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The Rearmament and Arms Control Policy under Sir George Ross-Keppel: Strategies, Implications, and Legacy in the North-West Frontier

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Abstract

This study explores the rearmament and arms control policy implemented under Sir George Ross-Keppel during his tenure as Chief Commissioner of the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) in British India. In February 1899, the Punjab Government ordered the Frontier authorities to disarm the people of settled districts to prevent the supply of arms and ammunition to the trans-border tribes from the British India to minimize the crime in British India. The above act was the result of Great Uprising of 1897-98, which converted the Diamond Jubilee of British Queen Victoria ascending to the throne as a year of trouble. At a time when the region was marked by tribal autonomy, cross-border tensions, and frequent uprisings, Ross-Keppel adopted a pragmatic approach that blended limited rearmament with strategic disarmament to maintain peace and order. His policies focused on regulating arms possession among tribal communities, controlling the flow of weapons across the Durand Line, and using traditional mechanisms such as jirgas to enforce compliance. Rather than imposing blanket disarmament, Ross-Keppel recognized the cultural and security significance of arms among the

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Pashtun tribes and aimed to co-opt local leadership into a framework of controlled militarization under British oversight. This paper analyzes the rationale, implementation, and long-term implications of these policies, arguing that Ross-Keppel's approach reflected an early form of hybrid governance—balancing imperial control with indigenous autonomy. The legacy of these strategies continues to influence contemporary debates on arms control and tribal governance in the region.

Keywords: Rearmament, Arms, Sir George Ross-Keppel, Strategies, Implications, Legacy, North-West Frontier

Introduction

In February 1899, the Punjab Government ordered the Frontier authorities to disarm the people of settled districts to prevent the supply of arms and ammunition to the trans-border tribes from the British India to minimize the crime in British India.¹ The above act was the result of Great Uprising of 1897-98, which converted the Diamond Jubilee of British Queen Victoria ascending to the throne as a year of trouble.² This uprising was obviously different from all previous border troubles. It almost affected 400 miles border land from Waziristan to Buner. About 200,000 mercenaries were involved in this out break were more united as compare to the past disturbances in the Frontier.³ The military operations of 1897-98 proved that the frontier tribes had gained modern rifles. Especially in the campaign of Malakand and Tirah, when British forces faced tough resistance from the tribes by using such modern rifles like Martini Henrys and Sniders. Only in Tirah, they killed

¹ Chief Commissioner Office Record, printed file No. 18 bundle No. 13, 1. Provincial Archives Peshawar.

² Sultan-i-Room, *The North West Frontier Province (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) Essays on History* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2013), 176.

³ *The Rising on the North West Frontier 1897-1998, Compilation from the War Correspondence* (Allahbad: Pioneer Press, 1898), 1.

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287 British troops and 553 made wounded.⁴ The above development compelled the Government to pass Frontier Disarmament Act. Under this act an absolute embargo was put on the carrying and possession of arms and ammunition of every type, in the frontier districts. All the law-abiding men in the frontier surrendered such rifles while the criminals refused to submit their possession. Thus the villagers deprived from self-protection and they were totally now depended on the mercy of criminal gangs (mostly these criminal were from Khyber Agency led by Multan Khan). Resulted the people of Peshawar and Kohat faced considerable hardships at the hands of dacoit parties.⁵ The supply of European arms and ammunition to the trans-border tribes from the Persian Gulf (firstly to Oman and then to Gawadar and from Gawadar to Afghanistan) empowered the tribes for criminal activities in the British territories. The Gulf arms trade started just after the Frontier uprising of 1897-98, which ten years later revolutionized the tribes with modern weapons more lethal from those possessing the border military police and the local militias. This arms trade was carried out by the arms traders attached to French and German armament firms. This trade took the attention of British authorities in India when a consignment of 30,000 Martini Henry rifles reached to Kandahar through the coastal areas of Gwadar and Makran. During the South African war the old Martini Henry rifles were replaced by the modern '303' rifles in the Australian and New Zealand forces who were fighting in the war. The old Martini Henry rifles were sold to the aforementioned dealers. Just in three years (1907-09) about ninety

⁴ T.R. Moreman, *Arms Trade on the N. W. Frontier 1890-1914*. www.king.emperor.com, accessed June 14, 2020.

