cut off from the Assamese etc.

Pakistan inherited all the undemarcated borders of the British India. The partition of the subcontinent provided a large man-made border with India which turned out to be even more problematic than British India's Afghan border. In addition, Pakistan also inherited a frontier on its North Western part. A "frontier" is a border zone which not only separates two independent countries but over which neither side enjoys full administrative and political control. While it is true to say that the frontier is a primitive concept of boundary, it is still held valid and applied in some part of the world (Pounds 1963: 57). There are two types of frontiers; political frontiers and settlement frontiers. While a settlement frontier divides the developed and undeveloped areas of a single country, the political frontier, like the boundary or border separates the two independent sovereign countries (Pounds 1963: 56). Pakistan inherited both the political as well as the settlement frontiers in the North West. The settlement frontier could be divided into two categories, one

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<sup>2</sup> The terms delimitation and demarcation were introduced by Sir Henry McMahon who himself was directly involved in the delimitation of the boundary between India and Tibet (McMahon 1935: 2-16).

<sup>3</sup> It needs to be mentioned that maps are not regarded very reliable evidence of political boundaries by many international lawyers and geographers. A cartographer can make mistakes because of inadequate surveying or dictates of rulers could introduce involuntary distortions (Razvi 1971: 57).

that consists of settled areas and the other which is not fully settled. The second type is often referred to as the tribal belt which indicates a loose control of the state authority. The political frontier is primarily the boundary line that separates Pakistan from Afghanistan and divides the Pakhtoons from the Pakhtoons, and Baluchis from Baluchis on the Iranian border, Punjabis from the Punjabis on the Indo-Pak border.

## THE PUNJAB BOUNDARY COMMISSION

Over the years Pakistan's border with India has proved to be the most trickiest. Not only is it a very long border with no natural barriers like rivers or mountains to separate the territories of these two independent neighbours but it has also caused innumerable border clashes making regular contributions toward the existing high level of mutual antagonism and hostilities especially during the immediate phase of post-partition period.<sup>4</sup> Three reasons account for this. First, the division of the Indian subcontinent involved the partition of two large provinces of Punjab and Bengal; second, the Kashmir dispute; third, the general state of mutual suspicions and antagonism that followed the partition. The process of partitioning of Punjab and Bengal itself was a massive task studded with complex problems. Added to this was the inability of the British to arrange the accession of states to one Dominion or the other before the set dates of independence.<sup>5</sup> The British could have set a deadline for the accession of all princely states before 14th August 1947 but for some odd reasons they opted to avoid setting of such a date. To divide the provinces of Punjab and Bengal many proposals were advanced including the one that referred to the handing over the complex problem of boundary demarcation to the United Nations or to the International Court of Justice to which Pundit Nehru strongly objected on the grounds that it would involve cumbersome procedure and unacceptable delay.<sup>6</sup> It needs to be highlighted here that while Nehru shot down the involvement of the UN in resolving the boundary question on the above mentioned grounds, he deemed it fit in his wisdom to seek the involvement of the UN in order to secure the resolution of the Kashmir dispute only few months later. Another proposal was attributed to Jinnah's thinking who was in favour of enlisting the services of Law Lords of the British House of Lords in order to form the boundary commission to which Mountbatten disagreed on the grounds that most Law Lords were elderly people who could not sustain the sweltering heat of the Indian

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<sup>4</sup> Pakistan's border with India was 3,486 miles long (East Pakistan's border was 2,162 miles and West Pakistan's border was 1,324 miles), out of which only 455 miles on The Eastern and 778 miles on The Western side were demarcated. Until March 1953 the undemarcated border of East Pakistan was 546 miles. See the Debates of the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan (Legislature) 1953: 323.

<sup>5</sup> Some writer even asserted that defects in British planning resulted in such failures (Lamb 1968: 99).

<sup>6</sup> Alastair Lamb found Nehru's objection to UN involvement rather intriguing. He wrote that the 'United Nations might select people who were not very suitable, that is to say not in sympathy with Congress. More importantly the presence of the United Nations would surely introduce needless bureaucratic delays.' (Lamb 1995: 27). Also see Ali 1967: 203-321; Campbell-Johnson 1953: 124; Choudhury 1968: 53-55.

Summer (Ali 1967: 203-321). Jinnah put this proposal because he was acutely conscious of the improbability of the Hindus and Muslim members of the Commissions reaching an unanimous verdict. Both the above mentioned suggestions were put in good faith and to facilitate the smooth working of the commission mainly because the task of redefining boundaries within a few weeks was generally regarded as massive undertaking especially if viewed within the context of existing communal tension. Finally the proposal that a boundary commission should be formed with an Englishman as its chairman with equal number of judges from both sides was accepted and eventually a boundary commission was formed which was headed by Sir Cyril Radcliffe with equal number of Hindus (Pro Congress) and Muslims (Pro Muslim-League) Judges. Jinnah seemed to have agreed to the appointment of Sir Cyril Radcliffe's chairmanship of the boundary commission primarily because of two operative factors: the constant pressure from Mountbatten who persuaded him to accept Radcliffe's name and the acute realisation of time constraints as there were only few weeks within which the transfer of power was to take place (Ali 1967: 203-321).

According to the partition plan of June 3, 1947 the issue of redrawing the boundaries of Punjab and Bengal was to be resolved by a Boundary Commission which was to be set up following the provincial assemblies decision regarding the division of respective provinces. Meeting on 20 and 23 June the provincial assemblies of both Bengal and Punjab, sitting in separate sections representing Muslim and Hindu majority areas, voted on whether or not their provinces should be divided, and in both cases the sections representing Hindu majority areas opted for partition while the Muslim majority sections voted against the partition (Keesings Contemporary Archives June 21-28, 1947: 8679). Since both League and Congress had accepted the partition plan of 3rd June, which provided that if a simple majority of either section decided on partition, the divisions would take place, so it was decided to divide both the provinces. Consequently two Boundary Commissions were set up each consisting of four judges of Provincial High Courts and the names of members of the Commission were announced on 30 June with Sir Cyril Radcliffe as the Chairman of both the Commissions (Keesings Contemporary Archives June 28-July 5, 1946: 8696). The Punjab Boundary Commission included Justice Din Mohammad and Justice Mohammad Munir on behalf of the Muslim League, and Justice Mehr Chand Mahajan and Justice Tej Sindh on behalf of the Congress. The Bengal Boundary Commission consisted of Justice Abu Saleh Mohammad Akram and Justice S.A. Rahman representing the Muslim League and Justice C.C. Biswas and Justice B. K. Mukerji representing Congress (Ali 1967: 204). The Commissions were charged with the task of dividing both Punjab and Bengal on the basis of ascertaining the contiguous majority areas of Muslims and non-Muslims and in so doing it could also take into account 'other factors' (Ali, 1967: 204-205; Lakhnupal 1958: 34).

