

BRITISH GOVERNANCE OF THE NORTH-WEST FRONTIER (1919 TO 1947):
A BLUEPRINT FOR CONTEMPORARY AFGHANISTAN?

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

ABSTRACT

BRITISH GOVERNANCE OF THE NORTH-WEST FRONTIER (1919 TO 1947): A BLUEPRINT FOR CONTEMPORARY AFGHANISTAN? by MAJ Andrew M. Roe, 83 pages.

From the conclusion of the Third Afghan War (1919) to India's Independence (1947), Great Britain governed the wild, mountainous territory of the North-West Frontier that borders Afghanistan. This control used a variety of mature political and military structures to successfully administer the tribal areas.

The challenges faced by the British in the North-West Frontier are comparable to current problems the coalition and North Atlantic Treaty Organization face in Afghanistan. Looking at British solutions to similar problems in the same geographical area, albeit from a different era, has clear utility.

This thesis provides a historical overview of Colonial India, reviews the political and military structures employed in the North-West Frontier (1919 to 1947), and discusses the current warfighting and reconstruction challenges faced in Afghanistan. It also identifies the pertinent lessons learned from the British experience that are transferable to settling the conflict and furthering the national reconstruction of Afghanistan. The thesis concludes by combining the lessons learned into a coherent four-step plan for the reconstruction of Afghanistan.

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ACRONYMS

DFID	Department for International Development
DOS	Department of State
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
FPG	Force Protection Group
ISAF	International Security and Assistance Force
MLT	Military Liaison Team
MOT	Military Observation Team
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OMC - A	Office of Military Cooperation - Afghanistan
PRT	Provisional Reconstruction Team
QRF	Quick Reaction Force

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Preface

Everything was the same as it used to be, except for an emptiness and an oldness. My eyes noticed only the recognized things; the unfamiliar things didn't count at all: and it was not until I realized this that I knew I must stop and readjust myself to today. The continuity of my life had been broken. (1955, 127)

Peter Mayne, *The Narrow Smile*

The Afghan conflict that began in the autumn of 2001 again focused the attention of the world on the troublesome North-West Frontier of Pakistan. This mountainous region, linking Central and South Central Asia, was one of the most fascinating and challenging territories of the British Empire. The area provided a strategic cushion between opposing British and Russian spheres of influence and became a crucial outpost of the British Empire requiring measured security and stability as opposed to social and economic assistance.

Prior to 1901, the frontier districts that were aligned against Afghanistan were under the administration of the Punjab, as was the remainder of British India. However in 1901, Lord Curzon, the Viceroy, created the North-West Frontier Province in order to focus attention on the area after extensive military operations to prevent tribal frontier incursions. The province was divided into the "settled" and "tribal" areas. Significantly, this extensive geographical area was routinely and successfully controlled by a negligibly small British administrative and military apparatus that encouraged the tribes to "control" themselves through a mixture of incentives and force. A. F. Pollard observed, "A few highly-trained officers, scattered sparsely throughout the country, are responsible for the

good government of the people, most of whom have never seen a soldier and care not who their rulers be so long as they themselves are allowed to gather their crops in peace” (Pollard 1909, 609). A careful examination of this process could identify useful lessons for application in neighboring Afghanistan.

British control relied heavily upon a small number of highly trained British officers-officials, embracing many of the structures established by the East India Company during the previous century. These “frontier officers” were part of the Indian Civil Service or Indian Political Service and were highly educated (representing the middle and upper classes and often coming from top English public schools), committed, conscientious, and hard working. Many had studied Indian law and history and spoke some of the languages. They had a deep sense of duty and a strong national identity. There were relatively few of them. All required a great depth of administrative competence and judgment to wield successfully the extensive powers that lay at their disposal. They contributed significantly to the security and stability of the province. The political officer and the Indian political agents were particularly invaluable in navigating the intricacies of tribal politics.

Despite the unquestionable ability of the frontier officers, it was impossible for British officers alone to carry out the administration of such a large geographical area. Educated and trustworthy Indians were recruited into the ranks of the Indian Civil Service. The standards were high with emphasis placed on integrity and ability. These Indians were invaluable and many shared the same ethics and principles as their British counterparts, gained during their education in England. Their participation was essential (for balance and legitimacy) and inescapable. A small number of geographically

dispersed Britons, unaided from within, could never have successfully governed such a diverse population.

The same organizing principle was true of the army. While a relatively small British Army force remained in the North-West Frontier (acting more as a cohesive and reliable reserve than a force of first choice), the majority of forces came from the Indian Army. The Indian Army's main duty was to protect the peaceful border inhabitants from hostile tribesmen and on occasion, to conduct punitive operations. In the main, volunteer British officers commanded these units. They were a large and capable standing force. However, for more routine activity, the frontier scouts normally controlled tribal territory and the frontier constabulary normally controlled the settled areas. The ranks of the scouts and frontier constabulary were drawn from the local populace.

An investigation of successful British political and military structures employed throughout the North-West Frontier from 1919 to 1947 may produce relevant and useful lessons. In contemporary Afghanistan, the coalition continues to fight a guerrilla war in the eastern provinces and western Pakistan, while NATO struggles to rebuild the capital, Kabul, and other outlying provinces. As resources shrink--especially in the face of competing and higher priorities--new and imaginative approaches are needed if Afghanistan is to continue to develop. Looking at earlier British solutions to similar problems in the same geographical area should prove useful.

Historical Background

British involvement in India dates back to the founding of the East India Company on 31 December 1600, when Queen Elizabeth I granted a charter to the company providing exclusive rights to trade with the East. As trade improved, the

company protected its interests, which were threatened by the instability surrounding the declining Mongol Empire, the varying fortunes of local rulers, and the interference of ruthless chieftains. In 1757, the company's fortunes rose, and it transformed from a trading venture to a ruling enterprise when one of its military officials, Robert Clive, defeated the forces of the Nawab of Bengal, Siraj-ud-daulah, at the Battle of Plassey. Thereafter, the company conducted many of the functions of governance and administration, generating considerable revenue. The resulting structure was a functioning government, owned by businessmen. Such an accomplishment had not gone unnoticed by the British government, and company activities fell increasingly under London's control. In 1813, London broke the company's commercial monopoly, and from 1834 on served as the managing agency for the British government of India. The company lost this function after the Indian Mutiny (1857), and ceased to exist as a legal entity in 1873.

The loss of the East India Company marked a change in the appearance of government, rather than in any substance of policy. Queen Victoria's proclamation on 1 November 1858 went no further than to reinforce the successful guiding principles of the Company's policy. "We hereby announce to the native Princes of India that all the treaties and engagement made with them by or under the authority of the Honorable East India Company are by us accepted, and will be scrupulously maintained, and we look for the like observance on their part" (Philips 1963, 234).

However, some structural changes were inevitable. The creation of a Secretary of State for India and the establishment of a Council of India--essentially acting as a supervisory body--were two noticeable and significant additions.

India's dependence on Britain was cemented by faster communications, the opening of the Suez Canal (1869), and the completion of the Indo-British submarine cable (1870). The influence and control of the Secretary of State over the government in India grew stronger. However, in time, conflicting priorities and an unimaginative reliance upon the status quo resulted in few long-term political or social initiatives. Parliament failed to legislate regular reviews, resulting in an incoherent and benign strategy of political advancement. By 1918, the initiatives and centers of political authority had reverted to India.

But whereas the interior of India appeared manageable throughout British rule, the land frontiers of India appeared less secure. This was particularly so in the northwest, where Russia's expansion into Central Asia troubled and preoccupied British opinion. Policy makers in London and Calcutta faced a choice of leaving Afghanistan as a "buffer state" or of controlling Afghanistan and pushing British outposts into Central Asia. Despite a British invasion of Afghanistan in 1878 to 1880 (The Second Anglo-Afghan War) and a series of major frontier incursions by unruly tribesmen, by the close of the century, the British realized that Russia was using her threat of intervention in Afghanistan as a means of furthering her policies in Turkey and Europe. Furthermore, in 1907 the growth and danger of Germany made both powers realize that they had common strategic interests in Europe and Asia.

However, the numerous tribes of the frontier proved difficult to govern. The establishment of a common border in 1896 between Afghanistan and India--the Durand Line--aggravated the tribes and did little to establish a clear and acceptable partition. Conflict inevitably followed. After extensive British military operations to prevent tribal

frontier incursions, the Viceroy created the North-West Frontier Province in 1901 to focus attention on the area as an entity in itself.

After the First World War, larger problems on the world stage failed to mitigate the tension between the Soviet Union and Britain in the region. Both nations continued to watch each other and the Afghan government closely. In May 1919, attention again turned to the tribes of the North-West Frontier. Taking advantage of the political unrest in India, the newly appointed Amir ordered his troops into British territory under the pretext of protecting his own borders. The resulting one-month-long Third Afghan War resulted in British victory, and had a profound effect on British strategy towards the North-West Frontier Province (Ewans 2001, 123).

The Third Afghan War sparked the mutiny of the tribal militias that policed the North-West Frontier: the famous Khyber Rifles deserted, and the force disbanded. Other tribal scouts followed suit, especially those in the unadministered border between Afghanistan and the North-West Frontier. In Waziristan, large numbers of Mahsurs and Wazirs deserted from the militias. During 1919 and 1920, Afghan tribesmen launched 600 raids on Peshawar, Kohat, Bannu, and Dera Ismail Khan, resulting in nearly 300 deaths, 400 wounded and 436 kidnappings of British subjects. These casualties called for action and the British Army advanced into tribal territory. The British decided to maintain “fingers” of entrance by constructing forts at strategic locations along the whole borderline from Fort Sandeman in the south to Chitral in the north.

This British action reasserted relative order in the North-West Frontier but did not prevent occasional flare-ups. The Afridi incursion in 1930 and the Congress Revolt of 1942 (that spilled into the North-West Frontier) both elicited major military responses.

Diplomatic initiatives, such as the Anglo-Afghan Treaty of 1921, whose aim was a sharing of the burden of managing the Frontier tribes with Afghanistan, failed to achieve tangible results. India had meanwhile become preoccupied with world events. In November 1914, the Indian Army went to war. The war brought dislocation, inflation, and expansion of the Indian Army. After a period of reorganization and reductions, the army again expanded in the early 1940s and by 1942 was one million strong, with recruits entering training at the rate of 50,000 a month (Hathaway 2001, 123). Such expansion relied heavily upon Indianization of the Indian Army. In 1947, after a prolonged campaign of civil disobedience led by Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, England gave the colony independence, ending nearly 350 years of British presence. Colonial India was subsequently divided into India, an officially secular state with a largely Hindu population, and Pakistan, an officially Muslim state. A map of Pakistan is figure 1.



Figure 1. Map of Pakistan

Source: Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection; available from <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/pakistan.html>.

Geography and Climate

The country of the Pathans is much of it craggy and inhospitable, freezing in winter and scorching in summer. (Trench 1985, xi)

Philip Mason

The British named the land east of the former Durrani Empire, including the valley of Peshawar, the North-West Frontier. Previously, it had been known as the eastern frontier of Afghanistan. In earlier times, the region was part of a greater Persia. Geographically, the North-West Frontier joins the plains of Merkan and the Arabian Sea to the mountains of Kashmir a distance of nearly 3,200 kilometers. In political terms, the North-West Frontier can be defined as the area between the Pamir Mountains and the

eastern Hindu Kush, stretching to where the Gomal River divides Waziristan from Baluchistan. A map of the North-West Frontier of India, circa 1900, is found at Figure 2.

The general character of the frontier is an intimidating collection of mountains and valleys. The mountains rise to a height of over 26,000 feet, and the valleys are often meager ravines that are difficult to traverse on foot. The general elevation of the country decreases from north to south. The well-watered and tree-lined valleys of the north give way to the arid, waterless terrain of the south. There are few roads. The climate reflects the altitude closely. In the mountains, typical winter conditions are severe. In summer, the heat in the valleys is oppressive and in some cases unhealthy.



Figure 2. Map of the North-West Frontier of India, Circa 1900
Source: T. R. Moreman, *The Army in India and the Development of Frontier Warfare, 1849-1947* (London, United Kingdom: Macmillan Press, Ltd., 1988).

Thesis Format

The primary questions this thesis investigates are, what were the overarching political and military structures employed during the British occupation of the North-West Frontier after the Third Afghan War in 1919 until India's Independence in 1947, and how could they be applied to settling the current conflict and accomplishing the national reconstruction of Afghanistan? Subordinate questions and areas of research include: the mechanics of government within the North-West Frontier Province; the utility of institutional responses; the employment and effectiveness of the civil service, administrative officers, political officers, and Indian political agents; the role of British military forces, the Indian Army, and scouts; and the responsibilities and effectiveness of the tribal police. Research includes the current situation in Afghanistan, from both general coalition and NATO perspectives.

The scope of this thesis is deliberately narrow so as to make it all the more relevant to the current challenges faced in Afghanistan. The lessons are covered and presented over five chapters.

Chapter 1 provides a historical and geographical overview leading to the research question and secondary questions; states the significance of the subject; establishes the organization of the thesis; defines any key terms used; lists the limitations and delimitations in the thesis; reviews available literature; and demonstrates the research method. Chapter 2 provides a detailed review of political and military structures employed in the North-West Frontier from 1919 to 1947 and investigates the significance, structures, evolution and synchronization of political and military activities. Chapter 3 discusses the current warfighting and nation building challenges faced in

Afghanistan. Chapter 4 summarizes the lessons learned. Chapter 5 concludes the thesis by recommending a “strawman” for Afghanistan’s reconstruction. It also suggests possible areas for further study.

Key Terms

Al Qaida. The base. The radical Islamic network and its outfit.

Amir. A ruler.

Badragga. Armed escort.

Counter-Insurgency. The United Kingdom Army Field Manual, *Counter-Insurgency Operations*, defines counterinsurgency operations as: those military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological, and civil actions taken by the government to defeat insurgency.

District. The administrative unit of British India.

Fatwa. An Islamic decree or judgment handed down by a key religious figure such as the ayatollah.