⁵ Roos-Keppel to the Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department, Peshawar, 30th October 1908.

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thousand rifles including 303 rifles were brought to the coast of Makran which mostly later on reached to the Frontier tribes.⁶

The Ghalzai tribe of Afghanistan worked as broker in this arm trade. These Ghalzai camel caravan carried the Afghan agricultural products to India and on their departure they used to visit Gwadar and Makran to get financial benefit from arms trafficking. When the arms market become popular among the Frontier tribes. The Afridis of Dara Adam Khel invested their whole wealth in this arms trade when they saw the falling prices of their own handmade rifles.⁷ Roos-Keppel's administration captured such modern rifles and forwarded to Simla for further investigation, where it took some interesting curiosity and were sent to Indian office in London. Further inquiries were carried out and Colonel Malison was entrusted to report about the arms traffic to NWFP through Afghanistan. The report forced the British Indian Government to take preventive measures in the Persian Gulf without losing further time. A Gurkha battalion was stationed, who captured several caravan laden with ammunition. Similarly, on the permission of the Sultan of Oman a rigorous blockade against arms vessels was carried out in the Gulf of Oman and Persian Gulf, in 1909 and captured a large number of weapons.⁸ The sudden crush of the Gun trade compelled the Pukhtoons to return from the Makran at the beginning of 1910 and reported that the 'Sarkar' ships put an end to the arms trade and their money were in the hands of the dealers in Muscat. The Afridis of Dara Adam Khel started speculations that the stoppage of arms trade faced them

⁶ J.M. Ewart, *Story of the North West Frontier Province* (Peshawar: Government of NWFP, 1922), 33-34.

⁷ Ibid., 34.

⁸ Arnold Keppel, *Gun Running and the Indian North West Frontier* (Quetta: Gosha-E Adab, 1977), 54.

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with heavy financial losses, which they considered as legitimate trade. They started raiding on the settle districts and demanded for compensation from the Government. Roos-Keppel tactfully resolved the issue by calling a united *Jirgah* of the entire Afridi tribes. The issue was closed without compensation paid.⁹ The blockade in Persian Gulf restricted the supply of rifles and ammunition made by the European companies but this embargo boosted the trade of local made Martini-Henry rifle made in Dera Adam Khel near the Kohat Pass. These rifles were transferred in large scale to Malakand and Buner. The rifles were totally handmade and very effective which created difficulties to the original manufactures in Europe.¹⁰ However the supply of arms and ammunition from Persian Gulf failed the objective of the Punjab Government to prevent the supply of arms and ammunition from settle districts to tribal area. The tribes now having modern arms more cheaper as compared to adjoining tracts of British India. The second objective of the Punjab Government also failed to check violent crimes in British territory. The table give below shows the raising of killing mentioned in the letter written by Roos-Keppel from 1901 to 1907 in the Frontier districts.

Table 2.1

S. No	Districts	1901	1902	1903	1904	1905	1906	1907	Total
1	Hazara	16	20	19	15	19	15	16	120
2	Peshawar	114	82	90	72	93	96	114	661

⁹ Syed Ali Hamid, *Gun Running to the North-West-Frontier and the Clash of 1910*.
<https://www.thefridaytimes.com>, accessed on June 14, 2020.

¹⁰ General Report on Border Affairs in the North West Frontier Province for the year 1911-12 (Confidential), Miscellaneous Record No. II, S No. 761, 4. Provincial Archives Peshawar.