Since the pro-Indian and pro-Pakistani judges were ultimately unable to evolve the desired consensus, it was left to Sir Cyril Radcliffe to take the final decision (Blinkenberg 1972: 53). The award was announced on 17th August which invoked

strong and angry reactions from both the Pakistanis as well as the Indians. Despite the fact that Jinnah had known before the actual announcement of the award that the line decided by Radcliffe was going to seriously damage the Muslim interests, he stuck to his prior commitment that he would accept the award and consequently he accepted the award, unlike his Indian counterparts, rather gracefully.<sup>7</sup>

## THE AWARD

Constituted towards the end of June with the instructions to demarcate the boundaries of the two parts of Bengal/Punjab 'on the basis of ascertaining the contiguous areas of the Muslims and the non-Muslims', both Commissions started their work in July 1947 (Symonds 1949: 85; Ali 1967: 204-5). Having given his directions to the members of the commission, Radcliffe decided not to sit with the commission as he thought that his assigned role of being an umpire would only become operational if the commission failed to make a unanimous or a majority decision (Khan 1983: 137-41). However he asked for a daily report of the proceedings. Many public meetings were held in which arguments were presented by various counsels on behalf of the Muslim League, Congress, Sikhs and other concerned parties. The League's case particularly with regard to the Punjab was presented by Sir Zafrullah Khan who prepared the case rather hurriedly because of the time constraints (Khan 1983: 137-41). According to Zafrullah Khan, no clear instructions were given to him either by Jinnah or the then known leaders of Punjab Muslim League on what lines the case was to be presented to the Commission. The only exception Zafrullah Khan mentioned was Mian Mumtaz Mohammad Khan Daultana who discussed the case within him and agreed with the line already worked out a day before.<sup>8</sup> Zafrullah also mentioned that Justice Din Mohammad told him that Radcliffe had already decided in his mind the line of demarcation of the boundary which was seriously prejudicial to Muslim interests (Khan 1983: 137-41). As expected, the Commission could not reach a unanimous verdict and the fate of millions was left to the whim of one man, the Chairman Sir Cyril Radcliffe who had never visited India before and did not even sit in the public hearings (Brines 1968: 43; Ali 1967: 205; Choudhury 1968: 53).

The final award was announced on 17 August 1947 and published next day though the deliberations were completed by 8 August. In almost all cases Radcliffe, in finalising the award, strictly adhered to the 'religious affinity factor' except in the case of Gurdaspur District of Punjab (Choudhury 1968: 53). It is interesting to note

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<sup>7</sup> Justice Din Muhammad went to see Jinnah in order to secure his consent to resign from the Boundary Commission. He informed Jinnah that Radcliffe had already settled in his mind the line of demarcation of the boundary which was seriously prejudicial to Muslim interests. But Jinnah refused to give the desired permission (Khan 1983: 140). Jinnah referred to the award as unjust, incomprehensible and even perverse but asserted that as honourable people it had to be accepted because of prior commitment to the Boundary Commission (Jinnah 1963: 12; Chaudhury 1968: 57).

<sup>8</sup> The line Zafrullah had worked out in consultation with four young lawyers was based on subdistrict level population figures which was more helpful than district level figures from the Muslim's point of view (Khan 1983: 137-41).

that in the case of Calcutta, the argument of linkage dependency did not seem acceptable to Radcliffe. Although in the City of Calcutta the Muslims were no more than one-fourth of the total population of the city, 'the hinterland, on which the life of Calcutta as a city and port depended and of which it formed an integral part, was a Muslim majority area' (Ali 1967: 207). Besides, a large segment of Calcutta's population consisted of scheduled castes who had allied themselves with the Muslim League (Ali 1967: 207). Radcliffe decided not only to award Calcutta to India but also gave the Muslim majority district of Murshidabad and a greater part of the Muslim majority district of Nadia to India (Ali 1967: 208-9). Had there been a free plebiscite held to ascertain the wishes of the people of Calcutta, the chances were that it would have opted for Pakistan (Ali 1967: 208-9). While Mountbatten decided to hold a referendum in NWFP, a Muslim majority province encircled by other provinces that had already been included in Pakistan, he was extremely unhappy and reluctant over the suggestion to subject Calcutta to a referendum (Ali 1967: 208-9; Campbell-Johnson 1953:71-2). Three facts explain Mountbatten's refusal to hold a referendum in Calcutta similar to the one he ordered for NWFP. First, Lord Ismay took Mountbatten's original plan of partition to London at a time (on 2 July 1947) when the Boundary Commissions were just getting ready to start their work, in order to seek final approval of the British Government. According to that plan, wrote Ismay, Western Bengal including Calcutta was to go to India (Ismay 1960: 42; also see Ali 1967: 208). How could Mountbatten decide which part of Bengal was to go to India or Pakistan much before the final award of the Boundary Commissions was announced unless he had already decided what was to be allocated to India and Pakistan irrespective of the final awards of the Commission?

The second important fact in this regard is how could the then editor of *The Statesman*, while commenting on the Radcliffe award, categorically states that it was known before the finalisation of the award that Calcutta was to go to India (Stephens 1963: 180)? Who leaked this news? Members of the Commission were sworn to secrecy and it does not seem convincing that Radcliffe himself would indulge in such a practice. Three years later the mystery of the leak was resolved when V.B. Patel, speaking in Calcutta in January 1950, revealed that the Congress agreed to partition provided Calcutta would be allocated to India (*The Hindu*, Jan. 16 1950). This was the third fact which clearly reflects that Mountbatten had not only already decided the future fate of Calcutta but had also kept the Muslim League in the dark regarding his plan to hand over Calcutta to India. This also indicates that Mountbatten knew the Congress preferences and catered for them with his own carefully contrived tactical moves. The information that was handed over to the Muslim League was that the fate of Calcutta would be decided by the Boundary Commission. Indeed this appears to be a good tactical move.

The award in Punjab generated a wave of indignation in Pakistan. It was regarded as extremely unfair, disgusting, abominable and one-sided (*Times*, 18-19 August 1947; *The Pakistan Times*, 19 August, 1947). Although the major focus of Pakistan's resentment was the allocation of the Muslim majority district Gurdaspur to India, the Punjab Boundary Commission had also awarded to India parts of



several districts of Punjab in which the population was predominantly Muslim (Wilber 1964: 216). Loss of Gurdaspur District was viewed as a major blow because it meant something much more than simple award of additional territory to India (Choudhury 1968: 53-4). This was a decision which not only linked Kashmir to India but also facilitated India's forcible occupation of the State at a later stage (Rushbrook-Williams 1962: 48). The district of Gurdaspur consisted of four tehsils (sub divisions), Gurdaspur, Batala, Shakergarh and Pathankot. Apart from Pathankot which had a Hindu majority, all the others were Muslim majority tehsils. If the principle of religious affinity had been applied then the whole district should have been awarded to Pakistan. Radcliffe decided to allot three-fourth of the district to India giving an access to the State of Jammu and Kashmir. In addition, Radcliffe also gave the Muslim majority tehsils of Ajnala (Amritsar District), Zira, Ferozpur (in Ferozpur District), Nakodar and Jullander (in Jullander District) to India. Radcliffe's explanation of those allocations was rather hollow and flimsy. He argued that in those cases he decided to avoid disruption of railway communications and the water system (The Times, August 19 1947; Ali 1967: 213-14). The Indus waters dispute lasting over 13 years clearly indicates that partition had disrupted the water system and as far as the railways were concerned, it was obvious that they would be effected with the partition of British India and consequent emergence of two independent Dominions.