Gasht. A scouts’ patrol, generally of about 4-platoon strength. Anglicized in scouts’ parlance into a verb, “gashing” or to “gasht.”

Insurgency. The United Kingdom Army Field Manual Volume V, *Operations Other Than War*, Part 1 “The Concept and Practice of Insurgency”, defines insurgency as: the actions of a minority group within the state who are intent on forcing political change by means of a mixture of subversion, propaganda and military pressure, aiming to persuade or intimidate the broad mass of the people to accept such a change.

Irregulars. Locally raised regiments that maintained control within tribal areas.

Jihad. “Struggle”--to achieve what is right; also holy war; obligation of Muslims to engage in defensive battle against non-Islamic forces or unjust rule.

Jirga. Originally a Pashtu term meaning council or formal gathering to arrive at a communal or national decision.

Khassador. Tribal levy (policeman); paid by the British, they wore their own clothes and provided their own weapons.

Loya Jirga. Great Council. The traditional conference of tribal elders, chiefs and other influential people to discuss key political issues. Also the primary law-making body in Afghanistan.

Lashkar. A large gathering, generally hostile; a tribal army.

Madrasha. Islamic religious school.

Mujahid. The Qur’anic interpretation of all those who resist non-Islamic forces. In the Afghan context, those who fought against the Soviets.

Mujahideen. Plural of mujahid; holy warriors engaged in jihad, or holy war.

Nation-Building. James Helis, in *Nation Building, The American Way*, describes nation-building as, “... the intervention in the affairs of a nation state for the purpose of changing the state’s method of government. Nation-building also includes efforts to promote institutions which will provide for economic well being and social equality” (2003, 3).

Pakhtunawali. Strict tribal code of honor.

Piffers. Punjab Frontier Force.

Political Officers. Oversaw the “settled” and “tribal” areas of the North-West Frontier, supervised the collection of taxes and distribution of allowances.

Pushtoon. The ethnic group inhabiting southern and eastern Afghanistan who are Pashtu speakers.

Raj. Kingdom: used to denote British rule in India 1858 to 1947.

Reconstruction. Draft Department of Defense Directive 9-17-2004 defines stabilization as, “Efforts by the U.S. Government in coordination with coalition partners and other nations, international organizations, and nongovernmental organizations to create a stable and self-governing polity by establishing the rule of law, rehabilitating the economy, and otherwise improving the welfare of the people.”

Sipahi, Sepoy. Soldier in the East India Company’s army. An infantryman. Often used to describe soldiers in the Indian Army.

Stabilization. Draft Department of Defense Directive 9-17-2004 defines reconstruction as, “Efforts by the U.S. Government in coordination with coalition partners and other nations, international organizations, and nongovernmental organizations to create a secure and stable environment and to provide for the basic human needs of the population to include food, water, sanitation, and shelter.”

Tajik. Ethnic group living in northern Afghanistan of Caucasoid and Mongoloid sub-stock.

Taliban. Seekers of truth. Originally students from religious schools who later assumed political authority over Afghanistan.

Tehsil. Subdivision of an administrative district; center for the collection of revenue.

Tribal Levies (or Khassadors). Tribesmen selected to police their respective tribal areas.

Viceroy. A governor of a colony, country, or province who acts for and rules in the name of his sovereign or government.

Delimitations

The analysis will be restricted to that of the North-West Frontier (1919 to 1947) and the unique challenges faced by the British after the Third Afghan War until Indian Independence. The examination will not stray into India prior to 1919 or the wider British Empire, as political and military solutions were tailored to fit particular circumstances. The British response to the North-West Frontier (1919 to 1947) was unique to the specific challenges of that geographical area. Secondly, research will concentrate solely upon political and military structures, as both are directly transferable to current military operations in Afghanistan. Social and economic assistance has been discounted, although both undoubtedly played a significant role. This delineation allows the focus of the thesis to be tightened within what is an extensive and far-reaching topic area.

Limitations

Although the Combined Arms Research Library has a wealth of documents and books from the period, some historical documents are not available, even through interlibrary loan. Furthermore, access to current knowledge about military operations in Afghanistan is limited to open sources.

Research Methods

This thesis analyzes the principal question using the historical method. This method comprises six steps:

1. Selecting and refining the topic.

2. Gathering the evidence to answer the research question.
3. Recording the relevant evidence.
4. Critically evaluating the evidence.
5. Arranging the data in an understandable and meaningful way to answer the research question.
6. Communicating the findings in a way to assist in full understanding of the subject.

Sufficient work exists on the North-West Frontier (1919 to 1947) to allow the primary question to be answered.

Literature Review

There are many documents and books about the North-West Frontier. The themes and quality vary widely, ranging from pictorial general overviews to those more specific and comprehensive in topic. Many of the older British works, written when the Empire still existed, appear biased and lack balance and objectivity. This bias is understandable, as these works sold the virtues of the Empire, bowdlerizing shortfalls for popular appeal. This is arguably the case with *A Hundred Years of the British Empire* by A. P. Newton. However, *Imperial Policing*, written by Major General Sir Charles W. Gwynn, K.C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., in 1934, is far more balanced and candid in its criticism of military support to the civil power. This is unusual. More recent works present a more impartial explanation of events and will be the focus for research. Of particular note are Victoria Schofield's *Afghan Frontier: Feuding and Fighting in Central Asia*, T. R. Moreman's *The Army in India and the Development of Frontier Warfare 1849 - 1947*, Charles Chenevix Trench's *The Frontier Scouts* and Michael Barthorp's *The North-West*

Frontier. These comprehensive works draw on a number of useful research sources. *The Evolution of India and Pakistan, 1858 - 1947, Selected Documents on the History of India and Pakistan*, compiled by C. H. Philips with the cooperation of Professor H. L. Singh and Doctor B. N. Pandey has proved invaluable. These source materials allow for objective, detailed, and balanced understanding of the main political and military lines of development. A number of works challenge the success of British governorship in the North-West Frontier. *An Aspect of the Colonial Encounter in the North-West Frontier Province* by Doctor Akbar S. Ashmed (a former member of the Civil Service of Pakistan and Political Agent), for example, stresses failure in communication between the two cultures. Such works provide useful balance.

The Internet has also been useful, but the majority of articles regarding the North-West Frontier have been too general in nature and lacking in detail. However, some sites, such as (<http://www.members.dca.net/fbl/> (British Indian Army)) and (<http://indianarmy.nic.in/arhist1.htm>), have proved helpful. General sites on the East India Company and many of the frontier forces have also assisted research. Despite extensive research, no Master of Military Art and Science theses appear to exist on this specific topic. Nonetheless the thesis, *The Third Afghan War and the External Position of India, 1919 - 1924*, written by Mr M. H. Jacobsen, has been a useful source of information.

There is no shortage of books, magazines, scholarly journals, and government documents on the current and future problems facing Afghanistan. Of particular relevance is Anthony H. Cordesman's *The Ongoing Lessons of Afghanistan: Warfighting, Intelligence, Force Transformation, and Nation Building*. This document, while dated May 2004, provides a clear and balanced picture of the complexities faced by the

coalition. *Afghanistan: A Short History of Its People and Politics*, written by Sir Martin Ewans, a former Head of Chancery in Kabul, Afghanistan, has been invaluable. This book clearly describes the unique challenges faced by Afghanistan and provides a frank insight into the immense task of political and economic reconstruction. A second book worthy of note is *Afghanistan* by Amalendu Misra. This book seeks to provide answers to many of the pressing questions facing Afghanistan and discusses whether post-war reconstruction could lead to a more democratic and peaceful Afghanistan.

Significance of the Study for Afghanistan

The Afghan conflict is anything but a conventional war. It is an asymmetric war fought with radically different methods, by differing sides with different goals and perceptions, and as a theater battle in a broader global struggle against terrorism. (2004, 08)

A. H. Cordesman, *The Ongoing Lessons of Afghanistan*

The war in Afghanistan continues unabated. The Taliban and Al Qaida's defeat was short lived, and both reemerged as a significant threat, fighting a low-level insurgent campaign throughout Afghanistan. Despite coalition efforts, Al Qaida was able to establish new and elusive bases of operation in eastern Afghanistan and western Pakistan; formerly the North-West Frontier. Transformed and undeterred, both organizations continue to prove capable of independent action in the form of small-scale hit-and-run terrorist attacks, politically motivated assassinations, and fragmentation operations. The coalition's response has been resolute, if not wholly successful; evolving into a low-intensity conflict in Afghanistan and Pakistan to meet the complexities and subtleties of the challenge it faces (Cordesman 2004, 9).

At the outset, the coalition failed to “secure” Afghanistan, while its tribal factions and warlords were weak. Having lost the initiative, the coalition faces a number of independent armed organizations who rose to fill the power vacuum left by the demise of the Taliban. The reemergence of warlords who oversee their territories as independent rulers and only intermittently accept the authority of the central government is of tangible concern. Moreover, the coalition neglected the need for economic aid and an effective reconstruction strategy, relying on the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the United Nations (UN). Both organizations have achieved only marginal success.

The result has been a weak and often ineffective nation-building effort centered upon Kabul and the International Security and Assistance Force (ISAF). The absence of a strong central government, a poor economy, the dominance of warlords, and the involvement of government or pro-government forces in the drug trade have combined to exacerbate the situation. As a result, Afghanistan has regained its status as the region’s largest producer of narcotics.

The coalition, therefore, faces a complex and difficult challenge in its search for solutions to the Afghan conundrum. Investigating the success of British political and military structures employed throughout the North-West Frontier (1919 to 1947) may produce some useful and relevant lessons that could have application in the current situation. Indeed, as resources shrink, new and imaginative measures will be needed to control Afghanistan’s geographically dispersed tribes, preventing the reemergence of terrorists or armed insurrection against the government. Looking at British institutional responses to similar problems in the same geographical area, albeit in another era, has clear utility.

This thesis identifies the pertinent lessons learned from the British experience of the North-West Frontier (1919 to 1947) that are transferable to settling the conflict and furthering the national reconstruction of Afghanistan. Such knowledge will be relevant to strategic planners and will contribute to the debate on how to carry Afghanistan forward. Several theses and a significant amount of writing exist on the North-West Frontier, but none specifically consider the value of institutional responses and their utility to the current conflict in Afghanistan. This thesis will also make suggestions as to how these successful structures and responses may be applied.

CHAPTER 2

THE NORTH-WEST FRONTIER

Introduction

The best way of pacifying the Frontier, as has always been obvious and has in fact been proved by the Government of Pakistan, is to provide the tribesmen with education and economic opportunities superior to those gained by raiding. But it is the problem of the chicken and the egg. Which comes first, economic development or some approximation to law and order? To the guardians of the Victorian Empire the answer had to be law and order. (1985, 2)

Charles Chenevix Trench, *The Frontier Scouts*

The first part of this chapter discusses the tribes of the North-West Frontier. It also reviews the major political and military structures employed to administer and govern the province. The second part of this chapter investigates the significance, evolution, and synchronization of political and military activities (institutional responses) to frontier problems.

Context

The British valued the tranquility of the countryside; they believed that a private person's freedom to go about his business without assault was the justification of their rule. (1985, xiii)

Charles Chenevix Trench, *The Frontier Scouts*

Overall control of the North-West Frontier was the responsibility of the civilian British commissioner. He delegated routine responsibility to six separate administrative districts. Deputy commissioners, the majority of whom had extensive military experience in India before becoming administrators, headed the districts. The mission of the authorities was to protect the peaceful inhabitants of the "settled" territory from attack by

unruly tribesmen, maintain free passage on the trade routes, and preserve relative peace along the border with Afghanistan. Military force alone was incapable of controlling the border effectively and the government looked for alternative methods. The British eventually adopted a policy of conciliation, backed by the threat of force. Such an approach required patience and adaptation. The basic policy of encouraging the tribes to control themselves through a combination of incentive (money and arms) and fear proved relatively successful. The tribesmen maintained relative order through traditional customs and practice.

The Way of the Tribes

The distinctive Pushtoon subtribes of the Wazirs, the Mohmands, the Mahsuds, the Afridis, the Khattaks, and the Shinawaris occupy the mountainous area of the North-West Frontier. These tribes are identified by a proud and un-cooperative self-government, a part feudal and part democratic ethos and a rigid Muslim faith. They live by an austere code of honor called “Pakhtunawali.” “This imposes upon the individual three important compulsions which must be observed; renegades must be offered safety and protection, hospitality must be offered at all times--even to an enemy and any affront, whether it be real, imagined or by default, either to an individual, his family or his kinfolk, must be avenged no matter how long such a vengeance takes to accomplish” (Barthop 1982, 12).

These independent tribes remain narrow-minded, jealous of their autonomy, and resistant to outside authority. The people are quick-tempered, independent, and courageous. These tribesmen and their independent culture posed a significant challenge to the administration. Ironically, British social behavior on the North-West Frontier found identifiable parallels in the Pushtoons’ sense of honor and courage. Life is seen and

defined by the commonly accepted principles of winning fairly and loosing admirably. However, Doctor Akbar S. Ahmed argues in *An Aspect of the Colonial Encounter in the North-West Frontier Province* that such a view was one sided. “No such symbols of Frontier romance or nostalgia are visible among the tribes themselves. It is essential to underline that this is a one-way nostalgia. Pathan tribes saw the encounter as extra-ethnic, extra-religious and, in many cases, extra-savage” (Ahmed 2001, 322). Ultimately, the British lacked a common Islamic faith and were viewed as infidels.

Throughout British India, the British regarded the unruly Pushtoon of the North-West Frontier as a different social phenomenon from the other natives on the subcontinent. They were viewed as “noble savages.” In the face of attempts to subjugate or turn them into passive and compliant subjects, the Pushtoons offered stubborn resistance despite having inadequate means and resources. In the early twentieth century, the British ultimately left the tribes in their mountain strongholds to govern themselves, recognizing that they could not bring the tribal territory into the confines of a civilized district. The British exercised control indirectly. The tribesmen were a formidable challenge.