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3	Kohat	35	43	40	37	48	40	48	291
4	Bannu	39	36	22	23	29	22	19	190
5	D.I Khan	10	11	09	05	07	11	10	63
6	Total	214	192	180	152	196	184	207	1,325

Number of murder in frontier districts from 9101-1907.¹¹

In the same letter Roos-Keppel further stated;

The experience of the last seven years serves to show only too clearly that policy of disarmament has had the very result in these three particular which it was desired to avoid. The system of village self-defense on the border has ceased to exist: frontier remissions are indeed given ,but it is impossible to inforce the conditions of their grant, since we have deprived the people of the means to fulfill those conditions: in the interior villages of the districts the wealthier citizens are at the mercy of the armed house-breaker, as was instanced at Charsada but a few days ago: a general feeling of soreness and resentment exists among the respectable classes that Government should have robbed them of their means of self-defense without providing any safeguard in lieu: while many, again, whether from timidity or from interested sympathy with the raiding gangs, are glad to be able to excuse their inaction and their failure to carry out their obligation on this very ground.¹²

¹¹ Letter from Roos-Keppel to the Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department, Peshawar, 30 October, 1908.

¹² Ibid.

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The supply of arms and ammunition increased the crime with so momentum that the Government sent two expeditions against the Zakka Khel Afridis and other against the Mohmand. In the Kohat side, a gang of outlaws established a strong base across the border in Afghanistan and constantly conducted raids in Kohat and Bannu. Similarly, in Mahsud the well-armed gangs of *Mullah Powindah*¹³ committed serious depredations on the Derajat border.¹⁴

Literature Review

Roos-Keppel constantly informed the Secretary of State for India about the Frontier situation for the year 1910-11, that the outstanding feature of the year was the great growth in number, importance and size of the professional outlaws, highwaymen and dacoits who formed a safe haven in Afghanistan and tribal areas. They harassed the people of Bannu and Kohat districts so great in the summer of 1910 that no security of life and property is sure even in the main routes of these settled districts. Travelers by mail *tongas* or in private conveyances were forced to pay a double revenue, one to the Government and other to the dacoits leaders. The kidnapped were carried to the Afghan territory and demanded of their ransom and the Governor of Khost is believed to have extorted a large share of each ransom from the bandits.¹⁵

¹³ Mullah Muhiy-ud-Din commonly known as Mullah Powindah, was from Sultani, a sub section of the Mehsud tribe. At the beginning he was a religious leader of the Mehsud tribe. But when British Indian Government started encroachment in Waziristan. He started an arms resistance to them. For nearly two decades he was a dominant figure in the politics of South Waziristan.

¹⁴ Administration Report of the North West Frontier for the year 1909-1910. Printed Record, S. No. 1956, ii. Provincial Archives Peshawar.

¹⁵ General Report on Border Affairs in the North West Frontier Province for the year 1910-11, 1. Miscellaneous Record No. II, S. No. 758. Provincial Archives Peshawar.

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About the gravity of the situation, Roos-Keppel received many delegations of the affected subjects and forced him to rethink in the existing laws. Firstly, his plane was to make the laws liberal, related to arms licenses. But it was not a permanent solution of the problem concerned, because it was difficult for the villagers, living in the far parts of the province to get arms licenses. At the same time, he wanted to keep the old rules and regulations strict, for the arms like daggers and pistols. In his view, these were the weapons of assassin and were not effective against the raiding gangs who having much better and sophisticated weapons. The main purpose of Roos-Keppel proposal was, to develop a system of self-defense of border and to enable the border villagers to curb the activities of raiding gangs through villagers persuading parties (*Chagha*). In short, Roos-Keppel wanted to reverse the notification no. 303 of British Indian Government, which they issued on the 16th of October 1900, regarding the disarmament of the Frontier settled tribes.¹⁶ The council of Governor General rejected the proposed scheme and regrets to reversed the removal of restrictions which was imposed eight years ago. Although they showed great concern on the supply of arms and ammunition from the Persian Gulf to the Frontier tribes where already the *mullahs* were preaching *jihad* against the British Indian Government. The Deputy Secretary of Foreign Department pointed out the measures already done in this direction. He stated that up to July 1907, the Government issued 6,527 rifles for the use of villagers of Hazara, Peshawar, Kohat, Bannu and Dera Ismail Khan districts and Wana, Tochi and Kurram Agencies.