## THE POLITICS

The award of three-fourth of Gurdaspur District genuinely hurt the Pakistanis. "Loss of Gurdaspur district was not merely a territorial murder of Pakistan, it meant much more. [...] Without Gurdaspur India had no claim whatsoever to Kashmir." (Choudhury 1968: 54-55) It was the Radcliffe award which provided the essential rail link to the Indian forces with the State of Jammu and Kashmir. It would have been extremely difficult for India to fight a Kashmir war without this necessary rail connection with the State (Birdwood 1953: 235-6; and idem 1956: 74). Why did Radcliffe go for such an unfair award? Was he influenced or induced by Mountbatten? To answer these questions, a number of aspects of this tragic episode should be mentioned. By most accounts it seems safe to assume that Mountbatten was the man responsible for causing the undesirable changes in the above mentioned award. If he himself did not alter it, he seemed to have influenced the concerned quarters to bring in line the actual position of the provinces with his thinking. Sufficient evidence exists to support this contention. To begin with, it was commonly believed that Mountbatten wanted to be the Governor-General of both the Dominions for at least eight or nine months from 15 August 1947 onward – the man who not only awarded their independence but also guided them in their infancy; Jinnah's decision to become the first Governor-General of Pakistan wounded Mountbatten's pride (Ali 1967: 173-8; Choudhury 1968: 56; Stephens 1963: 176). Attempts were made even after Jinnah's decision to devise a formula by which Mountbatten could continue as the Governor-General of both Dominions (Ali 1967: 177; Mosley 1961: 248). Once it became clear that Jinnah would not

change his decision, many observers noticed a distinct change in Mountbatten's attitude towards Pakistan (Ali 1967: 177).

Another aspect of the Punjab award which puzzles many is the discovery of a pencil sketch of the award among the papers that Evan Jenkins, the last Governor of undivided Punjab, left behind. The sketch map was prepared by the Viceroy's private Secretary George Abell on 8 August 1947 in response to a request from Jenkins who was anxious to know the main outline of the boundary in order to make necessary administrative and security arrangements (Ali 1967: 217). The sketch map included the tehsils of Zira and Ferozpur on the Pakistani side but when the award was announced, these areas were included in India. Jenkins, anxious to avert the perceived communal bloodshed wanted advance information in order to make adequate security arrangements. He contacted Mountbatten's Private Secretary George Abell in order to seek the desired information. Abell supplied him the sketch map which was prepared on the August 8, 1947. Obviously, Abell could not have passed on this information without Mountbatten's authorisation and the requisite information could only be procured from Radcliffe's office or from his staff. The sketch map supplied to Jenkins clearly indicated that both tehsils of Zira and Ferozpur were to be assigned to Pakistan. It can be safely assumed that Radcliffe intended to include those tehsils on the Pakistani side, but somehow or other during the period between 8 August and 17 August 1947 for some mysterious reasons he changed his mind and gave those tehsils to India.

Two points need to be highlighted here. First, assuming that the sketch map was based on authentic information supplied by the Radcliffe's office, then the map prepared on 8th August had shown the tehsils Zira and Ferozpur on Pakistan's side but the final Radcliffe report included these tehsils on the Indian side. Some writers have questioned the accuracy of the map and argued that this map was not intended to reflect the exact location of the boundary and was supplied for administrative purposes. Indeed it makes sense but even for administrative purposes, one tends to mark the broad administrative unit such as district or tehsil and this map clearly reflected that tehsils of Zira and Ferozpur were on the side of Pakistan. To further strengthen this point, there exist corroborative evidence reflecting Radcliffe's intentions to include these tehsils on Pakistani side. Justice Din Mohammad, a member of the Punjab Boundary Commission, informed the Government of Pakistan that when Muslim members of the Commission started their arguments for the above mentioned tehsils, Radcliffe stopped them with a remark 'that it was unnecessary to argue so obvious a case' (Ali 1967: 217-18). Radcliffe at the time appeared totally convinced that these Muslim majority areas east of the Sutlej river and in the angle of the Beas and Sutlej would automatically go to Pakistan. Later, he gave these two tehsils to India without any logical or even valid explanations. Why did Radcliffe change his mind about what he himself regarded as an obvious case for inclusion into Pakistan? According to Sir Zafrullah Khan, Justice Din Mohammad saw him before leaving for Delhi to seek Jinnah's permission to resign from the Boundary Commission and informed him that Radcliffe had already settled in his mind the line of the boundary which was seriously prejudicial to Muslim interests (Khan 1983: 140). Jinnah refused to grant him the permission to

resign. Chaudhry Muhammad Ali had gone to Delhi in connection with the question of national debt on 9th August 1947 and before he left Karachi he was told by Liaquat Ali Khan that Jinnah had received very disturbing news that the Muslim majority areas were in danger of being allocated to India and was asked to communicate Jinnah's concerns to Lord Ismay (Ali 1967: 218-19). He went straight to Viceroy's house and conveyed to Lord Ismay Jinnah's apprehensions who not only expressed complete ignorance about Radcliffe's ideas regarding the boundary but also stressed categorically that neither Mountbatten nor he himself had ever discussed the question with him (ibid.). According to Mohammad Ali he not only saw a map hanging in Lord Ismay's office with a pencil line drawn across the map of Punjab reflecting the possible boundary and clearly indicating that tehsils of Zira and Ferozpur were included on Pakistani side, but he also drew Lord Ismay's attention to the map on the wall. The second point that needs some attention is the question of mysterious delay between the finalisation of the accord and its eventual announcement. According to Munir the award was finalised on 8th August but it was kept secret even from the leaders and members of the Partition Council till its announcement. Why was the award not announced before the partition day? One explanation of delayed announcement is that the British wanted 'to divert odium from the British and to avoid turning a day of rejoicing over Indian and Pakistani freedom into one of mourning over disappointed territorial hopes' (Hodson 1969: 351). It was indeed a flimsy excuse and totally unconvincing explanation as far as the latter half is concerned. However the first half of the explanation that the British wanted to divert odium has some merit. Indeed British had always looked after their own interests and the concerns for the welfare of the natives was never a serious impediment in British calculations. However in this case it was Mountbatten who had asked Radcliffe to delay the publication of the award whereas Radcliffe firmly opposed the delay in publishing the award. Yet one finds that in the ultimate analysis it was Mountbatten who carried the day. Justice Mohammad Munir was of the opinion that then desired alterations took place between 8 August and 17 August, when Radcliffe was the guest of Mountbatten in Delhi, and Mountbatten must have induced Radcliffe to make those changes (The Pakistan Times, 22-24 June 1964; Choudhury 1968: 55-56). Justice Munir did not believe that Radcliffe would have changed the award on his own accord as he knew that the original award had already been sent to Sir Evan Jenkins and no new arguments based on convincing evidence had been sent to him but Munir did not rule out the possibility of alteration being introduced under the concerted pressures of Mountbatten. Justice Munir thought that the award was more political than judicial, as 'it lacked every attribute of a judicial decision' (The Pakistan Times, 22-24 June 1964). 'If the award was judicial, lacked every attribute of a judicial decision, and if it was political', stressed Munir, 'why lay claim to justice, fairness and impartiality'? 'Why not say that India belonged to the British and their Viceroy gave it to whomever he liked?' (The Pakistan Times, June 22-24 1964; Choudhury 1968: 55-56)

The Radcliffe award was regarded by the Pakistanis as extremely unjust and a decision violating all the accepted principles of fairness and justice. Sardar Abdur

Rab Nishtar described it as 'the parting kick of the British to Pakistan' (The Times, August 18, 1947; The Pakistan Times, August 19 1947). Despite the fact that even Jinnah was greatly upset by the abominable award and interpreted it as incomprehensible and even perverse, he decided to live up to the commitment and to abide by the decision and asserted that we must bear this blow 'with fortitude, courage and hope' (Jinnah 1963: 32-3).