A Lofty Sense of Their Own Calling

My people . . . my people; the phrase rings like a bell through all that he wrote. (Ahmed 2001, 2)

O. Caroe, *The Pathans*

The North-West Frontier was a male-dominated world. British volunteers were driven by a passion to serve and a desire to seek adventure in a land filled with mystery and danger. The middle and upper classes of British society were drawn to frontier

service. Many volunteered because of family connections. Sons followed fathers into the same regiments and served side-by-side with uncles and cousins. This was also true of the political and administrative organizations. Many were second sons of titled families who would not inherit the family estate, and consequently had to choose between the church and an alternate career maintaining social prestige. Service on the North-West Frontier met this criterion and also offered extremely good rates of pay. Consequently, the frontier was governed by likeminded individuals from the same social tier who were dedicated to common ideals. Fair and orderly administration was assured (Schofield 2003, 152).

The tours of duty were long. Ships took months to reach the East and British officials who served in India stayed in India. This continuity was indispensable. Years of experience produced individuals who were well versed in the ways and culture of the country and its people. The ability to speak the language was essential and the mastery of many tribal dialects was a matter of pride. Unbroken service produced officers who were acclimatized to the unique climate of India and who possessed an intricate knowledge of the land (Trench 1985, 137).

The Indian Civil Service--“The Steel Frame”

Thus the government of India is really in the hands of about eleven hundred Englishmen, of whom a couple of hundred are military officers or uncovenanted civilians, while all the rest belong to the great corps of the civil service. (1908, I.422)

A. L. Lowell, *The Government of England*

The Indian Civil Service produced the select few who governed the North-West Frontier. Undergraduates at Oxford or Cambridge who expressed an interest in pursuing a

career in India would attempt the Indian Civil Service exam in their final year. Successful applicants would spend an additional year at university studying Indian law and procedures (mostly criminal law and the law of evidence), the revenue system, Indian history and the language of the province in which they would work. From their elitist education, graduates saw themselves within an elevated social order charged with the duty to preserve civilization in India.

Serious training continued upon arrival in India. The new recruit was put in the charge of a deputy commissioner. The deputy commissioner taught the trainee how to behave; the culture, customs, needs and difficulties of the people in the villages; and the proud history and traditions of the service.

It was instilled into me that as a member of the Indian Civil Service, my integrity, financial, moral and ethical, was to be beyond suspicion. Every action of mine should therefore be fair, just, helpful and kind. There was to be no fear or favor in my actions or decisions and no listening to sifarishes of which I would get plenty. I had to be firm but always polite and courteous. I had to remember that I was not a ruler of the people, but their servant, working for their benefit. I also had to realize that no matter how insignificant I might regard myself to be, in this small rural district, I was a very important person. Whatever I did was expected to be the right and correct thing to do. (Nehru 1999, 213)

Once proficient, the civil servant's opportunity to exercise power was ubiquitous. Assisted by perhaps a few other Europeans as well as Indian officials and clerks, new officials might be required to render legal decisions, determine land tenure, oversee local police, recommend public works projects and provide famine relief when necessary within their administrative districts. Their power and prestige were such that they were referred as "the heaven born" and likened to the Brahmans who stood at the top of the Indian caste system. Those with the aspirations, experience and aptitude to become

political officers had the opportunity to transfer to the Indian political service. A significant number rose to the challenge.

“Indianization” of the Indian Civil Service

Because it was unfeasible to administer a large geographical area with just British officers, numerous Indians filled the lower ranks of the Indian Civil Service. These loyal, hardworking, knowledgeable and effective individuals proved invaluable to the service. They provided much needed cultural balance and legitimacy. The policy of gradually transferring power from British to Indian hands, first announced in 1917, implied that the Indian Civil Service would become increasingly Indianized. This had considerable benefits (Schofield 2003, 154).

A post in the Indian Civil Service offered upper-caste Indians many opportunities. Senior positions were seen as “respectable” employment in a hierarchal culture, whereas “business” was rarely a realistic alternative for an Indian from a good family. Few other options existed. The chance to travel to London, receive an Oxbridge education and a steady income (which in turn enabled them to marry) was an unsurpassable opportunity. Whether an individual’s interest lay in economics, engineering, languages, or law, the Indian Civil Service offered the opportunity for advancement in a structured system. Despite stiff competition, a significant number of Indians rose to the challenge and Indianization of the Indian Civil Service occurred more rapidly than that of the Army. Many British candidates and officials bitterly resented the increased Indianization of the service (Wilkinson-Latham 1977).

Political Officers and Their Assistants

The job of a Political in Waziristan was as dangerous as that of a Scouts officer. Since he must not seem to fear or distance himself from his tribes, he seldom went about his work with Scouts or military escort. Normally he was escorted only by Khassadars or tribal badraggas and he could never be certain that they would provoke a blood-feud by defending him against their fellow-tribesmen. (1985, 135)

Charles Chenevix Trench, *The Frontier Scouts*

Political officers played a crucial role within the North-West Frontier whether working from a fixed headquarters or on tour. They were central players around whom the entire local government revolved, and were directly accountable to the deputy commissioner. They oversaw both the “settled” and “tribal” areas of the North-West Frontier, supervising the collection of taxes and distribution of allowances. Their duties were numerous and explicitly articulated in the *Punjab District Administration Manual*. Political officers needed extensive knowledge of land revenue and law, since they determined both on a regular basis (Schofield 2003, 171).

Political officers were charged with improving the economic life of the people they controlled and often introduced European methods to assist efficiency. These limited measures--such as improved irrigation techniques, enhanced bee-keeping and small-scale silk production--were well received by the tribesmen of the settled areas. Like the Indian Civil Service, political officers were highly revered locally. The tribes readily accepted men with power and visible leadership skills. But personality, experience and understanding played an equally important role. Political officers found that tribesmen best responded to a man-to-man approach. By devoting time and patience to the problems they encountered, it was possible to win local confidence and establish close working

relationships in a territory in order to govern often by influence alone. A good political officer was always in demand.

Respect was essential when entering the tribal areas. Political officers were often a day's travel or more from the nearest British outpost and lightly protected. Without the collaboration and admiration of the local population, their presence and authority would have been untenable. Political officers became skilled at trying to prevent force being used against an unruly tribe unless absolutely necessary. They had supremacy over Army and Royal Air Force jurisdictions--which often caused considerable angst--and were not afraid of using such power. Such authority and standing did not go unnoticed by the tribes.

Political agents assisted political officers. These agents were steadfast and dependable tribesmen who had proved their unquestionable allegiance to the British. They understood tribal customs intimately and were responsible for paying the tribal police, the khassadors (also known as tribal levies). Their assistance and knowledge was indispensable. Post-annexation, no British official was permitted to cross into the "tribal" areas, where the cause of the majority of all trouble lay. Therefore the role of the political agent took on even greater significance than it had in the previous century.

As had the political officer prior to 1901, the political agent would go twice a year to the jirga of all tribes in the "tribal" area to distribute allowances, conduct general discussions and listen to grievances. This was an important element of British control. Michael Barthorp argues in *The North-West Frontier* that the political agents (described as middlemen) were not always trustworthy and that some were motivated by self-

interest. As a result, trouble which might have been averted by independent intrusion often went unchecked resulting in greater consequences.

However, as a rule, the delegation of power worked well. Political agents generally did not intrude into the routine dealings of the tribesmen and intervened only when a serious situation arose or when directed to by the political officer. This tolerant and nonjudgmental approach proved successful. The achievements of a political agent largely depended upon his personal influence and his ability to tackle difficult situations. They were also essential in gathering timely and accurate information, which was challenging in the fractious tribal environment of the frontier (Schofield 2003).

Khassadors

The tribal levies or khassadors were a central and embedded element for controlling the unruly North-West Frontier tribes. This was an intelligent method of allowing selected tribesmen to police their respective tribal areas under the watchful eye of the political agent and irregulars. Such an approach encouraged the tribes to control themselves and reinforced the strength of tribal autonomy. Khassadors were paid but not equipped or clothed by the British. To provide some scale, 4,600 khassadors policed the North-West Frontier district of Waziristan in 1923. The program was relatively successful and the khassadors found few difficulties in routine policing. However larger disagreements proved more problematic, as did the fundamental issues of loyalty when linked to conflicting interests (Trench 1985, 94).

The Irregulars

They [the irregulars] were the Political Agent's striking force if needed; their constant duty was also to show the flag, to proclaim the presence of the Government and its right to go up to the Durand Line. (1985, xiv)

Charles Chenevix Trench, *The Frontier Scouts*

The khassadors required constant supervision, which routinely fell to the irregulars, also known as scouts. These locally raised regiments, commanded by British officers (often seconded from the Indian Army), maintained control within the tribal areas. The primary duties of the irregulars included: mediation between tribes; discouraging raids and the assembly of hostile lashkars (it was better to discourage than to chastise); updating topographical records; giving moral support to friendly tribes; and demonstrating government forces' unrestricted access to the Durand Line (Trench 1985, 105). A comparable organization of armed police, known as the frontier constabulary, conducted equivalent duties in the settled areas. The constabularies' main focus was dealing with raiders from across the administrative border. They also routinely supported the civil police. As with the irregulars, British officers commanded the frontier constabulary.

Irregulars enlisted for a fixed period and received a modest pension on completion of their contract. Despite strong leadership, desertion was a notable problem. "No one much minded a man taking himself off without his rifle; he was assumed to be a young fellow who did not know his own mind. . . . desertion with a rifle was far more serious, a black disgrace on the deserter's platoon and company" (Trench 1985, 68). Irregulars also lost personnel to sickness, particularly malaria, scurvy, dysentery and jaundice.

The irregulars achieved most success by foot patrols, although they also used mounted units. They relied on secrecy and surprise to insure their safety. They were constantly mobile, physically robust and extremely knowledgeable about the people and area they patrolled. In case of difficulties, the irregulars carried carrier pigeons that could be released to return to headquarters for help. Years of campaigning and shared experiences developed deep bonds of loyalty, confidence and mutual respect between the irregular officers and their sepoys.

The irregulars acted as the military arm of the political officer in cases not serious enough to call in the Indian Army. Their response was not always force, demonstrating a clear understanding of tribal culture. “On one occasion in Waziristan, the political agent, Major Baines, as Jack Lowis recorded, decided to use the Scouts to ‘bring to order’ to an important tribe of Wazirs, the Zilli Khel, by restricting the autumn movement of their flocks. The scouts succeeded in capturing nearly one thousand sheep, eight shepards, and two rifles. ‘The sheep round-up was wholly successful in its purpose,’ Lowis noted, although he himself was criticized by an officer from the Brigade at Wana for cruelty to sheep. ‘But there had been no shooting, no casualties and no sheep died’” (Schofield 2003, 163).

Unruly tribes, however, were more often brought into line by the imposition of a fine as reimbursement for stolen property or lives lost. It fell to the irregulars to collect the fines. This did not always go smoothly and if a tribe refused to pay a fine, the scouts imposed a blockade. This measure often had limited impact, as it was difficult to deny access due to the mountainous nature of the country. If such an initiative failed, the Indian Army launched a punitive expedition against the tribe.

The Army of India

The Army of India consisted of both the British and Indian armies, which, when combined, was a sizable standing force. The two armies shared a common command structure. The British Army maintained a moderately small force in the North-West Frontier, despite the pressures of conflict in Europe. It served more as a cohesive and dependable reserve than a force of first choice. The majority of regular forces were from the Indian Army. Their main duty was to protect the inhabitants living peaceably within the “settled areas.” The army would, if required, repel raids by tribesmen from across the border and conduct punitive operations in support of the irregulars. Additional duties included aid to the civil power in suppressing riots and putting down internal subversive movements. A number of troops occupied certain areas across the administrative border, notably Waziristan.¹

The Indian Army was a long-service professional army, which recruited from certain classes of India’s population. Peasant farmers, pastoralists, and on occasion, tribesmen from the frontiers filled its ranks. While ill equipped for modern warfare (they lacked heavy weapons and modern logistic assets), the Indian Army was redoubtable in terms of unit cohesion and basic skills. It was well trained and ideal for frontier operations and a supporting role as an imperial constabulary. Experience in district low-intensity conflict exerted an important influence on the organization, equipment, and training of the Indian Army.

For some Englishmen, the Indian Army was more attractive than the British Army. It offered better pay--which permitted those without a private income to enjoy a comparable existence with British Army officers--earlier promotion, greater

responsibility and active duty. Before joining an Indian regiment, aspirants had to first serve an apprenticeship with the British Army for twelve months. Such an attachment proved invaluable in cross-fertilizing evolving tactics, techniques, and procedures.

However, like the Indian Civil Service, the Indian Army faced Indianization. The 1919 Government Act of India provided the authority to “Indianize” the officer corps to address shortfalls. The initial plan was to issue the King’s commission in relatively small numbers and only in eight units (Hathaway 2001, 123). As the number of British officers was reduced in both the Indian civil service and Indian Army, and as the number of Indian officers increased, a fundamental shift in ideology and approach occurred. By 1940, an extensive expansion program opened up every unit to Indian officers to offset shortfalls.

Operations conducted by the British and Indian Armies were consistently hampered by limited intelligence, endemic diseases, climatic extremes, and scarcity of food and water. The lack of roads severely complicated the administration of those deployed to remote areas of the frontier.

The government constructed a network of roads throughout the North-West Frontier in the early twentieth century to allow the Army to support the irregulars in a timely manner. These roads not only linked the irregulars to the army, but they also brought the tribesmen into contact with civilized India. Roads contributed to the economy of the country. Tribal goods, such as timber, hides, wool, potatoes, and fruit, made their way into the markets of India. Roads were a cheaper alternative to permanent military occupation. They also permitted rapid deployment of forces, enhanced the use of armored cars (which had limited cross-country capability) and allowed rapid movement of

artillery. Ironically, the army built many of these roads after a punitive raid had pacified an area.