The Government also sanctioned 1,000 additional rifles which have not yet been supplied. But before they could do more about their scheme the Chief

¹⁶ Letter from Roos-Keppel to the Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department, Peshawar, 30 October, 1908.

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Commissioner needed to submit a detail proposals regarding their proper use and how many rifles needed to every districts. The number of weapons which were surrendered in such districts at the time of disarmament.¹⁷

In a telegram Roos-Keppel briefly informed the Secretary of State in in these words;

It is difficult for me to submit detailed proposals for issue arms to villagers until I have had opportunity for discussion with you. Briefly, however, my proposal is that a sufficient number of Martinis to arm exposed border villages should be stored at head-quarters of each district to be issued on my orders only and taken into store again when necessity for retention by villagers ceases. This would prevent villagers obtaining any imaginary lien on rifles, such as they are apt to claim if rifles are left permanently or for long periods with them. At provincial head-quarters I would have further reserve of Martinis which could be issued by me to districts seriously threatened.¹⁸

Roos-Keppel also wrote a detailed letter to the Secretary of State for India and explained that, in the past the Government issued 8,695 firearms in which 6,652 are the rifles which are under the custody of five settle districts. In addition 1,400 Martini Henrys rifles are kept in the Khyber and Kurram Agencies and are not under consideration to be issued. They are only for emergency in these Agencies.

¹⁷ Letter from J. B Wood, Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department, to Roos-Keppel, Fort William, 11th February 1909.

¹⁸ Roos-Keppel telegram to the Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department, dated 13th June 1909, telegram No. 159-C. Chief Commissioner Office Record file No. 18 bundle No. 13, 5. Provincial Archives Peshawar.

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He also explained that due to no proper check some were found missed which were issued to the villagers in the past.¹⁹

Implications

Roos-Keppel further proposed to withdraw as soon as possible the old Government arms from the villagers and equipped them with Martini Henry rifles with efficient control. His aim was to resist the raids parties through self-defense system rather than troops or police. He proposed a number of rifles for villagers along with districts reserve and a cape of reserve at the provincial headquarter to be issue to the districts on behalf of Chief Commissioner to the Deputy commissioners in the case of serious emergency and withdrawing them on the restoration of normal conditions. The Deputy commissioners would issue sufficient rifles to those isolated villages which are always in dangers and far from the districts headquarters. The remaining would be issue in the time of real disturbance from the districts headquarters. He demanded hundred rounds for every rifles in which only 20 would be issue after the legitimate use of twenty. Every Deputy Commissioner would submit an annual report to the Provincial Government of the distributed rifles. He proposed the following number of Martini Henry rifles and its rounds.

Table 2. 2

Roos-Keppel proposed Martin Henry rifles and their rounds²⁰

¹⁹ Letter from Roos-Keppel to the Secretary to the Government of Foreign Department India, 5th July, 1909.

²⁰ Letter from Roos-Keppel to the Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department, 5th

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The reserve arms should be kept in the forts in each district under the control of

Districts	Number of Rifle	Number of Round
Hazara	400	40,000
Peshawar	16,00	160,000
Kohat	1,500	150,000
Bunnu	1000	100,000
Dera Ismail Khan	1,500	150,000
Provincial Reserve	2,000	200,000
Total	8,000	800,000

military authorities. He further stated that, the communal security is more reliable rather than the individual security, hence 15 rifles should be given to select villagers of each village for the security of land and cattle etc. He proposed Rs. 250 for every Martini Henry rifle as security. This amount was much high for a second hand rifle and this price reduced the chances of selling it in black-market.²¹ The Government of British India recognized the importance of Roos-Keppel proposal for suggesting better provision, for the protection of borders villages. For better preservation of arms and ammunition Rawalpindi Arsenal was preferred over Peshawar. Instead of hundred rounds they suggested 50 for each rifle, twenty for the time of issuing and the rest thirty would be for the reserve in the forts under the charge of military authorities.²²

Roos-Keppel departed for England and the charge of chief commissioner then assumed by Mr. W.R.H. Mark, as the acting Chief Commissioner. The rest of

July, 1909.