## OTHER FACTORS

Perhaps the most complicated aspect of the politics revolving around the boundary awarded was the interpretation of 'other factors'. Exactly what were these other factors which invoked so many ambiguous interpretations? Why were these 'other factors' never clearly spelt out or were they meant to be ambiguous in order to facilitate the manipulation of partition processes of the then known somewhat volatile border? Perhaps one way to study and analyse these 'other factors' is to place them in six categories; security, water, communalism, communication, Sikhs and Mountbatten's attitude. It is a well known fact that the incumbent atmosphere on the eve of partition was heavily charged and to undertake such a complex task of dividing Punjab and Bengal was indeed not an easy pursuit. To make things little more complicated, the British Government appointed Sir Cyril Radcliffe, a man who had no idea about the complexities of Indian politics. Not only India was to be partitioned within 10 weeks following the acceptance of June 3rd plan, but ongoing communalism coupled with leading political parties continuous confrontationists pursuits and politics (League vs. Congress) required the wisdom and guidance of a man who understood India and the Indians rather well. Admittedly Mountbatten's decision to give Britain only 73 days to get out of India after having been responsible for Indian affairs for almost 250 years was somewhat illogical and appeared hasty, but to appoint a man who had absolutely no knowledge of the intricacies surrounding the Indian politics coupled with the stresses and stains accompanying the ongoing freedom movement does not appear to be a well thought out decision. Radcliffe hardly knew where the provinces of Punjab and Bengal were physically located. But the argument advanced at the time was that the job required a man without Indian experiences. It was assumed that anyone with the knowledge of the country and its politics would have acted in prejudicial manner (Collins/ Lapierre 1975: 179-80). Indeed ignorance can be a bliss in some situations but it is equally true that such admirable ignorance can also cause irreparable damage. This is precisely what happened in the cases of Indian boundary awards particularly in Punjab.

### a) SECURITY

Among the 'other factors', security issues seem to have not been paid proper attention to by almost all concerned. Three factors seem to have strengthened the notion that security issues were not only totally disregarded but they were not viewed within the ambit of 'other factors'. Had the security implications of the

announced awards been properly comprehended, the nature of the award would have been different and far more judicial and realistic in nature. It seems that Mountbatten deliberately adopted a soft approach towards security issues as he believed that speed of transfer would avoid the troubles (Roberts 1994: 89). While it is not too difficult to see the application of military principles which sometimes do pay the desired dividends in battlefields, the then prevalent political situation required a totally different type of approach. Yet Mountbatten, in his wisdom, continued to treat the Indian political scene as another Asian battle front. What appears somewhat intriguing is that controlling communal riots with military precision did not attract Mountbatten's attention. Being a military man, it was expected that Mountbatten would be able to effectively utilise the military means in order to combat the rising intensity of communalism. A half hearted attempt to maintain peace in the explosive border areas seem to have been made when a Boundary Force was established on 1st August 1947 (Burke 1975: 62). Despite the fact that communal rioting had intensified, the Partition Council only decided on July 22 to set up special military command to protect the migrating population of many districts of Punjab with Major General Rees as its commanding officer.<sup>9</sup>

While the commander was an Englishman, almost the entire Boundary Force consisted of mixed units of Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Christian soldiers. To expect that such a force would not be influenced by the then prevalent loaded atmosphere was ludicrous. Indeed there were indications that the ongoing communalism would eventually engulf the Boundary Force as well but it appears that not much attention was paid to the mixed composition of the units and it was hoped that communal virus will not infect the force (Khan 1967: 16). 'Not surprisingly, the commander of the Boundary Force reported on 25th August that the atmosphere within his force had become very explosive and a small incident might provoke fighting' (Burke 1975: 62). It appears that the responsibility for the safety of millions of unfortunates who were compelled to move and trek their way to the other side of the borders did not rate high enough on the priority ladder of Mountbatten. Instead of deploying mixed units of Indian soldiers, he could have opted for a force entirely consisting of British troops only. A British force would have been certainly far more effective and would have acted more impartially under the then existing circumstances that were so heavily charged with the virus of communalism. The excuse that the Congress leaders would not have consented to the employment of British troops fails to carry conviction for no such proposal was made to them (Ali 1967: 196).

The second factor generating the impression that scant regard was paid to security aspects was the undesired delay in the announcement of the award. Many accounts clearly point towards the fact that the award was finalised before the date of the partition but was not announced till 17th August. (Burke 1975: 62). It really does not make sense that why the award was finalised too close to the independence day and to make things worse why the announcement was delayed

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<sup>9</sup> The Boundary Force was supposed to protect the population of Sialkot, Gujranwala, Sheikhpura, Lyallpur, Montgomery, Lahore, Amritsar, Gurdaspur, Hoshiarpour, Jullundur, Ferozpur and Ludhiana (Khan 1967: 15-17).

for another four days. One had to judge the security implications of this undesired delay especially within the context of intensified communal riots coupled with well planned Sikh attacks on the migrating Muslims without proper arrangements for transportation. With ineffective civil administration and insufficient Boundary Force, the delay in announcement implied that millions were kept uncertain. Consequently when the announcement came, millions found themselves on the wrong side of the border resulting into unparalleled carnage.

The third factor reflecting scant regard for security implications is somewhat futuristic orientated. At no stage sufficient considerations seem to have been extended to the fact that if the entire district of Gurdaspur was not given to Pakistan on the basis of existing Muslim majority coupled with deliberate provision of access to Kashmir could encourage India to make concerted efforts to secure Kashmir's accession in one form or the other. Four existing factors should have attracted the attention of Mr. Radcliffe. One that Nehru had never made any secret of his passion for Kashmir. Second, Nehru's close ties with the popular Kashmiri leader Sheikh Abdullah was too well known to be ignored. Third, the Maharajah was a Hindu Dogra. With the ongoing intensity of communal rioting and pressures exerted by the Hindu political leaders as well as by the non-Muslim rulers of other Indian states should have injected some doses of realism. Finally Mountbatten's visible tilt towards Congress and his concerted efforts to secure the accession of many princely states to India was too obvious to escape the attention of members of the Boundary Commission especially that of Radcliffe. Compared to Mountbatten's role in securing the accession of Jaipur, Jaisalmer, and Hyderabad where he forcefully argued with the rulers to join India, he did not play a similar role in the case of Kashmir (Cheema 1990: 39). At no stage did he make any attempt to impress upon the Maharajah that in view of the geographical and strategic factors coupled with the fact of the overwhelming Muslim population that the State should accede to Pakistan (Ibid.; Ali 1967: 286). Perhaps that is why he did not even bother to highlight the significance of access to India by the award of three tehsils of Gurdaspur. He knew it well that Kashmir was heavily dependent upon Pakistan for all the essential supplies which were coming through the traditional routes that were directly linked with Pakistan. The alternative route via Pathankot was never really used for transportation of goods as this was not well developed. But the existence of a route that could link Kashmir with India enabled the Congress to seriously work towards its acquisition. It does not sound very convincing that a trained military mind would not have properly comprehended the significance of such a route. To provide India this particular route was part of a well contrived plan of action in which Mountbatten seemed to have played an extremely significant role. It needs to be mentioned here that Radcliffe, of course, denied that access to Kashmir via Pathankot was one of the 'other factors' affecting the award (Hodson 1969: 354). Again it is difficult to believe that he did not realise the significance and importance of access which would be provided by allocating Pathankot to India especially when he himself made sure that a link to Pathankot was ensured through the Muslim majority tehsils of Gurdaspur and Batala which he awarded to India. He could have simply allocated Pathankot to India and rest of the

district to Pakistan in congruence with the basic principle governing the partition of the province.