The Royal Air Force

It was quite a tricky place to hit. The aircraft had to dive over a crest, deliver its missile and pull up to avoid another crest. After a couple of misses an aerial torpedo hit the target, there was a blinding flash and an immense cloud of dust flew up. . . . The rest of the weapons, a hundred rifles for security, and the fine were brought in that afternoon. (Schofield 2003, 167)

Gerald Curtis

The Royal Air Force played a significant role on the North-West Frontier. Airpower was first employed successfully in 1919 in Waziristan as well as later--and more crucially--during the Third Afghan War. Thereafter, limited bombing was used successfully as a means to punish a tribe for a raid or a kidnapping. Airpower provided a rapid and revolutionary means of bringing order to the tribal areas. However, the employment of airpower had its dangers and limitations. Flying in narrow valleys was extremely hazardous, and should a pilot have to make an emergency landing in tribal territory his normal fate was death. Furthermore, tribesmen became adept at camouflaging themselves from the air, reducing the value of air reconnaissance. It was also extremely difficult to distinguish between hostile tribesmen and peaceful villagers (Schofield 2003, 166).

Despite its limitations, airpower became a central component of frontier operations. It assisted withdrawals, directed artillery fire, provided communication between advance and rear guards and supplied photographic intelligence. Notwithstanding initial successes in these areas, the Air Staff in England firmly believed

that the Bristol fighters should act independently to control the tribesmen. Indeed, some went as far as to suggest that the Royal Air Force should be the primary means of tribal control. The recommendation failed to gain approval. In May 1930, a 700-strong lashkar formed on the Mohmand border. As soon as the British became aware of the potential danger, the Royal Air Force kept the lashkar's movements under close observation. The lashkar ignored a warning to withdraw, so the Royal Air Force began a series of bombing attacks. These attacks scattered the lashkar, but did not destroy the force since the air attacks were not integrated with ground forces in a combined operation.

Institutional Responses

By 1919, the political and military structures within the North-West Frontier were full-grown. Responses to new challenges were evolutionary (with the exception of airpower). Centuries of growth produced organizations that were relatively optimal. Limited advancement occurred through adaptation and the incorporation of new assets, such as the armored car, wireless telegraph and telephone, as well as initiatives to improve public health. Government recognized the requirement to contain and not rule. Underpinning these established structures was a central and irrefutable corps of dedicated British officers. These ruling leaders of the North-West Frontier were likeminded individuals dedicated to a common and shared purpose. Respected and evenhanded, they were viewed as a force for good. Initiatives by the administration had increased the wealth of the population. Their spread of education was also well received and had proven to be a useful counter to unified resistance, fanaticism and extreme sensitiveness to moral influences. The British hierarchy understood each other and worked effectively together, benefiting from the synergy. By 1940 however, this institution was challenged

by increased Indianization and the desire for independence. An unavoidable conflict of interests took hold of the administration.

Despite the challenge of Indianization, the ability to manage the hostile tribesmen remained the core problem. This became increasingly difficult when long-range rifles fell into the hands of the tribesmen. Realizing the value of range, the Pushtoons readily adapted to long-range harassing fire and mountain-ambushes, sometimes stretching for miles. However, the Pushtoons did not abandon the close fight. They improved on it by the skillful combination of fire and movement. These improved tactics were primarily attributable to the large number of Pushtoon deserters who brought their training back to their tribal areas.

Notwithstanding new tactical challenges, the British never lost sight of the primacy of political and administrative institutions. From May to September 1930, the Peshawar District administration was faced with an Afridi incursion which originated within the administrative frontier.² Aggression directed against the government by the Khilafat movement resulted in deteriorating conditions. The military was called upon to deal with the growing situation. Despite extensive operations, which included both the Army and the Royal Air Force, complete control was not given to the military authorities. The commissioner of the North-West Frontier Province remained in control throughout (Gwynn 1934, 255).

While there were clear advantages to such an approach, there were also serious shortcomings that senior military officers found difficult to come to terms with. This approach challenged unity of effort and control. Decisions were ultimately made by a committee of three. The chairman, being the civilian and the authority, had to rely on the

advice of the two technical members; the senior Army and Royal Air Force officers. This arrangement had clear ramifications for the speed of the decision making process.

As a general rule, the military authority in India was responsible for the number and type of troops deployed in support of the civil authorities and for the method of their employment. Experience led to certain modifications to the regulations governing this situation on the North-West Frontier. These modifications led to this unique command relationship:

1. The civil authority could demand armed assistance, and the military authority was not only bound to comply, but the commander was obliged to use force when called on to do so by the civilian officer (the method of employing force and the extent to which it was used remained the responsibility of the commander).

2. The civil authority was entitled to recommend the class of troops to be employed, on account of his special knowledge of the characteristics of the people to be dealt with (such advice would generally turn on the issue of whether British troops or some special class of Indian troops was most suitable (Gwynn 1934, 271)).

Such authority vested in the civil authority demonstrated the unique command relationships within the North-West Frontier and the flexibility of British methods of control. The administration's local knowledge remained paramount, allowing institutional responses to adapt to suit different circumstances. Commanders accepted that actual circumstances were the compelling factor in any response and that doctrinal solutions were often inflexible. Personal discretion was essential.

The military faced the greatest challenges following World War I. Many of the units committed to the North-West Frontier lacked training and experience. New recruits

and old soldiers filled their ranks. The units were far below pre-war standards. There was also a critical shortage of officers (roughly two experienced officers per battalion). The establishment of the Mountain Warfare School, which opened in 1917, went some way to meet these shortfalls. Its aim was to instruct officers and non-commissioned officers in the principles of war with special emphasis on mountain warfare. Particular importance was given to skill-at-arms, self-reliance, vigilance and personal judgment to overcome “trans-border loneliness” (Moreman 1998, 179). Officers were encouraged to develop a “spirit of suspicion” to defeat the tribesmen at their own game. Lieutenant General Sir Arthur Bennett, General Officer Commanding Northern Command declared, “I think there is no doubt that mountain warfare is a science. I have always regarded it as a thing very like a game of chess which wants a great deal of skill to avoid mistakes, but at the same time it is not a science that can be said at any one time to have reached its finality” (Moreman 1998, 123). The Royal Military College at Sandhurst also covered the conduct of frontier operations as part of its syllabus.

Facing growing tribal unrest and tangible shortfalls within the Indian Army, the military turned to technological innovations as a means of addressing deficits. The Bristol fighter aircraft, Lewis machine gun, and armored cars made an impact on the North-West Frontier as did improved artillery. In 1919, the government even considered using poison gas against the Mahsuds. This measure was rejected (Moreman 1998, 111). Equipment advancements notwithstanding, the deployment of experienced reserves (often Gurkha battalions) and superior numbers still proved to be a successful combination on the battlefield.

Airpower brought a new dimension to the North-West Frontier in 1919. However, the bombing of villages, which lay at the heart of airpower doctrine, was rarely politically practical or justifiable. Hostile lashkars were often drawn from a wide geographical area and from villages where many of the inhabitants opposed their behavior. As a result, air attacks were used against small isolated groups. Such attacks lost their impact once tribesmen learned to avoid casualties by dispersing, taking cover and moving at night.

Under these circumstances, it became essential for the British Army to coordinate operations with the Indian Army in the tribal areas to achieve success. However, the military authorities were unwilling to allow ground troops into the tribal areas (except in exceptional circumstances) and relied exclusively on air attacks and artillery, which achieved only limited results. As a compromise, the concept of a “blockade line” came into existence. This purely defensive posture relied on irregulars and frontier constabulary to establish a defensive position to intercept tribesmen leaving the tribal areas. Such an approach had limited effect in “tribal” areas and failed to exploit the capabilities of joint operations.

The increased efficiency and range of new artillery, such as the 18 pounder, had a greater impact on the frontier. Captain H. L. Nevill in *North-West Frontier* describes its impact as, “quite unmistakable, and the tribesmen proved that the familiar Napoleonic ratio of moral to physical effect still held true” (1912, 124). This was certainly true when dissuading lashkar’s from attacking the settled areas. Artillery in these circumstances was used to great effect. However, once they finally realized the capability of the weapon, the tribesmen refused to commit themselves to decisive combat and relied on guerrilla tactics. Such an approach countered the strength of indirect fire.

The establishment of a road system and the construction of forts at strategic locations along the whole borderline was a successful initiative in controlling the North-West Frontier after 1919. Roads, linked to garrisoned forces, allowed rapid deployment of assets across the frontier and provided greater flexibility in an age of motorization than had previously been possible (although pack transportation remained essential to all operations within the mountains). However, a garrisoned footprint had its limitations. In the absence of visible and physical protection, the inhabitants of the tribal areas were placed in a predicament. Tribal law compelled them to help insurgent tribesmen, providing food and shelter. They were not in a position to resist demands. But in helping, and if fighting occurred, they ran considerable risk of being mistaken for unruly tribesmen and would be dealt with accordingly by the authorities.

A restrictive road network and mountainous terrain presented severe supply problems. The Waziristan Campaigns of 1919 and 1920 generated a constant requirement for delivery of ammunition, food, water, and engineering supplies to the deployed troops. Shortfalls in meeting these demands led to lengthy halts, excessive delays and tribal resistance. These lines of communication also had to be secured by additional soldiers, which consumed further resources.

Conclusion

Wars between 1st class Modern powers come and go. Armaments and battlegrounds change with each upheaval. The tribes of the North-West Frontier of India, however, remain as heretofore an unsolved problem. The Indian Army of the future will still have to deal with Mohmands and Afridis, Mahsuds and Wazirs. The Tongis and Kandaos of the past will again be contested. History repeats itself. Let it be read profitably. (1945, vii)

*The Official History of Military Operations on the North-West Frontier,
Between 1920 - 35*

The authorities successfully protected the peaceful inhabitants of the “settled” territory from attacks by unruly Pushtoon subtribes, while maintaining free passage on the trade routes and preserving relative peace along the border with Afghanistan throughout 1919 to 1947. This success was principally due to the maturity of the well-tested political and military structures and the devotion of the individuals who governed the Frontier. Experience led to the development of a distinctive frontier style of policing and low-intensity military operations. New military technologies afforded few decisive advantages to the military. Despite accomplished governance, the Army in India and the Air Force were almost continually in action in the North-West Frontier during this period conducting protection duties, punitive raids, and expeditions. The independent Pushtoon subtribes remained an unsolved, but controllable, problem.

¹In March 1920 Lord Chelmsford, the Viceroy, sanctioned the temporary occupation of central Waziristan as the best means of pacifying the area and protecting the administration border.

²The origin of the outbreak lay in the Congress Swaraj agitation and its alliance with the local representatives of the Khilafat movement. The latter were under the influence of the prominent anti-British agitator, Abdul Ghaffar. He was responsible for the development, from the local Youth and Moslem movement, of a semi-military organization known as the “Red Shirts.” The Red Shirts worked in close cooperation with the local Congress agitators in spreading disaffection, which gained momentum during the winter of 1929-1930. Peshawar city was the center of the subversive agitation. However branch organizations existed in all the principal towns of the province. From these centers every effort was made to spread unrest among the more ignorant inhabitants of the towns and surrounding villages (Gwynn 1934, 255).

CHAPTER 3

AFGHANISTAN

Introduction

Their enmities and bitter struggles spring from the tribal, sub-tribal and regional differences which characterize this, most backward of societies-- differences which escape definition in terms of modern political theory. (Ewans 2001, 12)

Raja Anwar

The first part of this chapter provides an overview of Afghanistan and a brief historical synopsis of the country's recent history. The second part of this chapter investigates the current threat and the coalition's response to unique insurgency challenges. The chapter concludes with an overview of the nation-building challenges faced in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan

Afghanistan is a land-locked country connecting South Asia, Central Asia, and the Middle East (figure 3). It covers approximately 250,000 square miles and its diverse social community has distinct racial, physical, and linguistic differences. It is a heterogeneous nation, in which there are four major ethnic groups: Pashtoons, Tajiks, Hazaras, and Uzbeks. The official languages of the country are Pashto and Dari (Afghan Persian). Recent estimates suggest that Afghanistan may have a population of some twenty-six million, divided into some twenty principal ethnic groups and upwards of fifty in total. Islam is the principal religion and is inextricably integrated with local customs. The country has a long tradition of weak and ineffective central government, tribalism, banditry, and ethnic tension. A high percentage of the population lives in remote tribal

communities. These groupings are generally isolated and poor, relying on subsistence agriculture and pastoralism. The country's ethnic, religious, and regional diversity result in a wide political fragmentation. Ali Ahmad Jalali argues that Afghanistan evolved as a country composed of autonomous "village states" spread across the entire nation (Jalali and Grau 1995, xiii). In some areas, life has continued unchanged for centuries.



Figure 3. Map of Afghanistan

Source: Perry-Castañeda, available from http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/middle_east_and_asia/afghanistan_pol_2003.jpg; Internet; accessed on 12 November 2004.

The government of Afghanistan (the Transitional Authority of Afghanistan), established under the Bonn Agreement in 2001 to advance the country towards free and

fair elections, has proved unstable and weak. It is headed by Hamid Karzai. Ethnic divisions, a perceived over-representation of Tajiks from the Panjshir valley, and a pro-United States policy have greatly reduced the government's authority. Provincial leaders or warlords, many of whom head private armies and possess personal agendas, dominate governance outside Kabul. Legitimate Afghan security institutions are in the early stages of development and are "Kabul centric." The Afghan National Army is embryonic, with recruiting, training and retention proving challenging. Police forces are being "professionalized" under German lead, and Italy is assisting with judicial reforms. In general, progress has been slow.

Modern travel remains limited to a poorly maintained road network linking the major towns and cities. No railroad networks exist. Much of the country is overgrazed and there is widespread soil degradation, deforestation and desertification. Formerly a major food exporter, Afghanistan now produces less than two-thirds of its own food needs. It is one of the poorest countries in the world and is at the bottom of every economic and social indicator. The country also faces an acute mine and unexploded ordnance problem, a result of Soviet occupation and a subsequent civil war. Its links with international terrorism and its participation in the drug trade, producing seventy percent of the world's supply of opium, are of continued international concern.