²¹ Ibid.

²² From S. H. Butler, the Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department, to the
Chief Commissioner of NWFP, 15 September, 1909.

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Roos-Keppel scheme was carried out by Mark with the help of Central Government to materialize it. The Secretary of Chief Commissioner informed the deputy commissioners of Peshawar, Kohat, Bannu, Dera Ismail Khan and Hazara that, the Government issued 1600, 1500, 1000, 1500 and 400 Martini Henry rifles for yours respective districts from Rawalpindi Arsenal for the better protection of border villages against raiding gangs.

Strategies

They were directed to receive these arms and ammunition from Rawalpindi Arsenal and gradually issue to the villages according to their security needs. They were also directed to collect all the Government arms and ammunition, which were presently under the possession of villagers, for returning to Rawalpindi Arsenal, for disposing of.²³ it has further explained that, the Government of India has sanctioned, the keeping of all spare rifles and ammunition in military custody, that is why, you should arrange officer commanding , to keep them in the forts, in the districts head-quarters. They would be entirely in your control and would be issued on your disposal in the time of need. Later on, the number of rifles for Bannu, were reduced to 100 from 400 due to the satisfactory situations of its border.²⁴ The following rule and regulation were adopted for these arms and ammunition.

- This villagers would not be allowed, to possess any Governmental arms and ammunition during peace time.

²³ Letter from S.E. Pears Deputy Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of NWFP, to the Deputy Commissioners of Peshawar, Kohat, Bannu, Dera Ismail Khan and Hazara, 8th October, 1909.

²⁴ Latter from Chief Commissioner of NWFP, to the Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department, 20th December, 1909.

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- In the first instance only 20 rounds per rifle should be issued. If these twenty were used legitimately, than in the presence of empty case new rounds should be provided to villages.
- In the case of losses any round, a fine of 8 *annas* should be imposed on the loser, and an official application should be written for such losses.
- Every Deputy Commissioner who remained in a district for more than three months, should be sent regularly “taking over certificate” for showing the number of distributed rifles and rounds in their districts to insure at any possible way to prevent the leakage of ammunition.
- An annually “distribution statement” should be sent to the Chief Commissioner on the first January of every year.
- A security bond of 250 rupees, should be taken for each rifle. Fifteen rifles should be given to a village on the general security of property. Then to select 15 men in the village for every rifle. There is no need of cash security, land and cattle is sufficient.
- Less than 15 rifles should not be given to any isolated village, as there would be a risk of the village being raided for the rifle.
- The villagers, to whom the Government issued rifles, and they showed cowardice in defending themselves or refused the turning out of *chighas*, the rifles should be withdrawn from them.
- The important personalities should be encouraged to purchase private arms on licenses for own defense, similarly, the villagers should be allowed to keep a number of private arms for their cattle guard’s on licenses.

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When the Gazette officers (Europeans or Indians) went on tour to an exposed villages, the villagers were bound to provide security to them with these rifles.²⁵

- Deputy commissioners should submit a monthly detailed statement of Government arms previously held by villagers sent to Rawalpindi Arsenal for dispose of.
- As the success of this scheme will depend upon the care and strictness, with which the various measure has been, the Chief Commissioner trusts that you will put forth efforts to instruct yours officers for carful supervision.

Hold off the Withdrawal of Rifles

Roos-Keppel's proposal about the withdrawal of all the old rifles was postponed by the acting Chief Commissioner due to the prevailing state of affairs on the border. From the Province of Khost in Afghanistan, the outlaws were overrun the settled districts of Bannu and Kohat. The criminals were involved in kidnapping of the peaceful citizens of the Nazian Valley of the Peshawar border. In Dera Ismail Khan, the Government relations with the tribes like the Mehsud and Sherani were also not cordial. In these circumstances, it would have not been in the favor of the state to withdraw about 8,000 arms which are of low quality. But still very useful for the defense of border villages at the night. Moreover, they had the advantages that, if these weapon were lost, it were not costly.²⁶

²⁵ Letter from S. E. Pears Deputy Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of NWP, to the Deputy Commissioner of Peshawar, Kohat, Bannu, Dera Ismail Khan and Hazara, 8th October, 1909.