#### b) WATER DISTRIBUTION

Perhaps an even more important factor that was directly linked with what came to be known as 'other factors' could be classified as the water distribution factor. Prior to partition, the province of Punjab had a well developed irrigation network. The canals leading out of the Punjab's five main rivers catered for water supplied to almost all cultivable areas of Punjab. While the Punjab canal irrigation network was frequently hailed as one of the greatest achievements of the British Raj, it was not accorded deserving and balanced attention. A close scrutiny of water-flow disruption of the Punjab canal system clearly reflect that very little considerations were extended to the interests of Pakistan whereas no efforts were spared to facilitate both the Indian as well as Mountbatten's interests. However, it needs to be stressed here that some writers are of the opinion that the complicated water canal system in Punjab was a major source of justification for the award (Blinkenberg 1972: 74-75). Indeed it provided one sided justification and it was only India which benefited from this factor. Thus Radcliffe and Mountbatten appeared to have managed to equip India with this lethal weapon. In case of those territories which were eventually included in Pakistan, this consideration played a totally insignificant role. On the contrary, this factor damaged their interests. Not only the subsequent water distribution problem can be regarded as legitimate child of Radcliffe's insufficient devotion to the likely implications of water disruption, but he seems to have totally ignored the problems of a lower riparian that could face enormous hardships if the vital controlling headworks were placed in hands of opponents. Indeed what was totally ignored was the fact that the partition of Punjab would cut across the rivers and canals of its irrigation system and if adequate considerations were not extended to the rights of lower riparian, the lower riparian could experience severe sufferings. Not only Radcliffe decided to give Muslim majority areas to India disregarding the basic principle employed for the division of Punjab, he also gave to India two very important headworks which fed canals in West Punjab. Both the Madhopur headworks on river Ravi and Ferozpur headworks on the Sutlej river controlling the Upper Bari Doab and Dipalpur canals in West Punjab and Easter Grey canal which irrigated also parts of Bahawalpur were given to India (Ali 1967: 318-19; Cheema 1990: 33-34). Admittedly Radcliffe was assured by his Indian as well as Pakistani colleagues that the existing arrangements for sharing of water would be respected, but how could he be so naive not to realise that in the absence of a long term legal treaty framework the two successor nations would respect the existing arrangements. Following the dissolution of Arbitral Tribunal (which was set up to deal with the disputed cases) on 1st April 1948, India immediately stopped, without any prior warning, the flow of waters in Central Bari Doab and Dipalpur canals causing extreme hardships for thousands of Pakistani cultivators. The dangerous implications of this move were aptly described by an eminent expert who wrote that no army, with bombs and

shellfire could devastate a land so thoroughly as Pakistan could be devastated by simple expedient of India's permanently shutting off the sources of water that keep the fields and people of Pakistan alive.<sup>10</sup> However if the entire district of Gurdaspur along with the Muslim majority tehsil of Ajnala had been allocated to Pakistan, there would have been no disruption of the upper Bari Doab canal. Radcliffe himself admitted in his report that he was unable to preserve the undivided irrigation system of the upper Bari Doab despite the fact that he made several adjustments to mitigate consequences of disruption (Ali 1967: 214-15). This particular canal originated from Madhopur headworks in Pathankot and extended to Lahore district. The simple solution to this problem was to allot the entire district of Gurdaspur to Pakistan as the district was known to be a Muslim majority contiguous area.

Compared to Pakistani Muslim cultivators interests the interests of the Indians were given utmost considerations. Last minute alterations which gave Ferozpur and Zira to India throw ample light on Radcliffe's soft attitude towards Mountbatten and his coconspirators Indian leaders. Recently revealed source material seem to indicate that Mountbatten, under pressure from Nehru and the Maharaja of Bikaner persuaded Radcliffe to alter the Award and give both Ferozpur and Zira to India (Roberts 1994: 93-94). The canal headworks which controlled the irrigation of Bikaner was located at Ferozpur and the Maharaja of Bikaner who had discovered somehow or the other that Ferozpur was being allocated to Pakistan began to pressurize both Nehru and Mountbatten as he did not want that the flow of water to his state be controlled by Pakistan. He believed that Bikaner's irrigation network would be adversely affected if Ferozpur headworks was allotted to Pakistan. In order to secure his interest he even threatened that if Ferozpur and Zira went to Pakistan, Bikaner would accede to Pakistan (Ibid. 100-101). Two questions need to be raised here. First how did Nehru, the Maharaja of Bikaner and Mountbatten know what was in Radcliffe's secret award? Second, Ferozpur housed an important weapon's dump, did this arsenal generate any compelling considerations? According to Christopher Beaumont who was appointed as the Secretary to the Boundary Commission on July 7, 1947, the appointment of an Hindu Civil Servant V.D. Ayer as the Assistant Secretary on 8th July was a mistake and Beaumont guardedly points finger at Ayer as the likely source who was constantly in touch with Nehru and V.P. Menon communicating the progress in boundary formation processes. While Beaumont even acknowledged that evidence against Ayer was somewhat circumstantial but the leak regarding the fate of Chittagong Hill Tracts and Nehru's quick and biting reaction even before Beaumont actually presented the Commission's Report to the Viceroy convinced Beaumont that the only way Nehru could have known about it was via Ayer (Ibid.: 95). The second question revolving around the weapon's dump also deserve some explanation. The loss of Ferozpur arsenal was indeed a crippling blow to Pakistan if viewed within context of subsequent farce of division of military assets. Since all the three actors involved in

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<sup>10</sup> David E. Lilienthal former Chairman of the Tennessee Valley Authority studied the implications of water disruption and wrote an article in which he explained in detail the impact of such disruption (Lilienthal 1951).



this drama wanted to deprive Pakistan of almost every type of assets Abell's telegram informing Punjab Governor Jenkins to 'eliminate salient' must have been based on dual considerations of catering to Bikaner's interests as well as to deprive Pakistan of a valuable arsenal. Sir Francis Mudie the former Governor of Sindh and Punjab, emphatically stressed in his unpublished memories that he found it difficult to believe that the sudden change of Ferozpur and Zira's status without explanation was not the result of pressures put on Radcliffe by Mountbatten and his government (Quoted in *ibid.*: 94).