Afghanistan's Recent History

If there has been an overriding feature of their history [the Afghans], it is that it has been a history of conflict--of invasions, battles and sieges, of vendettas, assassinations and massacres, of tribal feuding, dynastic strife and civil war. (2001, 12)

Martin Ewan, *Afghanistan, A Short History of Its People and Politics*

Because of its geographical location, Afghanistan has been on the axis of conquest, trade, and migration throughout history. Waves of migrating and warring people passed through the region described by historian Arnold Toynbee as a “roundabout of the ancient world.” Each has left its imprint on the country adding to the cultural diversity of Afghanistan. Buildings, languages, ethnic groups, cultural complexities, and even religions pay testimony to this.

The Afghanistan of today took shape in 1747 under the leadership of Ahmed Shah Durrani. The Durrani exercised power in Afghanistan between 1747 and 1978. By 1842, the empire of Ahmed Shah Durrani began to wane, as the “Great Game” between the Russian and the British Empires played out on the Central Asian chessboard. After a failed British expedition in 1842, Afghanistan lost control of its foreign policy and other powers of state, but was generally left to rule itself. Afghanistan gained full independence after the Third Anglo-Afghan War and Amanullah Khan, who led the war, became king. He instigated an ambitious reform program, based on a progressive and forward looking constitution, which granted everyone equal rights. His innovative and radical approach was not universally well received and discontent came to a head in 1928. Amanullah was quickly deposed. After a short interregnum, the Pashtun Nadir Khan took power. Nadir Khan became Nadir Shah, and his son Zahir Shah took over in 1933 and ruled for forty years until 1973. During this period, Afghanistan was prominent as a peaceful, moderate and liberal country within the region. The central government matured, providing housing, education, healthcare, and built roads into regions, which had previously been beyond Kabul’s control. The Cold War superpowers of the United States and the Soviet Union provided significant financial assistance (Schwerzel 2004, 4).

The period of relative peace and progress came to an abrupt end in 1973 when Mohammed Daud, a cousin of Zahir Shah, took power in a coup. Daud sympathized with and supported the Marxist factions, which the Soviets had nurtured and trained during the sixties. In 1978, the communists ousted Daud. The imposition of open communist rule resulted in a civil war, leading to the Soviet invasion in December 1979. For fourteen years from 1978 to 1992, Afghanistan was under Soviet-sponsored or inspired communist rule. Revolts and antigovernment activity was commonplace. “Instead of providing support to the Afghan army, the Soviets were engaging it in open combat. The vast, mountainous countryside was swelling with opposition, convoys already being ambushed on narrow roads, base camps taking fire from unseen assailants. The Soviets had meant to protect the revolution, their greatest worry being the United States response, which had not materialized. But by now they had encountered another enemy in Afghanistan, one they had not fully anticipated” (Tanner 2002, 241).

The Soviet invasion resulted in greater United States involvement in the region. Over an eleven year period (1980 to 1991), the United States and other states provided the mujahadeen guerilla fighters with financial support and arms through Pakistan’s intelligence agency. Additional manpower to fight the Soviets came from Pakistan and the Middle East. In 1984, Osama bin Laden volunteered to go to Afghanistan. By the end of the decade he was providing financial and material support for other Arab-Afghans (this ceased in the early 1990s when he became disillusioned with the mujahadeen and moved to Sudan). After the Soviet withdrawal in 1989 the mujahadeen continued to fight the Marxist government. During the late 1990s the Taliban or “religious students” (most of its members had been recruited from the madrasha or Islamic religious schools) grew

in importance. The Taliban “embodied both religious traditionalism and a Pushtoon tribal ethos, a combination that gave the movement an exceptionally vigorous dynamic and enabled it to prevail not only against the secular tendencies in Afghan society, but also against the adherents of an Islamist ideology” (Ewans 2001, 266). Their goal was the establishment of a strict Islamic state under sharia law, dominated by the Pushtoons. The Taliban, with extensive aid from Pakistan, rose to dominate most of the country, but the Northern Alliance (a loose grouping of Pushtoon opponents of the Taliban assisted predominantly by Russia) maintained control over a number of provinces (Schwerzel 2004, 5).

Afghanistan, under Taliban rule, became a safe haven for international terrorists, who were able to live, train and plan operations with no restrictions. Most noticeable was the Al Qaida terror network whose leader, Osama bin Laden, returned to Afghanistan in 1996. Inconclusive peace initiatives and fierce fighting between the Taliban and the Northern Alliance dominated the period 1999-2001. Of equal importance to the outside world was a growing humanitarian catastrophe caused by three years of drought.

After the 11 September 2001 terrorist attack on the United States of America, President Bush decided to go to war against Al Qaida and the Taliban under the banner of a global war on terrorism. Special Forces linked up with Northern Alliance commanders and served as advisers and forward air controllers. The first air strikes began on 07 October 2001, 26 days after the terrorists struck. Early combat operations included a mix of air strikes from land-based bombers, carrier-based fighters and Tomahawk cruise missiles launched from both United States and British ships and submarines. The Taliban was a conventional force, fighting in a linear manner. It was readily dismantled from the

air. After a relatively brief campaign, the United States led coalition, working in close cooperation with the Northern Alliance, succeeded in ousting the Taliban regime and chasing the remnants into the mountains.

The Current Threat

As part of our efforts to shape the international environment in the coming years, we must shrink the zones of chaos around the world where terrorist networks have already found sanctuary. (2004, 2)

Ivan D. Lesser, *Strike at the Roots of Terrorism*

Security in Afghanistan is fragile. While considerable efforts have been made to dismantle the Al Qaida network in southern and eastern areas of the country, progress has been slow and success difficult to quantify. Following the cessation of major combat operations, fighters dispersed among the Afghan population and altered their modus operandi to low-level rural insurgency operations. Tribal traditions and a strict adherence to the Islamic faith have made locating and capturing insurgents in remote areas particularly difficult. The strict code of honor called “Pakhtunawali” commands tribesmen to view insurgents as guests, providing protection and shelter. Conversely, Al Qaida and Taliban fighters have threatened tribesmen if they assist the coalition or divulge insurgent locations. Consequently, the coalition has received little intelligence from the tribesmen and achieved few spectacular successes.

Insurgent actions present a significant threat to security within Afghanistan. They inflicted over 1,000 fatalities between January and August 2004, demonstrating restored confidence and successful reorganization (Jane’s Executive Summary 2004, 1). These attacks are increasingly diverse. As part of a wider intimidation campaign, they target Afghan and foreign noncombatants and particularly pro-government individuals or those

involved with aid organizations. Besides rural and suburban attacks, guerrilla attacks inside major cities have increased during the first half of 2004.

Remnants of Al Qaida and the Taliban rarely gather in significant numbers. A guerrilla force (ambush or raiding party) usually consists of eight to ten fighters. This force is big enough to be hazardous to United States and coalition forces, yet difficult to identify, monitor and intercept prior to an attack (Cordesman 2004, 104). If attackers are met with stiff resistance, they usually scatter and disperse into the local area or population, seemingly without a trace. “Hit and run” tactics have been assisted by suicide and car bombings. The attacks are now independent actions. There is no structured coordinating hierarchy or headquarters controlling the insurgency.

A significant number of Al Qaida and Taliban forces have found sanctuary across the border in Pakistan. Insurgents continue cross-border guerrilla warfare from the tribal areas of the North-West Frontier Province in which the Pakistan national government is only able to exercise limited control. Despite some successes in capturing insurgents, United States intelligence analysts believe that new leaders and terrorists may be emerging as quickly as old ones are killed or captured. Furthermore, evidence suggests that Al Qaida may be “subcontracting” smaller operations to local terrorist groups, providing financial means and training to carry out the attack (Cordesman 2004, 123).

Warlords

Human rights abuses in Afghanistan are being committed by gunmen and warlords who were propelled into power by the United States and its coalition partners after the Taliban fell in 2001. These men and others have essentially hijacked the country outside of Kabul. (2004, 1)

Brad Adams, *Afghanistan: Warlords Implicated in New Abuses*

Warlords or local commanders present a significant threat to Afghanistan's stability and are a major factor that weakens the central government. They oversee their territories as independent rulers and only intermittently accept the authority of the central government. Once supported and used by the United States in the fight to overthrow the Taliban, these independent powerbases are now viewed as a significant obstacle to centralized control. Coalition support for the warlords has waned and disarmament of their forces is strongly encouraged.¹ The process of "disarmament and demilitarization" is fraught with challenges. Not all warlords wish to deactivate their militias. There are also practical problems regarding soldier reintegration. General Muhammad Atta stated, "But in return [for disarmament], we ask them [the government] to provide job opportunities and income opportunities for our mujahideen who fought for the country. The process of disarmament and demilitarization should run in tandem with the implementation of the project to find employment and other opportunities for people who give up their weapons. This is our proposition" (Najibullah 2004, 01).

Despite promises of disarmament, little progress has been made. Conflict between the warlords is increasingly common as they compete for influence and territory. Violence is unrestricted since the warlord militias are far greater in number (10,000-20,000), training and motivation than the government's troops.² In August 2004, three local warlords launched a simultaneous offensive in the western Herat Province.

Warlords are also inextricably involved in the drugs trade. Many of them profit by collecting taxes from local farmers and traffickers transiting territory under their control. Some warlords control production facilities and are more deeply involved in the trade as

processors and traffickers. The majority use the revenue raised from poppy production as a primary currency for buying weapons and other military supplies.

Drugs

If we are going to ensure that terrorism is reduced, then we have to make political progress in Afghanistan and we have to give people an opportunity to develop a different way of life and a different way of increasing their living standards than reliance on the drugs trade. (Misra 2004, 125)

Prime Minister Tony Blair, 31 May 2003

Afghanistan has regained its prewar status as the region's largest producer of drugs. As of June 2004, Afghanistan produced over 75 percent of the world's opium and supplied approximately 90 percent of Europe's heroin. The lack of an effective central government able to implement an anti-drugs program, a poor economic situation and the number of warlords within the drugs trade have all combined to worsen the situation. The involvement of government and pro-government forces in the drugs trade is disturbing and has been a key feature of the drugs trade's development. Initiatives such as the joint Afghan-British plan to destroy 25,000 hectares of poppy fields have made little overall progress.

Opium poppy, with its short harvesting seasons and ability to survive in arid and semi-arid conditions, has proved to be a lucrative crop for many farmers. It is also inextricably linked to their survival. The absence of traditional economic arrangements, or central control, has encouraged many farmers to grow opium poppy as an alternative "cash crop." Once planted, it requires minimum attention and results in maximum profit. Evidence indicates that warlords and militias have encouraged or forced farmers to shift

from traditional styles of farming to poppy cultivation against their wishes (Misra 2004, 126).

Britain is the lead country in helping Afghanistan to develop a counter-drugs program. It is working alongside the Afghan government to increase law enforcement, improve public awareness and promote alternative livelihoods. The United States, Germany and Japan are also playing roles. For example, Japan donated one-million dollars to support a United Nations program aimed at treating and rehabilitating drug addicts in three major opium-producing areas: Badakshan, Nangarhar and Kandahar. Despite anti-drug initiatives, progress has been limited. Opium production is forecast to grow over the coming years. The influence of traffickers, traders, producers and processors operating within and outside Afghanistan remains at the core of the crisis. Opium production is a problem that underlines the majority of the issues confronting the stabilization of Afghanistan. A growing consensus exists that victory in the war on terrorism in Afghanistan can only be achieved if the war on drugs is successfully prosecuted.

The Response

With most remaining Al Qaida and Taliban fighters operating in small groups along the border with Pakistan . . . [officials] argue that the next step in ensuring Afghanistan's future stability depends on the United States military's ability to build a trusting relationship between itself and the ethnic tribes that make up the Afghan population. (2004, 143)

Anthony Cordesman, *The Ongoing Lessons of Afghanistan*

Operation Enduring Freedom is the United States military response to the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks. Its principal function is conducting combat and counter-insurgency actions against Al Qaida and the Taliban in the southern and eastern areas of

the country³. The United States force has approximately 15,000 soldiers and is augmented by broad coalition support.⁴ While operations have been relatively successful, the coalition's pursuit of insurgents is continually hampered by terrain, tribal unwillingness to cooperate and a lack of local knowledge. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is conducting a wholly separate but concurrent reconstruction effort in Kabul and some outlying provinces. NATO's International Security and Assistance Force (ISAF) includes troops from thirty-six NATO, nine partner, and two non-NATO/non-partner countries, but not the United States. ISAF's mission is to support the Transitional Authority of Afghanistan in building and maintaining a secure environment in order to facilitate the re-building of Afghanistan (Headquarters International Security and Assistance Force command briefing, May 2004). The international force continues to be well received by Afghans throughout the capital and has been highly effective at maintaining stability across the city.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization has maintained the 6,500-man ISAF in Kabul since 2001 and has declared a wider intent to provide security for the entire country. NATO's plan hinges on expanding into northern and western Afghanistan, connecting these largely autonomous regions with Kabul, and expanding completely thereafter. The expansion has been slow and labored, since nations fail to support the initiative or provide manpower. Many fear that an expansion to remote areas would increase vulnerability to insurgent attacks and create a costly and complex logistics challenge. The German Provisional Reconstruction Team in Kunduz has been relatively successful, although expansion into Maimana only occurred due to inter-factional fighting in April 2004.⁵

Provisional Reconstruction Teams

To set the conditions for the achievement of stability within the Provisional Reconstruction Team area of operations in order to strengthen the Transitional Authority of Afghanistan's influence and marginalize the Afghan regional causes of instability. (2004)

United Kingdom Provisional Reconstruction Team Mission, Mazar-e-Sharif

In order to “win the hearts and minds” of the people, the coalition established a framework of Provisional Reconstruction Teams (PRT) throughout Afghanistan under the command of Combined Joint Task Force 180.⁶ These joint military-civilian PRTs provide stability to regions through patrolling, monitoring, influence, and mediation. Security activities reinforce the work of small teams from the United Kingdom and United States government departments within the PRT, which in turn encourages other members of the International Community to engage in reconstruction tasks. The strength of a PRT is dependant upon national caveats and the security situation of the local area. PRTs rely on Afghan militias for security. A quick reaction force from Combined Joint Task Force 180 is in reserve to back the PRTs.⁷

PRTs conduct grass-roots civil-military activities in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and the ISAF mission in order to establish and maintain the influence of the Transitional Authority of Afghanistan. They provide an important interface and facilitate information sharing between the local population and government, non-government and international aid organizations. They have been particularly successful in monitoring warlord activities, utilizing Military Observation Teams and on occasion, military liaison officers. The PRT concept has proved to be a strong force multiplier and a way of extending influence throughout the country with economy of effort and resources. Proposals under discussion call for an expansion of the PRT mandate from

reconstruction to stability. ISAF expansion, if realized, will see a steady build-up of PRTs and contingency forces across the country.⁸ The first stage of this expansion process will combine the United Kingdom and German PRT areas of operation to form PRT Area North.