²⁶ Letter from W.R.H. Merks, the acting Chief Commissioner of NWFP, to the Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department, 3rd March, 1910.

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The Government refused to give approval for proposal of withdrawn of the old rifles from the tribes. The central Government rejected the reservations of the acting Chief Commissioner regarding the unsatisfactory situation of the border, because it was more peaceful as compared to the past. So, there was no question to retain the old rifles for indefinite period. The Government issued the new Martini Henry rifles on due understanding that, Roos-Keppel proposed that, the Government weapons of the older type already in the possession of the villagers would be withdrawn, it was not suggested that, their withdrawal would be depend on the condition of the border situation. So, the Government of India are unable to admit the state of affairs on the border is a ground for the postponement of old arms, which they already possess, while the Government already supplied the Martini Henry rifles to them.²⁷

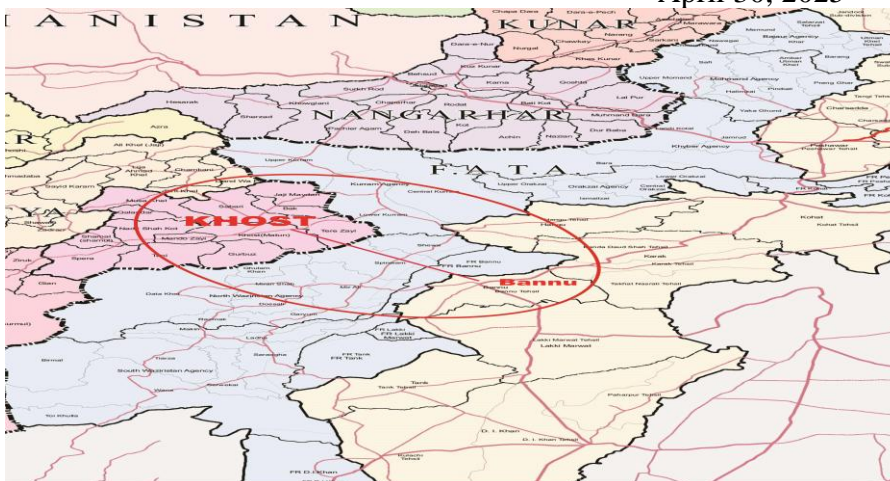
Analysis of the Rearmament Policy

The annual reports on the police administration in NWFP, for the years of 1910, 1911-12 and 1912-13 shows and clarifies the actual position of law and order situation , after the rearmament of the tribes with the modern Martini Henry rifles. In the year of 1910, the Bannu district suffered heavily, from the criminal actions carried out by the gangs from the Khost province of Afghanistan, as it was not far from the British Indian border. These outlaws bands increased the total number of crimes and created unrest for the people of Bannu and its neighboring tribes. Similar situation was prevailed on the Peshawar border due to the unrest in the tribal areas created from Khost.²⁸

²⁷ Latter from E.H.S Clarke, Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, to the Chief Commissioner of NWFP, 13th May 1910.

²⁸ Annual Report on the Police Administration in the NWFP for 1910., 1. Printed Record Section, S. No. 2216, Provincial Archives Peshawar.

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Map showing the position of Khost from Bannu.

In 1911-12, the total numbers of the crimes considerably increased, but the number of dacoits crime decreased with the destruction of Hakim Khan's gang in the Peshawar border organized from trans-frontier tribal area. The number of homicidal increased primarily due to the presence of outlaws in the Khost.²⁹ In the year of 1913, the other types of serious crimes decreased. The outlaws attack on Calcutta Mail in Khairabad Station in December 1913 was the most serious crime of the year. Again the connection of the attackers were from Khost in Afghanistan.³⁰ The total number of raids, murders and other serious crime were 159, 255 and 3,101 respectively in the year of 1909-10. In the year of 1911-12, the number of raids reduced to 114 and the murders cases increased to 272 and serious crimes to 3,316. In 1912-13 the raids further fallen to 71, while the murders and serious crime raised to 322 and 3,827. With the starts of World War First like the other parts of the world the situation in NWFP, also disturbed and again the number

²⁹ Annual Report on the Police Administration in the NWFP for year, 1911-12, 1.