### c) COMMUNALISMUS

The third factor which could have and should have attracted considerable attention of the Commission was communalism. At the time of partition the intensity of communal riots had acquired alarmingly dangerous proportions. It does not seem very convincing that the Commission-members had shut their eyes to killings that were so regularly taking place in almost all parts of Punjab. Strict adherence to the basic principle governing the partition of Punjab that the contiguous Muslim majority area would go to Pakistan and contiguous Hindu majority areas would remain with India, would have certainly caused less misery and agony of the people involved. A simple glance at the map enables even a stranger to quickly decide that the three tehsils of Gurdaspur district (Gurdaspur, Batala and Shakirgarh) along with tehsils of Ferozpur, Zira and Ajnala should have gone to Pakistan. All were, in some form, adjacent to the territories that eventually formed Pakistan. Three developments seemed to have exacerbated the communal situation. Perhaps the most important aspect was Mountbatten's somewhat sceptical and indifferent attitude towards the deteriorating communal situation. He did not appear to be convinced that the riots were taking that heavy toll of human life. According to Sir Francis Taker, the rulers of some states of Punjab (Patiala, Kapurthala and others) played a despicable role in intensifying the killings.<sup>11</sup> These rulers not only allowed the marauding Sikh bands to use their territories as sanctuaries but also beefed up their strength by encouraging their own state troops to join in the killing sprees. While the Sikh started a systematic genocide of the Muslims in various parts of Punjab, Mountbatten did not make any counter efforts to frustrate Sikh's plan despite of the fact that he was well informed about their plans and was already warned by Sir Evan Jenkins. Second important fact that needs to be mentioned here is Radcliffe's scant respect for these considerations. Had he been considerate enough of these horrible developments, one can safely assume that he would have gone for strict application of adjacent majority area principle. Third, the secret deal between Mountbatten and the Congress for advancing the date for the transfer of power from June 1, 1948 to August 14, 1947 deprived the departing British of sufficient time to make the necessary arrangements for smooth transfer or at least to minimise the intensity of massacre on one hand and denied Pakistan some time deemed so essential to organise

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<sup>11</sup> For gory details see Taker 1950: 445-49; also quoted in Ali 1967: 254-75.

effective administration on a sound basis.<sup>12</sup>

#### d) COMMUNICATION

The operative communication system was perhaps the fourth major consideration linked with the 'other factors', more specifically existing railway network. Both the Punjab irrigation system and railway network were regarded as great gifts of the British to their Indian empire. When a country is divided both the roads and railway tracts often experience disruption of continuity. If the successor nations evolve friendly relationships, not much impact of division is registered but if the successor nations are locked up in an antagonistic set of relationships, then many roads and railway tracts are often transformed into a cul de sac. Too much attention to the preservation of railway's continuity is indeed uncalled for. However it is alleged that when three tehsils of Gurdaspur were allocated to India, considerations for rail link also contributed their share. It appears that when it was decided to provide India access to the State of Jammu and Kashmir, the existence of a rail link to Pathankot must have proved another useful element. Compared to such one sided approaches based on somewhat flimsy arguments, the Commission did not give similar kind of sympathetic considerations to East Pakistan's claim to Calcutta. Assessing by any logical yardstick one cannot escape the conclusion that Calcutta should have been allocated to East Pakistan. From purely communication considerations, the physical separation of the East Pakistan from West Pakistan by itself makes a very strong case for the award of Calcutta to Pakistan. Compared to the Punjab award, such considerations did not figure prominently as far as the Bengal award was concerned. Instead the Englishman involved opted to hand over Calcutta to India disregarding the principles of justice and fairplay.

#### e) SIKHS

The question of Sikh's aspirations was also deemed to be directly linked with the 'other factors'. The Sikhs along with their partner Congress were pressing hard for shifting of the boundary as far west as the river Chenab and were insisting on the inclusion in East Punjab of Muslim majority districts of Lahore, Sheikhpura, Montgomery, Lyallpur, Gujranwala, Sialkot and Gurdaspur on the grounds of the existence of Sikh Shrines in those areas (Ali 1967: 210). On the same grounds, Pakistan could have laid claim to Sirhind, Delhi and Ajmer which had Muslim Shrines of great sanctity. As far as areas like Montgomery and Lyallpur were concerned, the Sikh's based their claim on the basis of contributions they made in developing these areas. Compared to Sikh contributions in these areas, the contributions made by the Muslim peasantry were much more and in terms of

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid. Sir George Cunningham, a former Governor of NWFP and Private Secretary to the Viceroy that the Punjab disturbances were the direct result of Mountbatten's unwisdom in accelerating the date of partition. According to Cunningham if Punjab had been given time, the terrible massacre of August, September and October could have been avoided (*The Sunday Times*, 24 July 1994).

farming population the Muslims outnumbered the Sikhs by four to one. Nevertheless the Sikh claims were received very sympathetically and to invoke strong sympathetic impulses phrases like 'poor Sikh', 'what can we do or them' were frequently employed by very senior British officials (Ibid.: 212). Not only were the claims of the Sikhs grossly exaggerated but the attitude of the British (right from Mountbatten to British officials in Punjab) provided the necessary sustenance to Sikhs' unreasonable demands. In fact, most British officials made no secret of their sympathetic 'gestures' for the Sikhs. Mountbatten went to the extent of suggesting to Radcliffe that 'any generosity to Pakistan should be given more in Bengal than Punjab since there was no Sikh problem in Bengal' (Roberts 1994: 99). Similarly Jenkin was not only convinced of Sikh claims in Punjab but strongly supported their claims in his communications to the Viceroy (Ali 1967: 211-12). Indeed it seems that some form of gerrymandering took place in case of Ferozpur in order to adhere to Mountbatten's request of balancing generosity for Sikhs in Punjab and for Pakistanis in Bengal. Apart from Mountbatten's known hostilities towards Jinnah and Pakistan considerations to compensate the Sikhs must have played a significant role in having the award altered and securing Ferozpur and Zira for India.

#### f) MOUNTBATTEN

Finally the most important aspect of 'other factors' was the personal attitude and the role of the last Viceroy Mountbatten towards the whole partition processes. To analyse Mountbatten's attitude properly one needs to study it in three categories, attitude toward Jinnah and Pakistan, attitude towards Nehru and India, and attitude towards the preservation of perceived British interests. An impartial scrutiny of the Boundary Award clearly reflects Mountbatten's role as less than honourable. Being a member of a Royal family, people in India expected him to be extremely fair and above board. But the subsequent events clearly indicate that Mountbatten developed some kind of bias against Jinnah and Pakistan and consequently his policies resulted in damaging the interests of Pakistan rather badly. Various accounts forcefully emphasise that once it was decided by the Muslim League not to accept Mountbatten as the first Governor General of Pakistan, Mountbatten's attitude towards Pakistan became somewhat hostile and he seemed to have gone out of the way to damage Pakistani interests.<sup>13</sup> This refusal not only wounded Mountbatten's pride but he thought that the refusal was engineered by Jinnah himself. Jinnah, on the other hand, claimed that the decision was taken somewhat against his will and on the insistence of his friends and colleagues (for details see Mujahid 1982: 116-51). Indeed not only Mountbatten was angered but his personal staff was also very bitter. Cynical remarks like 'Jinnah verdict goes in favour of Jinnah' were frequently echoing in the corridors of Viceroy's office following League's decision in favour of making Jinnah as its first Governor General (Ibid.).

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<sup>13</sup> Mr. A.T. Chaudhry quotes Viceroy's Personal Report No.11 and describes that the League's refusal to accept Mountbatten as the first Governor General of Pakistan was viewed as a bombshell (Chaudhry 1982: 83-99).