A functional breakdown of the United Kingdom PRT at Mazar-e-Sharif, as of October 2004, is shown at figure 4. The PRT is commanded by a colonel and has a senior representative from the United States Department of State (DOS), the United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), the Department for International Development (DFID) and the United States Agency for International Development (US AID). The principal focus of the civilian element of the PRT is reconstruction. The Military Liaison Team (MLT) and Military Observation Teams (MOT) are eight man teams using civilian cross-country vehicles to conduct routine patrols and monitoring activities. They provide stability to the region by brokering local ceasefires, overseeing disarmament programs and supervising the cantonment of heavy weapons. Each is assigned to a dedicated region containing a “safe house” for overnight accommodation. These are guarded by members of the local militia for a small fee. The Force Protection Group (FPG) maintains a dedicated Quick Reaction Force (QRF) and provides routine base security. Local guards provide gate control during daylight hours. A comprehensive Support Group includes a reinforced medical section, with a doctor and dentist, as well as a dedicated logistics support team.

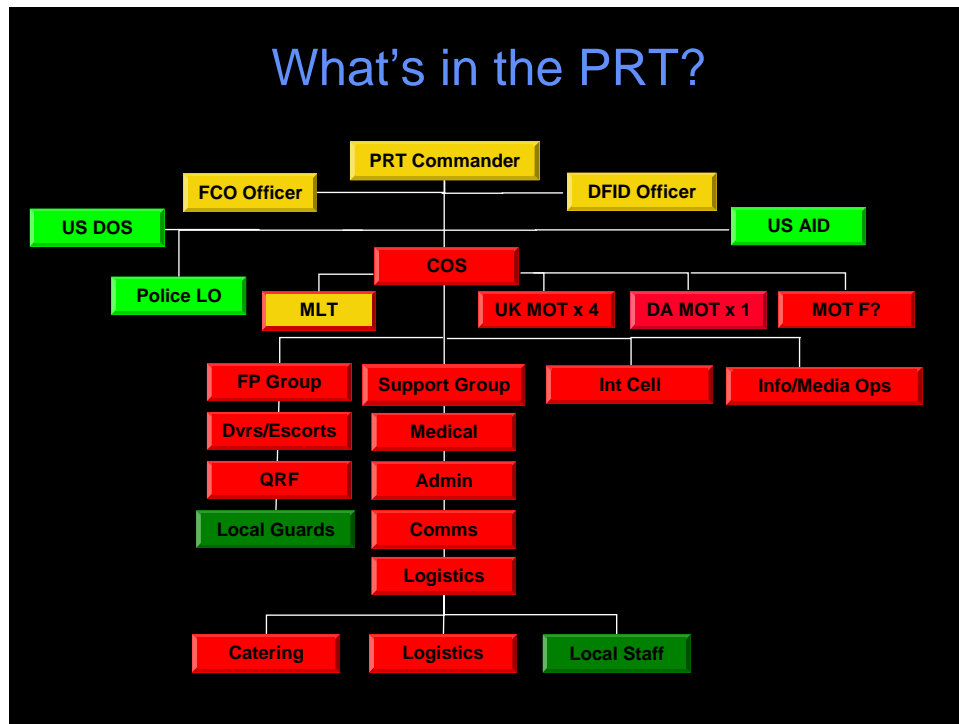


Figure 4. Functional Breakdown of Mazar-e-Sharif Provisional Reconstruction Team, June 2004

Source: Mazar-e-Sharif Command Briefing.

PRTs face many challenges. Travel in remote areas is difficult and there are few roads to assist with vehicle movement. Patrols rely on mud tracks, many of which are not accurately depicted on modern maps. Mountainous regions, such as the Hindu Kush, present considerable mobility challenges and are often impassable during the winter months. Military Observation Teams working in remote tribal areas routinely encounter communication, force protection and vehicle recovery difficulties. Patrols are conducted at considerable risk. International organizations working within a PRT framework also face significant danger and have expressed opposition to the program. They suggest that PRTs “blur” the line between the military and civil relief and aid projects. This leads to increased targeting of aid workers. Guerrillas have attacked personnel with close visible

relationships with the military. Guerrillas see these organizations as an instrument of the military and therefore neither independent nor evenhanded. They are legitimate targets in the eyes of the insurgent and warlords.

Operating Within a Tribal Environment

In Tribal Territory there is not what is generally understood as law and order, nor is there sheer chaos and anarchy--although there would be were it not for the Pukhtunwali code which sets a standard of behavior to which the Pathan at least aspires. (1985, 4)

Charles Chenevix Trench, *The Frontier Scouts*

Understanding tribal politics is essential for mission success throughout Afghanistan. Use of tribal connections and influence are indispensable in insulating and eradicating insurgents. An understanding of tribal codes and religious protocol is crucial for unit leadership. Failure to understand the basics can make actions in a tribal area an intimidating, counter-productive and dangerous undertaking. Isolated communities often view military inroads as an invasion or a breach of Islamic values; therefore, tact and diplomacy are mandatory. Since each tribe may view a situation differently, a uniform response will not always be successful. Commanders must think imaginatively and not be bound by doctrinal prescriptions.

Caution must be exercised when dealing with tribesmen. Feuding Afghan tribes have exploited the search for Osama bin Laden and Taliban chief Mullah Mohammad Omar to mislead coalition forces, dragging them into Afghanistan's tribal disputes. In January 2002, for example, American forces raided Hazar Qadam. Tribesmen insist that coalition troops were misled into the operation, which killed fifteen anti-Taliban fighters. American officials later acknowledged that they may have made a mistake and admitted

that they relied on information from members of rival ethnic groups whose loyalties frequently shift (Dempsey 2004, 14).

The Afghan National Army

The coalition has the mission of creating a 70,000 strong Afghan National Army consisting of some 25 battalions. The battalions will have the skills and weapons to maintain stability in Afghanistan. However, the process is fraught with difficulty. Low pay, ethnic tension and the poor quality of recruits have impaired the process. Desertions are also common and soldiers regularly drift away from inactive garrison life. Language and education shortfalls have also hampered the program.

Despite these limitations, in June 2003, the Afghan National Army launched its first counter-insurgency action with United States military forces. Operation Warrior Sweep resulted in large numbers of enemy casualties without significant positive impact on Afghanistan's security. The operation was viewed as a partial success. Battalions also deployed to Herat in March 2004 to quell unrest resulting from the assassination of the Civil Aviation Minister. Embedded United States Special Forces have strengthened Afghan battalions, made such deployments more effective and developed unit cohesion.

To accelerate the establishment of the Afghan National Army, the coalition established the Office of Military Cooperation - Afghanistan (OMC - A) in Kabul. OMC - A is a joint organization of 228 army, air force, navy and marine staff. The majority of the personnel, including the two star commander, are from the United States. Additional expertise is provided by officers from France, Romania and the United Kingdom. OMC-A's mission is to develop, train, field, and sustain the 70,000 strong Afghan National Army. This includes the Ministry of Defense (where "operational mentors" have proved

to be a great success⁹), intermediate commands, and combat battalions in the field. Additional responsibilities include coordinating the activities of lead nations in implementing reforms across the police, judiciary, counter-narcotics, disarmament, and defense elements of the Afghan security sector. OMC - A has been a successful initiative.

Nation Building

Nation building is the intervention in the affairs of a nation state for the purpose of changing the state's method of government. Nation building also includes efforts to promote institutions which will provide for economic well being and social equality. (2003, 3)

James Helis, *Nation Building, The American Way*

Despite the Bush administration's aim of reducing military involvement in so-called nation building activities,¹⁰ deployed forces have become unavoidably engaged in the reconstruction of Afghanistan. Civil affairs personnel have principally coordinated activities, but tactical units have also undertaken self-help initiatives with great success. The PRTs have also played a leading role. In general, these activities have been small-scale projects in areas where the non-government organization community has difficulty traveling safely to assess and provide aid.

The Joint-Military Operations Task Force in Bagram is responsible for coordinating humanitarian aid and reconstruction activities throughout Afghanistan. It possesses two subordinate Civil-Military Operations Centers at Kharshi Khanabad, Uzbekistan and Bagram, Afghanistan. The task force has nine civil affairs liaison teams. Civil affairs officers and humanitarian workers have deployed together in areas affected by coalition action. This joint deployment is most effective in creating unity of effort. The joint teams have made progress in winning the "hearts and minds" of the tribesmen,

by working closely with Afghan villagers and other coalition forces in rebuilding infrastructure (wells, schools, power, and water plants). There have been few large-scale projects (Cordesman 2004, 142).

Nearly all the principal humanitarian assistance organizations were involved in Afghanistan before the global war on terrorism began. All the key United Nations agencies, including the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Development Program and the Mine Action Service had active programs in the country. Hundreds of non-government agencies were also present. These independent and well-meaning organizations continue to assist in the reconstruction of Afghanistan.

Although there have been numerous achievements during the past years, aid for Afghan reconstruction has not been comparable to that for other recent operations. For example, per capita external assistance for the first two years of conflict was \$1,390 in Bosnia and \$814 in Kosovo but only \$52 in Afghanistan.¹¹ There are also other problems. The growing insecurity for civilian aid workers has reduced their numbers (from January to August 2004, over 40 aid workers were killed and an unknown number wounded), curtailing reconstruction activities outside the security of Kabul. An indication of the complexity of the relationship between military and civilian relief operations was the claim by Medecins sans Frontières that the coalition forces were attempting “to link military objectives with the provision of ‘humanitarian’ assistance” leading to a “confused identity” between the military and aid organizations.

Conclusion

Afghanistan has the potential to degenerate into civil war or state collapse. The veneer of progress is perilously thin. Notwithstanding international intervention, a

resurgent guerrilla campaign, the consolidation of warlords in tribal territories and a growing drugs trade present significant threats. All show few signs of abating in the short or mid-term. The Transitional Authority of Afghanistan controls only a small part of the country and has made few inroads into the outlying regions. These areas remain autonomous and only sporadically accept the authority of the central government. The Afghan National Army has been slow to evolve and operationally has achieved few successes worthy of note. In response to the challenge, the United States has opted for two separate military command structures within Afghanistan and even greater variety on the civilian side to deal with the situation. The United States remains focused on eliminating guerrilla forces in the southern and eastern areas of the country, and NATO is tasked with reconstruction throughout Afghanistan. This has proved to be complex and disjointed. Little unity of command exists and both missions lack synergy. However, the establishment of PRTs throughout the country promises a measure of stability and offers some hope for provisional reconstruction.

¹In 2003 two rival warlords, Mohammed Atta and Abdul Rachid Dostrum stored numerous heavy weapons including tanks, anti-aircraft weapons and rocket launchers. This was coordinated by the Mazar-e-Sharif PRT. However, both retained a significant military capability, including armor and artillery.

²The major Afghan factions, with their estimated troop strength, warlord, locations and ethnic composition are: (1) Islamic Society, *Jama't-e Islami*. Strength: 15,000 to 25,000. Leadership: Mohammad Fahim Kahn, National Defense Minister; General Atta Mohammed; Daoud Khan; Bismullah Kahn. Area of influence: Northeast Afghanistan. Ethnic group: mostly Tajik; (2) National Islamic Movement, *Jumbesh-e Melli Islami*. Strength: 6,000 to 8,000. Leadership: Abdul Rashid Dostum (governor of Mazar-e-Sharif). Area of influence: North Afghanistan. Ethnic groups: mostly Uzbek, includes Tajiks, Turkomen, Ismaili and Hazaras; (3) Islamic Unity Party, *Hizb-e Wahdat-e Islami – Khalili*. Strength: Made up of six groups, with a total strength of about 26,000. Leadership: Abdul Karim Khalili; Gul Aga Shirzai (governor of Herat); Ismail Khan (governor of Kandahar); Hazrat Ali. Areas of influence: Southeast Afghanistan (Ali); Central and Northern Afghanistan (Karim); Northwest Afghanistan (Khan); and West

Afghanistan (Shirzai); 4. Islamic Party, Hizb-e Islami. Strength: 100 to 300. Leadership: Unis Khalis; Burhanuddin Rabbini; Padsha Khan Zadran. Areas of influence: Northwest of Kabul and the Panjshir Valley (Rabbani); Khost, Gardez and Southern Afghanistan (Zadran).

³For example, Operation ANACONDA was one of the largest engagements in the land war. During 02 - 18 March 2002, 1,000 troops from the 10th Mountain Division, 101st Airborne and United States special forces and coalition special forces, along with 1,000 Afghan troops, secured and search the Shai-e Kot area for Taliban and Al Qaida insurgents.

⁴In addition to European and North American support, Pakistan's Army and paramilitary forces have been engaged in operations against Al Qaida and Taliban insurgents in the North West Frontier Province and particularly South Waziristan.

⁵The expulsion of the Provisional Governor, together with the departure of the local militia commander, created a power vacuum that possessed the potential to destabilize the Faryab Province. Not wishing to allow a possible standoff between a key regional warlord and the Afghan Transitional Authority, a British PRT was established in Maimana. Its role was to assist the United Nations, the Afghan National Army and the police to progress the influence of the Afghan Transitional Authority in Faryab Province. The PRT was established five months ahead of NATO's planned schedule. (The Green Howards' Gazette August 2004, 24).

⁶Combined Joint Task Force 180 commands the United States PRTs in Gardez, Bamian, Herat, Kandahar, Jalalabad and Parwan. It also commands the United Kingdom PRT at Mazar-e-Sharif (although this will subsequently transfer to NATO's chain of command).