³⁰ Annual Report on the Police Administration in the NWFP for year, 1912-13, 1.

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of raids raised to 93 raids, murders to 394 and serious crimes to 3,998 in the year of 1914.³¹

Table 2.3

S. No	Year	No. of Raids	Murders	Serious Crimes
01	1909-1910	159	255	3,101
02	1910-1911	114	272	3,316
04	1911-1912	71	322	3,827
04	1912-1913	77	316	3,663
05	1913-1914	93	394	3,998

Number of raids, murders and serious crimes in NWFP, from the of 1909-10 up to the start of First World War.³²

To sum up this discussion it is clear that; in NWFP in the year of 1897-98, the British Indian Government faced tough resistance from the Pushtoon tribes, greater after the uprising of 1857. To prevent similar occurrence in future the Government took some serious measures to stop the inflow of arms trade from Persian Gulf to NWFP. When this arms trade stop so, the local handmade rifles manufacturing greatly disturbed the Derajat and Peshawar border due to the frequent raids of the out gangs. To encounter this threat Roos-Keppel developed a self-defense system on the border by providing modern Martini Henry rifles to the villagers living on

³¹ Diwan Chand Obahri, *The Evolution of North West Frontier Province* (Peshawar: Saeed Book Bank, n.d), 98.

³² Ibid., 98.

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the border of settle districts. This system reduced the number of raids but failed to decrease the number of murder cases.

In the light of this study it is recommended that; the present tribal *lashkars* against the insurgent elements in tribal districts are useless. As this experience was once failed when the British authorities adopted a similar policy about a hundred year ago. Pakistani Government should need to minimize the real cause of insurgency which is linked with the deplorable condition of Afghanistan and to develop an effective defense system on Pak-Afghan border to stop the inflow of insurgent elements and weapons to the Pakistani side of the border.

Conclusions

Sir George Ross-Keppel's rearmament and arms control policy on the North-West Frontier of British India represents a distinctive blend of colonial military strategy and adaptive frontier governance. Rather than enforcing blanket disarmament, Ross-Keppel opted for a calibrated approach that acknowledged the deep-rooted tribal customs surrounding weapon ownership while asserting British administrative authority. His use of traditional tribal mechanisms, such as jirgas and local militias, allowed the British to manage armed populations without inciting widespread rebellion—a hallmark of his pragmatic and localized policy orientation. The policy's success lay in its flexibility: it aimed to stabilize the region not by suppressing tribal autonomy but by co-opting it into a framework of controlled militarization and trust-building. This method helped reduce hostilities and ensured a functional, if uneasy, peace along the volatile frontier. However, the long-term consequences of this strategy were mixed. While it provided short-term stability, it also institutionalized armed tribalism, which would complicate future governance efforts and hinder state-building initiatives in the post-colonial era. Ultimately,

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Ross-Keppel's policies reflect an early example of negotiated control and hybrid sovereignty—a form of governance that continues to influence policy-making in frontier regions of Pakistan today. His legacy remains relevant for understanding how external powers can engage with culturally autonomous zones, especially in contexts where the imposition of direct control is neither feasible nor sustainable. As this experience was once failed when the British authorities adopted a similar policy about a hundred year ago. Pakistani Government should need to minimize the real cause of insurgency which is linked with the deplorable condition of Afghanistan and to develop an effective defense system on Pak-Afghan border to stop the inflow of insurgent elements and weapons to the Pakistani side of the border

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20. Letter from Roos-Keppel to the Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department, 5th July, 1909.
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22. From S. H. Butler, the Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department, to the
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