With injured pride and badly hurt vanity, Mountbatten then seemed to have embarked upon a course of action which would damage Pakistan's interests and favoured India in almost all areas and issues. While the list of issues in which Mountbatten openly supported the Indian interests is very long, the issues that were directly linked with the division of Punjab involved the cases of Gurdaspur, Ferozpur, access to Kashmir, and the distribution of military assets to the two successor nations. The award of Gurdaspur and Batala to India provided the much needed link between India and Kashmir despite the fact that Gurdaspur was physically located next to Sialkot, a contiguous Muslim majority area enjoying physical proximity with an area that was to form part of Pakistan. Besides it was a dual purpose move. It would provide the much desired Indian access to Kashmir and compensate the Sikhs in some ways. Depriving Pakistan of a district which by any logical yardstick, would have been allocated to Pakistan, was an added source of satisfaction. As far as the case of Ferozpur was concerned, ample evidence suggests that initially both Ferozpur and Zira were given to Pakistan but last minute switch was made through the concerted efforts of Mountbatten (Syed 1982: 152-54). An account by the Chief Engineer (Irrigation) of Bikaner amply revealed that well planned efforts were made to influence Mountbatten who, in turn, then seemed to have prevailed upon Radcliffe to change the award.<sup>14</sup>

Compared to Jinnah and Pakistan, Mountbatten's attitude towards Nehru and India can be easily classified as friendly and cordial. He went out of the way to accommodate the wishes of Congress leaders like Nehru and preserve the interests of India. His clear and unrelenting bias in favour of Nehru and India was well known to many senior British officers who did not hide their feelings. Field Marshal Sir Claude Auchinleck suggested quick departure of the British from India soon after the partition as he felt that 'Mountbatten was no longer impartial'.<sup>15</sup> According to another senior British officer General Messervy who stressed that 'Mountbatten could see nothing except through Hindu eyes' (The Sunday Times, 24 July 1994). While there exists sufficient evidence to support Mountbatten's biased attitude, four episodes are mentioned here in order to merely illustrate this point. First, just before it was decided to hold referendum in North West Frontier Province (NWFP) the then Chief Minister of the Province who was heading a Congress Ministry made frantic efforts to have a third option of an independent Pakhtoon State be included in the proposed referendum but Mountbatten refused on the grounds that the original partition plan was changed, on the insistence of

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<sup>14</sup> Dr. Kanwar Sain was a Chief Engineer (Irrigation) of the Bikaner State in 1947 who revealed in his book *Reminiscences of an Engineer* that he was ordered by the Maharaja of Bikaner to go with State's Prime Minister Sardar Pannikar to see Mountbatten. During the meeting, the representatives of Bikaner conveyed to Mountbatten that if Ferozpur went to Pakistan, the Maharaja of Bikaner would be left with no option except to opt for Pakistan. At this point, according to Dr. Sain, the colour of Mountbatten's face changed. It is not too far fetched to assume that since the Maharaja of Bikaner Sadul Singh and Mountbatten had been friends for quite some time and Mountbatten, who was already annoyed with Jinnah and Muslim League, deemed fit in his own wisdom to appease the Maharaja, to reward Nehru and to punish Pakistan in one move (Roberts 1994: 100-1).

<sup>15</sup> see 'Why Mountbatten should have been impeached', *The Sunday Times*, 24 July 1994.

Nehru in order to exclude the option of independence for any province.<sup>16</sup> This clearly indicates that Mountbatten was continuously consulting Nehru when he was preparing the partition plan. The Congress also complained that the then Governor of NWFP Sir Olaf Caroe was sympathetic to the Muslim League. Not only Mountbatten quickly arranged to have sent the Governor on leave but also showed the list of fifteen army officers selected to conduct the referendum in the NWFP to the Congress Chief Minister of NWFP (Cheema 1990: 50-51). The second episode reflecting how much Mountbatten cared for the Congress leaders revolves around his Kashmir visit. Just before Mountbatten actually visited Kashmir, he asked Nehru to prepare comprehensive note on the existing situation in Kashmir ostensibly meant to facilitate him for his intended encounters with Kashmiri leaders. In this note Nehru seemed to have highlighted that the people of the State would approve Kashmir's accession to India because of their devotion to Abdullah and the popularity of National Conference on one hand and on the other it down played the popularity of the Muslim Conference stressing that it enjoyed little influence in the State (For detailed analysis see Lamb 1992: 108-17). During his trip to Kashmir Mountbatten made no efforts either to contact Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas, the leader of Muslim Conference or to arrange a dialogue with Mir Waiz Mohammad Yusuf Shah in order to assess the views of known Muslim leaders (Ibid.). This episode unequivocally points towards his preference for Congress leaders. The logical course of action should have been that Mountbatten should have acquired another brief from the Muslim leadership in order to be familiar with the alternative interpretation of the situation as well as the aspirations of the people involved. Indeed it is difficult to reject that Mountbatten unhesitatingly trusted Nehru. Besides Nehru seemed to have had cultivated relations with Edwina Mountbatten and this seemed to have paid enormous dividends to Congress (Roberts 1994: 88). Third episode reflecting Mountbatten's overt bias in favour of India and Congress leader focuses on the division of military assets. Field Marshal Auchinleck was entrusted with the task of judicious division of military assets. Sensing how Auchinleck's scrupulous honesty could frustrate Indian designs to deprive Pakistan of its legitimate share of military assets, the Congress leadership systematically initiated a vilification campaign accusing Auchinleck of being more supportive to Pakistan than India. Mountbatten, of course, bought the Congress version regarding Auchinleck's role in the division of assets and begun to pressurise him to resign (for details see Connell 1959: 920-22; Cheema 1990: 17-21). While performing the difficult task of dividing military assets Auchinleck was relying for support rather heavily upon the Viceroy, senior officers of the Indian

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<sup>16</sup> Despite the fact that Nehru once admitted to Mountbatten quite candidly that NWFP could not possibly stand by itself, the Congress Committee of the NWFP along with the Red Shirts passed a resolution for the establishment of a Free Pathan State and asked the Central Committee to influence Mountbatten. The Congress leaders entrusted Nehru to impress upon Mountbatten to include the third option. Had Nehru not made his contribution towards the exclusion of a third option at the formulation stage of partition plan Mountbatten would have in all probability agreed to this request of the Congress as well. He changed the Governor and also gave a choice regarding the selection of officers to be assigned to conduct the referendum (Cheema 1990: 50-51).

army and the Indian political leaders and all of them let him down in one form or the other but the most disappointing source of support which totally disillusioned Auchinleck was the Viceroy himself who did not hesitate in exhibiting his overt support for India and the Congress leaders (Ibid.). Fourth episode revolves around the secret understanding between the Congress and Mountbatten regarding the future status of Calcutta. How the British had already decided to give Calcutta to India without even considering logical claims of the Muslim League clearly reflected the one sided approach Mountbatten adopted.

Finally the third aspect of Mountbatten's attitudes revolves around his obsession to retain India within the Commonwealth. Mountbatten was extremely keen to retain India within the Commonwealth after its independence but not necessarily Pakistan (Roberts 1990: 88). He felt that the prestige of the Attlee government was inextricably linked with the retention of India within Commonwealth. Persuading India to join the Commonwealth consumed more of Mountbatten's time and energy than did the security questions (Ibid.: 91). Indeed 'the threat not to join the Commonwealth gave the Congress leaders a lever over Mountbatten which they used to the full' (Ibid.). Krishna Menon's letter communicating to Mountbatten of dire consequences for the future of Anglo-Indian relations if Kashmir was allowed to join Pakistan is just one example of how the Congress leaders exploited Mountbatten's weaknesses and inclinations (Lamb 1992: 108).