⁷Additionally, a NATO company-size reaction force was established at the airport in Mazar-e-Sharif in June 2004.

⁸The first phase of the expansion calls for NATO PRTs in Herat, Jalalabad, Parwan and Kandahar.

⁹The Minister of Defense (Fahim Khan), First Deputy Minister of Defense (Wardak), Chief of the General Staff (Bismullah Khan) and Vice Chief of the General Staff (Noori) have been appointed "operational mentors" by OMC - A. Additional mentors assist each staff branch within the General Staff. Operational mentors provide guidance and assistance.

¹⁰Even before taking office, members of the Bush team expressed dislike of nation building, suggesting that it was an inappropriate use of United States troops and resources. During the presidential debates, President Bush indicated that he would not have engaged in "nation building" in Haiti, intervened in Rwanda to prevent genocide, or

become involved in the Balkans. (Rachel Stohl, “What to do with Afghanistan: Prospects for Stability,” *The Defense Monitor*, Volume XXX, Number 9, Page 13).

¹¹CARE International in Afghanistan, *Rebuilding Afghanistan: A Little Less Talk, a Lot More Action*, policy brief, October 2002.

CHAPTER 4

LESSONS LEARNED

Today, we lack metrics to know if we are winning or losing the global war on terror. Are we capturing, killing or deterring and dissuading more terrorists every day than the madrassas and the radical clerics are recruiting, training and deploying against us? Does the US need to fashion a broad, integrated plan to stop the next generation of terrorists? The US is putting relatively little effort into a long-range plan, but we are putting a great deal of effort into trying to stop terrorists. The cost-benefit ratio is against us! Our cost is billions against the terrorists' cost of million. (Rumsfeld, 16 October 2003)

Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld

Introduction

The coalition's current strategy to defeat the ongoing insurgency in Afghanistan has focused on the elimination of guerrilla forces through a policy of conventional military attrition in the southern and eastern areas of the country. Little emphasis has been placed on security and stabilization of the countryside beyond Kabul. This absence of security has diminished the trust of the population in the central government, impaired relief agencies and prevented nationwide reconstruction. It has also rendered aid agencies vulnerable to guerrilla operations. Guerrillas have capitalized on this weakness by targeting relief workers and projects, as well as government officials in an effort to impede stabilization and progress. The absence of government control has resulted in the growth of local militias and the influence of warlords. Opium production remains inextricably linked to nationwide insecurity.

The British historic response to the North-West Frontier recognized that military operations alone could not effectively stabilize a region. The military effect should be accomplished by simultaneous social and economic development and political reform.

These activities should have a common objective and a unity of command, to integrate civil and military efforts within an all-inclusive strategy. Perhaps the successful institutional structures and responses of the British experience in the North-West Frontier 1919 to 1947 can be applied to the complex challenges faced by the coalition and NATO personnel in Afghanistan.

Security Through Central Government: A Flawed Strategy?

The coalition and international community have focused on strengthening the government of Afghanistan, seeing strong central control as a principal means of achieving security throughout the country. However, corruption, inefficiency and political divides--fueled by ethnic rivalries--plagued the advancement of the Transitional Authority of Afghanistan into a modern democratic state. Peace, order, and domestic security remain illusive. Personal interests are common throughout the Karzai regime and erode popular support for the administration. The absence of security outside Kabul resulted in continuing reliance on local powers for security and administration. Coalition efforts have failed to erode the influence of regional warlords, and militias continue to be the cornerstone of regional power. Lieutenant General John R. Vines, commander of Combined Joint Task Force 180 in Afghanistan, stated, "Militias are part of the existing reality, some are legitimate, and some are predators. We need to work aggressively to disestablish militias who are not legitimate, but the challenge is, if you disestablish a militia, who provides security? The vacuum can be filled by anarchy" (Constable 2003, 17).

In a country with no recent history of strong central government, it is unreasonable to expect either a strong centrist or "western style" of administration to take

hold immediately. Ethnic, religious, and provincial diversity thwart progress. The British recognized the need to delegate responsibility within the North-West Frontier to achieve security, while still maintaining political primacy. Strong central control alone, which the British enjoyed, could not address the unique challenges of tribal multiplicity. A distinct bureaucracy in the form of separate administrative districts, each headed by a civilian deputy commissioner, provided control. Within the districts, the irregulars or scouts provided primary security. These locally raised regiments, commanded by British officers, maintained control of the tribal areas. An analogous organization, known as the frontier constabulary, conducted similar duties in the settled areas. Both organizations were overseen by the Army of India. Such a delineation of responsibilities proved effective and regional security was maintained.

As opposed to dismantling regional militias, the Transitional Authority of Afghanistan should give consideration to co-opting and incorporating them under government control for legitimate purposes. Arguably this is no more difficult than continuing the current goal of establishing strong central control; something that is alien to the people of Afghanistan. Regional forces could be trained, equipped and organized into a nation-wide security structure, which is centrally paid and has common operating procedures. Under such a structure, the militias could become a lawful and useful cornerstone of regional security. Supported by a small cadre of Afghan National Army personnel or coalition trainers, and reinforced by a larger central force (the Afghan National Army), these militias could fill the same role as the irregulars of the North-West Frontier. This system would provide regional security under a recognized ethnic framework. It would also offset the requirement to establish immediate central control

and provide gainful employment for those personnel being demobilized (an additional source of regional instability).

This proposal faces many obstacles. Some of the local militias were previously implicated in human rights violations. Confidence would have to be reestablished, and those associated with alleged crimes investigated or granted amnesty. Militia involvement with poppy production and inter-militia conflicts would also have to cease. Indeed, militias may have to become engaged in poppy field eradication. This proposal would require that the incorporated militias deal with unlawful activity swiftly and efficiently and be loyal to the central government. Finally, the issue of warlords must be addressed as they have ultimate control over the militias.

Warlords or Deputy Commissioners?

Warlords are needed to maintain stability in their provinces to allow Kabul--the essential center of gravity--to continue building power.
(Armstrong 2003, 88)

Colonel Joseph D. Celeski, Commander of Combined Joint Special
Operations Task Force, 31 May 2003

The government of Afghanistan does not possess sufficient muscle to eliminate warlords who cause a danger to internal regional security and stability. To date, government efforts to appease warlords through political and military appointments have failed to restrain ambitions for regional dominance. Warlords continue to rebuff central control and “green on green” disagreements between rival militias destabilize rural areas of Afghanistan. Warlords’ continued involvement in poppy production and associated illegitimate activity is divisive. Notwithstanding these shortfalls, warlords play a pivotal

role in regional security. Their removal would create a vacuum of lawlessness and regional disorder. In the short term, warlords are essential in enhancing regional stability.

Accepting warlords as equivalent “deputy commissioners” or province governors may be a solution to addressing the underlying issues of regional control. With government approval and clear jurisdiction, warlords could play a legitimate role in regional security and reconstruction. Their extensive local knowledge and respect within the local community are key attributes for success. Warlords are well suited to making local legal decisions, determining land tenure, and providing relief. Many have undertaken such responsibilities previously. By filling the appointment, warlords could maintain their militias for legitimate purposes (albeit at a reduced establishment) and preserve their status within the local community. This would be well-received by the international aid agencies. It may also prove to be an agreeable path to overt support for the Transitional Authority of Afghanistan.

However, such a plan will face many local and international challenges. Warlords would have to perform a regional administrative role, requiring many new skills. They would have to relinquish or delegate their militia command and train for their new role. Disengaging from military activities will not prove easy. Warlords would, in addition, have to limit some regional ambitions and take no further part in poppy production. A legitimate government salary would not equate to an income gained through drugs, and recourse to trafficking may occur in secret. Warlords would also require the support of civil servants to achieve proficient administration. Establishment and training of such a corps of civil servants would take time.

“Political Agent” or Advisor to the Province Governor?

Newly established province governors would benefit from the advice of knowledgeable advisors, versed in the procedures of effective administration. Political officers filled this role effectively within the North-West Frontier. They were central players around whom the entire local government revolved, and were directly accountable to the deputy commissioner. Their responsibilities included overseeing tribal areas, supervising the collection of taxes and distribution of allowances, as well as improving the economic life of the people they controlled. They were highly respected. Proficiency was based on education, experience, and skill.

Highly trained advisers at the elbow of the province governor confer many advantages. They could coordinate regional reconstruction with aid agencies, monitor militia activities and provided an essential link to coordinate coalition activities. They could apply their expertise to help mentor the province governor and shape the development of local administration. They would also prove useful in gaining low-level intelligence.

The Reintroduction of Khassadors?

The coalition has made limited progress in dismantling the Al Qaida and Taliban network in the southern and eastern areas of Afghanistan. Attacks against the coalition and aid agencies have increased. Capturing insurgents in remote areas is particularly difficult and hindered by tribal traditions and strict Islamic faith. Local intelligence has been almost nonexistent. Al Qaida and Taliban forces continue to conduct cross-border guerilla warfare from the tribal areas of the North-West Frontier Province.

Tribal levies or khassadors were a central element of control on the North-West Frontier. Carefully selected tribesmen were paid to police their respective tribal areas under the watchful eye of the political agent and irregulars. They also proved to be excellent sources of local intelligence. Khassadors were remunerated but not equipped or clothed by the British. The program was relatively successful for routine matters and was cost-effective. Larger disagreements were more problematic, as were issues of allegiance when linked to incompatible interests.

The establishment of a network of tribal khassadors in the southern and eastern areas of Afghanistan may prove beneficial in countering the insurgency campaign. To meet current needs, the focus of the network should be placed on gathering low-level intelligence and providing early warning of guerrilla attacks. Policing routine tribal issues should occur simultaneously or once the current threat has diminished. Accepting initial shortfalls and variances in standards will be fundamental to making the initiative work in the long-term. Khassadors would continue to face numerous conflicts of interest, but the earlier British experience shows that the overarching benefits significantly outweigh the shortfalls.

Provisional Reconstruction Teams: The Answer?

The establishment of Provisional Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) represents a revolutionary step in the reconstruction of Afghanistan. The program combines security and civil action to facilitate regional development. Unity of command and effort is central. The PRT initiative has been a success and mirrors many of the functions undertaken by the British political and military structures of the North-West Frontier. PRTs present a distinct defense against an evolving insurgency in Afghanistan.

Lieutenant General John R. Vines, speaking at Fort Bragg on 25 August 2003 stated, “It’s [the PRT] something the Taliban recognizes they can’t compete with” (Miles 2004, 1).

PRTs possess the ability to positively influence a significant proportion of Afghanistan’s rural population, thereby providing regional stability. They deliver services that directly affect welfare, income, and quality of life; services never before provided by the central government of Afghanistan. Initiatives to repair damaged infrastructure (for example roads, water wells, bridges and schools) have made an important impact on the local population. Such initiatives gain the support and favor of the “broad mass of the people,” which is central to the long-term stability of Afghanistan and degradation of the Al Qaida and Taliban guerrilla campaign. A mutually supporting network of PRTs could lead to enhanced security over the entire country.

However, any expansion must include efforts to train and equip local police; an area that has been neglected by some PRTs. Regional security is essential, and local police will gradually replace the coalition and NATO security forces conducting such duties. They will provide stability and security after the PRT liaison teams have moved to new areas. Local police should also investigate crimes against civilians, in order to negate criticism that PRTs have no mandate or training to investigate local violations of crimes or human rights abuses.

PRTs should also develop closer working relationships with regional leaders and warlords. Military liaison officers should be assigned to work with these leaders, monitoring behavior and activities. Attention should also be given to utilizing embedded medical assets. Most PRTs contain a doctor, dentist and a number of highly trained medical technicians. As the majority of the rural areas influenced by the PRTs lack the

infrastructure to meet the basic health care needs of the population, medical assistance could be an important factor for securing the “middle ground.” The educational needs of the local population must also be taken into consideration. Spread of education throughout the North-West Frontier was well received by the tribesmen. It also proved to be a useful counter to resistance, fanaticism and extreme sensitiveness to moral influences. Therefore, additional roles of the PRTs should be to coordinate regional educational and medical support as part of a wider reconstruction campaign.

Senior representatives from the United States Department of State and the United Kingdom’s Department for International Development are in charge of all reconstruction work. Many serve in the PRTs for two years, providing continuity and experience. They ensure that the aid organizations are used effectively and are integrated into the civilian-led assistance coordination program. However co-location and closer working relations with the PRT have rendered aid agencies vulnerable to attack. PRTs need to convince the local population that aid and assistance will be withdrawn should they fail to warn or prevent attacks. This approach had some successes on the North-West Frontier.

Finally, thought should be given to “civilianizing” the PRTs wherever possible, in order to help restore the perception of normality, return the military to its primary mission and perhaps even lead to a reduced threat. For example, liaison officers or advisers to warlords or regional commanders could be civilians with prior military service. Qualified local Afghans should also be incorporated into key PRT appointments. This would help with perceived legitimacy and is a natural evolution of the PRT concept.

Roads and Railroads

Now my children can walk safely and easily to school. The cars move faster and the drive is smoother. Now it's much easier for me to take my fruit and vegetables to the market. This paved road is very good. (USAID 2003, 01)

Sultan Mohammed, Wardak Province

Complicating the work of the PRTs and coalition in Afghanistan is “a primitive road network” (Miles 2004, 2). The principal road structure of Afghanistan is in a poor state of repair. Two-and-a-half decades of civil war and a lack of infrastructure investment led to considerable deterioration. The United States Agency for International Development has completed Phase 1 of the project to pave the 389-kilometer Kabul to Kandahar highway (linking Afghanistan's two largest cities, Kandahar and Herat, to Kabul). In addition, another 1,000 kilometers of rural roads have been rehabilitated or built under other programs. Rehabilitation of the roads is expected to lead to increased access to clinics, hospitals, schools, and markets. It will also provide farmers with greater opportunities to move their products to market. Roads remain a priority mission (USAID 2003, 01).

The British established a robust road network throughout remote areas of the North-West Frontier as a security measure. The initiative was a success. Roads linked to garrison forces allowed rapid deployment of assets across the frontier and provided greater flexibility for the government irregulars and the Army of India. Roads were an alternative to military occupation and a much cheaper substitute. They contributed to the economy of the region and facilitated trade. Moreover, roads were a principal means of bringing tribesmen into contact with civilized India.

Investments should be directed towards the improvement of the existing road network and the construction of new roads, especially in those regions hosting PRTs. Roads will allow the PRTs and aid organizations to cover a greater area in less time. They would also allow tribesmen and their family's access to government services and provide greater opportunities for farmers to sell their agricultural products. Such an initiative would support central government authority in the remote districts and would influence the "middle ground" in the coalition's favor.

In support of new roads, consideration should also be given to developing an extensive railway network. Despite a small number of ambitious proposals for railroad construction (including the 1928 Kabul to Jalalabad line), terrain, economics, concern over gauge standards, and a past strategy of opposing railway construction, have all prevented Afghanistan from constructing an effective network. The current government is eager to address this shortfall, recognizing the economic and social benefits of improved communications. The 2004 agreement for Russian Railways to build a circular railway in Afghanistan, linking neighboring Iran and Pakistan, should be exploited. Thought should be given to linking Afghanistan's mineral deposits to any embryonic railway network.

Lack of Cultural Understanding

One of the most dominant characteristics of the Afghan is his intense love of independence. The Afghan patiently bears his misfortune or poverty but he cannot be made to reconcile himself to foreign rule. . . . Foreigners who have failed to understand this point and who have tried to deprive him of his national independence or personal freedom have had to pay heavily for the price of folly. (Schofield 2003, 115)

Muhammad Ali, Professor of History at Kabul University, 1965

The coalition suffers from a deficit of cultural awareness, regional knowledge, and local language skills. Ignorance of tribal customs leads to misunderstanding and alienation. While insurgents communicate freely to gain intelligence, PRT inability to speak the tribal languages is a barrier to basic understanding and communication. Language difficulty prevents tactical units from establishing working relationships with village elders and receiving local intelligence. A lack of continuity--produced by short operational tours and compressed handovers between rotating forces--also compounds the problem, further diminishing the ability of the coalition to gather vital intelligence.

In contrast, British officers serving in the North-West Frontier often stayed in India their entire career. Years of experience and a first rate education produced individuals who were well versed in the ways and culture of the country and its people. The ability to speak the language was essential and the mastery of tribal dialects was a matter of pride. Unbroken service produced officers who were acclimatized to the unique type of weather of the North-West Frontier and who possessed an intricate understanding of the land and its people.

Assuming the international community assesses Afghanistan as a worthy investment, consideration should be given to creating a corps of "Afghanistan specialists." These should have a thorough grounding in Afghanistan's law and procedures, the revenue system, Afghanistan's history and the language of the province in which they would work. They should also expect to operate exclusively in Afghanistan during their career. This should not be solely confined to serving military personnel. Retired service personnel or those with a particular experience or skill should also be recruited. They should be generously paid for their substantial term of service. These

highly trained personnel could fill appointments in PRTs (providing much needed continuity and experience), act as advisors to Province Governors, or directly support tactical operations in southern and eastern areas of Afghanistan. Focus should occur in the short term on civil affairs battalions to develop existing expertise.

Conclusion

War in Afghanistan did not begin with the Taliban and it will not necessarily end with their removal. (Misra 2004, 147)

International Crisis Group, 2001

Lessons learned during the British control of the North-West Frontier present many useful parallels for Afghanistan. The control of regional militias--as a legitimate arm of the central government--and the establishment of warlords as Deputy Commissioners, supported by advisors, reflect a proven and successful political and military structure. The introduction of an intelligence network based on tribal police may also prove advantageous in countering insurgency. Central to these proposals is the existing and verified PRT model. PRTs exercise many functions to assist local government and have the ability to evolve to create an even greater effect that transcends existing mandates. However, a poor road network and a lack of personnel continuity hamper progress. The establishment of a corps of Afghanistan specialists may be a prudent answer to a shortfall posed by the regular rotation of troops and the inevitable transition to civilian primacy.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Introduction

Yet, retreat from any form of nation-building responsibilities in Afghanistan is fraught with complexities. If the international community were to abandon its democratization initiative, it would be likely to produce the worst possible result: failure to achieve Afghan democracy, yet untold resentment for not trying. (2004, 175)

Amalendu Misra, *Afghanistan*

The study of the political and military structures employed in the North-West Frontier (1919 to 1947) is worthwhile for all personnel (civilian and military) involved in the stabilization and reconstruction of Afghanistan. British control of the frontier throughout the early twentieth century was mature, responsive and effective. Despite the evolving challenges of the Pushtoon sub-tribes, political primacy remained the dominant consideration. Military activities, while extensive on occasion, remained subordinate to the political goal of maintaining a safe frontier for the Raj. This governance, which balanced limited ends with limited means, offers useful insights into how structures adapted over time to address complex and unpredictable problems, while incorporating only limited, but timely, technological innovation. The challenges faced by the British in the North-West Frontier are analogous to contemporary problems the coalition and NATO face in Afghanistan.

Lessons learned from the British experience of the North-West Frontier remain pertinent and are transferable to settling the conflict and furthering the national reconstruction of Afghanistan. When Colonial India gained Independence in 1947, Pakistan, recognizing the usefulness of British control, mirrored existing political and

military structures on the frontier. These have continued relatively unchanged and remain effective today. As competing priorities reduce the attention paid to Afghanistan, planners need to apply innovative and imaginative measures if the country is to continue to settle and develop. The British solutions to similar problems in the same geographical area are useful guideposts.

Many of the lessons identified are at odds with current coalition policy and rely heavily on the employment or establishment of local forces; forces the British used to great effect to achieve local security.

Furthermore, the medieval nature of Afghanistan demands measured and deliberate reconstruction activities. Large scale western initiatives or uncoordinated local projects have the potential to rapidly change--or undermine--the fabric of remote and fragile communities, leading to instability. The “world of the peasant rooted to his soil” could be quickly challenged by “the merchant whose soul is in the profits of his trade” (Tönnies 1887, 2). If men do change their temperament in accordance with their surroundings, caution must be exercised when applying contemporary western standards to traditional societies.

Ideally, this thesis will encourage additional thinking and debate as to the applicability of well-tested British institutional responses to similar problems in Afghanistan.

Lessons Learned

The time--if it ever existed--in which military planners could only plan for war is long over. In fact, it seems fair to say that war plans that do not include peace plans have always been signs of gross military incompetence. . . . In war, more than any other human activity, no one should begin what they are not prepared to finish, and few modern wars

will have outcomes where desirable governments, economies, societies, and patterns of alliance magically occur simply because the fighting ends. (2004, 150)

Anthony Cordesman, *The Ongoing Lessons of Afghanistan*

Securing peace and rebuilding Afghanistan is dependant upon the mind-set of the ruling elite and their tribesmen. Cultural, clan and tribal divisions remain at the heart of the country's separation. These age-old differences cannot be changed overnight. While the international community's aspiration to achieve strong central government is rational, the pace of change and the extent of applicability of "western ideals" it seeks remain unrealistic. Many national and regional factors thwart short-term realization. Warlords, militias, political and tribal infighting, severe economic problems, and poppy production remain unresolved dilemmas. Each requires careful attention. The West must be realistic and measured in its ambitions for Afghanistan.

Recognizing that central government has made few inroads into the provinces outside Kabul, a revised political and military strategy, based on the lessons learned from the North-West Frontier, should be considered for Afghanistan. This strategy ought to include:

1. Integrating regional militias as a lawful arm of the Transitional Authority of Afghanistan. Trained, equipped, and incorporated into a nationwide security structure under central authority, militias could become a lawful and cooperative cornerstone of regional security.
2. Accepting warlords as province governors (with government approval and clear jurisdiction). Separating the duties of governor and militia commander will be essential for success.

3. Establishing a network of “western” advisors to support province governors. Advisors could coordinate regional reconstruction, monitor militia activities, oversee the collection of taxes, and provide an essential link to coalition activities.
4. Creating an efficient national civil service equivalent.
5. Founding a network of tribal police throughout Afghanistan, but particularly in the southern and eastern areas of the country. This initiative would address low-level intelligence shortfalls and provide early warning of impending guerrilla attacks.
6. Establishing a mutually supporting network of PRTs throughout Afghanistan.
7. Investing in an efficient road and rail network. Particular consideration should be given to those regions hosting PRTs.
8. Instituting a corps of dedicated European and North American “Afghanistan specialists.” Highly trained personnel should fill key appointments in PRTs, act as advisors to province governors, or directly support tactical operations in southern and eastern areas of Afghanistan.

A Recommended Afghanistan “Strawman”

Afghans need to do far more to evolve a transparent federal structure of government that guarantees autonomy of groups and regions without sacrificing the notion of national identity. (2004, 179)

Amalendu Misra, *Afghanistan*

The challenge of creating an Afghan state is daunting and time consuming. Converting many of the existing structures into government organizations is necessary for nationwide security. Convincing the ruling elite of the advantages of such an approach is central to any viable strategy. With social and economic growth starting to take hold throughout Afghanistan, a coherent long-term assistance plan is required. This

plan requires a progressively stable operational environment (with NATO taking an ever-increasing lead), legitimate regional rule by local tribesmen, and coordinated international assistance at the regional level. This is where the lessons learned from the British experience of the North-West Frontier have applicability for Afghanistan. Combining the pertinent lessons learned into a coherent strategy supports a four-step plan for the reconstruction of Afghanistan:

1. In step one, NATO expands throughout Afghanistan, creating an extensive network of supporting PRTs. PRTs continue to be predominantly military (to allow a security function to be undertaken), but increasingly supported by international agencies and local qualified Afghans. During this step, roads are enhanced or constructed and a railway network established. PRTs remain a cornerstone of regional stability and provide an indispensable coordination function.

2. Once the network of PRTs is established, step two requires regional militias to be integrated (under close supervision of NATO or coalition trainers) into the national military structure. Concurrently, warlords would be trained in centralized administration in Kabul, and subsequently return as qualified (and legitimate) province governors. Military liaison officers, who would play an advisory and mentoring role, would support newly qualified governors. This step would establish the foundations of legitimate province government. Physical support would be required to create government infrastructure. Regional activities would be overseen and supported by “reinforced” PRTs.

3. In step three, handpicked locals would be trained as civil servants in the centralized academy, opening in Kabul in 2005. Training would be progressive, thorough

and practically orientated. Experienced faculty, who understand the region, are essential to ensure success. Parallel instruction would also occur for “western advisors” within the same academy, allowing “joint” training wherever possible. Such an approach permits esprit de corps and prevents unnecessary separation. Particular emphasis would be placed on language and customs training for western advisors. Additionally, a corps of trained western “Afghan specialists” would be established. Its ranks would be filled from European and American volunteers (ideally, those nations contributing to military operations in Afghanistan). Afghan specialists would be qualified to fill a variety of civic and quasi-military appointments upon graduation. During this phase, PRTs would also oversee the establishment of a network of tribal police.

4. Step four (a) would see the realization of provincial administration, answerable to Kabul. During this step, local structures (political and military) would be mentored and monitored to maturity, and take over all governance. Western advisors would replace military liaison officers as mentors to province governors, and trained civil servants would fill the ranks of local government. Local militias would conduct security activities to extend the reach of central government. “Border teams” would be established to assist with controlling the Pushtoon sub-tribes, and prevent cross border raids from Pakistan. Particular emphasis would be placed on developing an effective and legitimate local police force. PRTs would become increasingly civilianized with Afghan specialists and local qualified Afghans filling key appointments.

5. During step four (b), PRTs would cease to exist. Local government would be mature, evenhanded and effective. Military support, in the form of District Advisory Teams, would be available on request, but rarely called upon. The threat from guerrillas

would be negligible and international organizations would freely coordinate their efforts with local authorities. Regional reconstruction would continue.

Recommended Topics for Future Study

Investigation should be directed towards the perceived success of the intelligence network employed on the North-West Frontier (1919 to 1947). What were the component parts of the setup, how was time-sensitive information passed to the authorities, and what was the efficiency of the system? This may present answers to address the shortage of tactical intelligence in Afghanistan.

Social and economic assistance to the North-West Frontier also deserves study. Little mention of it was found during the literature review, although it is recognized that each played an important supporting role. How did social and economic programs support political and military initiatives? What effect did they achieve, and what structures were involved?

Careful consideration should be given to the benefits of rudimentary education and medicine on the tribesmen of the North-West Frontier. What were the virtues of educational initiatives conducted by missionaries? Did limited medical assistance achieve greater support for the administration? Can a “measure” be placed on their ability to counter fundamentalism and assist in winning the middle ground; so crucial in defeating insurgents? Does such an approach have utility today?

PRTs require careful examination. They have been acknowledged as an efficient way to provide security, stability, and reconstruction within Afghanistan. However, significant variances exist between coalition and NATO PRTs. Exploration of existing structures, national caveats, missions, and methods of operation are worthy of

examination. Furthermore, consideration should also be given to which troops achieve the greatest effect (the British have successfully employed Gurkha infantry soldiers in Mazar-e-Sharif), what type of leader is required to coordinate activities (education, background) and what new disciplines are required within the PRTs to meet evolving challenges. Consideration should also be given to the consequences of civilianizing the PRTs. Such a study may provide timely information for NATO's expansion.

Exploration of the resurgent drug trade in Afghanistan should also occur. What initiatives can prevent or slow increasing production? What role do regional warlords and militias play in the drugs trade? Is there a direct link to guerrilla activities and terrorism? What structures are required to tackle the problem? Is the involvement of PRTs in the "Drug Eradication Program" inevitable?

Finally, are Al Qaida and the Taliban following a recognized pattern of insurgency? Can existing templates of counter-insurgency (for example, Sir Robert Thompson's famous "Five Principles") work against today's guerrillas? How should coalition and NATO forces deploy to counter a growing insurgency campaign? And is the international community taking the threat of insurgency seriously in Afghanistan?

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