Linked with the issue of retaining India within the Commonwealth, Mountbatten appeared to be somewhat concerned for the welfare of British officers. Instead of opting for strengthening of British India militarily he resisted all such attempts and worked on the policies to accelerate the departure of the British forces from India. Indeed such a policy eventually resulted in the massive massacres in Punjab. He appeared to be more concerned for the welfare of few thousands British soldiers and was not much bothered about the looming danger of massive communal horror that would keep the subcontinent in turbulence for years to come. In many ways Mountbatten's attitude towards partition processes reflected short sightedness and self orientation. Even the date of 14th August was selected merely because it was the second anniversary of Japanese surrender despite the fact it coincided with Muslim religious festivals. His hostile attitude towards Pakistan and Muslim League leaders was also the product of a personal rebuff.

The appointment of Sir Cyril Radcliffe generated the impression that the boundary award would be judicial and fair but the actual award disappointed many who viewed the award as more political than judicial. Not only the award was full of ambiguities, but it also gave birth to many complex problems that had and still continue to take a rather heavy toll of South Asian peace. While the disputes arising out of border territories were relatively less on the Western side than those on the East Pakistan's border, but the intensity of tension had been much higher primarily because of the water and Kashmir disputes. In addition, both the partitioned sections of Punjab experienced massive migration of people resulting into chaotic conditions in the border area. Even the Punjab Boundary force failed to stop lawlessness and disorder in the border areas. However when the dust settled

down following the colossal exchange of population, the Punjab waters dispute became the focus of attention. Simultaneously the ongoing Kashmir dispute continued to make things difficult and complicated. Thrice this border has experienced short but violent wars between the two countries. In addition, this border has been witnessing frequent troops concentration whenever things did not work out or the incumbent crisis deteriorated.

Apart from major wars, this border has also experienced innumerable violent border clashes. Part of the reason for these clashes was the dubious nature of Radcliffe Award which was not very clear and ignored various physical features. At some places of this border the two rivers Ravi and Sutlej formed the border but the boundary crossed the rivers at some places. Consequently some villages belonging to Pakistan were physically located on the Indian side of the river and vice-versa which though small in territory and area, often proved to be irritants in many situations.

### CONCLUDING REMARKS

While most of the border disputes were finally resolved in border agreements, the politics governing the boundary award needs to be accompanied by clear answers to some probing questions. Why were the agreed principles violated? Was the award changed and if yes who changed it? When did the change take place? The revelation of source material in the 90s clearly highlights glaring defects of the partition plan of June 3rd, absurdity of limited time allocated to Radcliffe for the division of Punjab and Bengal Boundaries, and Mountbatten's interference in securing the desired changes in the Radcliffe award. Despite Mountbatten's expressed orders to his staff not to have any contact with Radcliffe's office and staff, it is now proved beyond any doubt that he and his staff like Lord Ismay had meetings with Radcliffe. 'According to Noel-Baker's report to the Prime Minister, Radcliffe had admitted that he showed the first draft of the proposed award to the authorities in Delhi and that, on further consideration, he made the award in terms which departed from the first draft'.<sup>17</sup> In addition, Congress hierarchy made concerted efforts to have the award changed in accordance with its own priorities with and without Mountbatten's convenience. Mr.V.P. Menon's unsuccessful attempt to see Radcliffe's at midnight of August 11, 1947, Krishna Menon's threat to Mountbatten and Nehru's friendships with the Mountbattens all point towards two major conclusions. First, the award was changed at the last moment and in consequence Ferozpur and Zira which were initially allocated to Pakistan, were given to India at the last moment. In addition, it is also now known quite clearly how the Indian Congress leaders manipulated Mountbatten along with other British officers in order to secure land access to Kashmir (Lamb 1992: 114-15). Indeed the award of Ferozpur, Zira, Gurdaspur, and Batala could be viewed as an integral

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<sup>17</sup> The British Prime Minister asked the Secretary of State for Commonwealth relations to look into the allegations (linked with the changes of the award) raised by Pakistan Foreign Minister Zafullah Khan who denounced the alterations in the Security Council (Roberts 1994: 97).

component of Mountbatten's parting kick to Pakistan.

To provide an answer to the second question is not all that easy as it involves the exactitude of timings. However one can systematically mention various indicators with dates which can certainly help in narrowing down the time frame. Indeed the issue of change or alterations mainly concerns Ferozpur and Zira area. It was this area which was initially, given to Pakistan but when the official award was announced, both these tehsils were shown as part of India. Radcliffe, himself termed this areas as an obvious case, obvious to go to Pakistan. George Abell's map which included this area on Pakistani side arrived at Government house in Lahore on 8th August. Few days afterward Abell's telegram was also received by the Governor of Punjab which simply stated 'eliminate salient' (Roberts 1994: 93-94). This implies that changes took place between 9th and 13th August 1947. On 9th August Chaudhri Muhammad Ali visited the Viceroy's house where he found Lord Ismay closeted with Sir Cyril Radcliffe. Chaudhri Muhammad Ali also saw a pencil drawn line across the map of Punjab which indicated both Ferozpur and Zira on Pakistani side. Dr. Kanwar Sain along with Sardar Pannikar met Mountbatten on 11th August in which the threat of Bikaner to join Pakistan was also employed. On the same evening V.P. Menon visited Radcliffe's bungalow though he was unable to see him but he met Beaumont. Next morning Radcliffe was invited to a lunch by Ismay with expressed instructions not to bring Beaumont on the pretext that 'there would not be enough room at the table for the extra guest' (Ibid.: 96). According to Beaumont that was the first time he and Radcliffe were separated at any sort of function. 'That same evening Punjab line was changed with Ferozpur and Zira going to India' (Ibid.).

With the new evidence now available for public scrutiny, it is quite clear that the award was altered as far as Ferozpur and Zira were concerned. Difference of opinion still exist over whether Mountbatten himself changed it or whether he exerted concerted pressures upon Radcliffe and secured the desired alterations. Ample evidence exists to prove that Mountbatten merely maintained the facade of having given strict orders to his staff not to make any contact with Radcliffe's office. Frequent but cautious meetings have taken place between Mountbatten's staff and Radcliffe. Noel Baker even went to the extent of mentioning in his report that Radcliffe had admitted having shown the first draft of the proposed award to the authorities in Delhi and that on further considerations, he made the award in terms which departed from the first draft.

The Radcliffe Award was indeed unjust and more political than judicial. The Award of two contiguous Muslim majority tehsils of Gurdaspur district to India not only deprived the Pakistanis the legitimate Muslim majority areas but it also provided the valuable road and rail link from India to Kashmir. This link enabled the Maharaja of Kashmir to actively consider the India option as well. The last minute switched allocation of Ferozpur and Zira to India not only caused loss of large tracts of Muslim majority territory to Pakistan but also enabled Bikaner to safely join India. Had that been no last minute changes, the large arsenal of Bikaner, in all probability, would have come to Pakistan. The architect of all these secret changes appears to be indeed Mountbatten. With Beaumont revelation it is



rather difficult to absolve Radcliffe either. In the end one has to ask the question that why Christopher Beaumont had to wait little over 44 years to unveil this act of stark injustice. But then the history of British colonies is full of even more overwhelming and unjust decisions violating all accepted principles of fairness and justice.

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