

The British colonial experience in Waziristan and its applicability to current operations

**A Monograph
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ABSTRACT

The British Colonial Experience in Waziristan and its applicability to current operations, by Mr. Matthew. Williams, GG-13, Department of Defense, 56 pages.

Following the fall of the Taliban government in Afghanistan in late 2001, members of the former regime and Al-Qaeda found refuge in Waziristan. Waziristan is a tribal area in Pakistan located along the border with Afghanistan whose majority ethnic Pashtun population has menaced every occupying power since Alexander the Great. The formidable terrain coupled with the fierce independent character of the Pashtun tribes has made Waziristan a difficult area for outsiders to subdue. Taliban and Al-Qaeda elements use this tribal area as a sanctuary and staging area for attacks against international and government forces in Afghanistan. Waziristan is especially important to the U.S. due to the belief that sympathetic tribesmen may be sheltering Osama bin Ladin and his key lieutenants.

Due to the fact that Waziristan is part of a sovereign country that has forbidden the permanent presence of U.S. troops, the U.S. cannot directly influence this area with overt, uniformed military forces. Despite this challenge, the U.S. is not the first country to try to influence events in Waziristan. When developing the best course of action to accomplish its goals in Waziristan, the U.S. can look to the British colonial experience to help guide its actions. The British dealt extensively with Waziristan from 1849-1947. Despite the passage of time, the most important factors (i.e., political, military, geographical, and ethnographical, etc.) that influenced the British colonial experience have not changed significantly and are still relevant today.

This monograph concludes that the U.S. must accomplish its goals in Waziristan through interagency operations. The U.S. should shape the environment as discreetly as possible and let the Pakistani government deny and disrupt Al-Qaeda and Taliban activities in Waziristan. The British colonial experience demonstrated overt military operations do not guarantee any success in Waziristan and will likely increase the chance of unleashing events that could remove Musharraf and possibly place nuclear weapons into the hands of Islamic extremists or military hardliners. Musharraf is not a model democratic leader, but he is better than the alternatives in Pakistan; the U.S. should not do anything to imperil his hold on power. The possible consequences of his removal outweigh any benefit that unilateral or overt military operations might achieve, perhaps even the capture or killing of Osama bin Ladin.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Following the fall of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan in late 2001, members of the former regime and Al-Qaeda found refuge in Waziristan. Waziristan is a tribal area in Pakistan located along the border with Afghanistan whose majority ethnic Pashtun population has menaced every occupying power since Alexander the Great. The formidable terrain, coupled with the fierce independent character of the Pashtun tribes, has made Waziristan a difficult area for outsiders to subdue. Taliban and Al-Qaeda elements use this tribal area as a sanctuary and staging area for attacks against international and government forces in Afghanistan. Waziristan is especially important to the U.S. due to the belief that sympathetic tribesmen may be sheltering Osama bin Ladin and his key lieutenants.

Although Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf allowed U.S. forces to use multiple Pakistani air bases to support its post-9/11 military operations in Afghanistan, he has forbidden nearly all operations by uniformed U.S. forces in Waziristan. Even Pakistani military forces did not operate in Waziristan until late 2001, historically leaving security of the area to local forces. The introduction of Pakistani military forces in this area represented a significant policy change that took place after the U.S. requested the Pakistani government deny sanctuary to Taliban and Al-Qaeda elements fleeing from Afghanistan. The Pakistani Army initially carried out limited offensive operations in the tribal areas accompanied by infrastructure development activities. The Army, however, did not launch a large-scale offensive in Waziristan until spring 2004 after suspected Islamic extremists tried to unsuccessfully assassinate Musharraf in December 2003. Despite the fact that Pakistani forces have conducted counter-insurgency operations in Waziristan, Al-Qaeda and Taliban elements continue to wage cross-border attacks against international and government forces in Afghanistan.

Even though this area of the world is relatively unknown to the U.S., the British dealt extensively with these tribal areas from 1846-1947. The British first made contacts in Waziristan in 1846-9 after it defeated the Sikhs in the first Sikh War. During this time period, revenue collection was the primary British activity. Some officers also proselytized the tribesmen. The British did not take full responsibility for Waziristan until 1849 after completely subduing the Sikh kingdom and annexing the Punjab. The British governed its new Punjabi possession from Lahore and initially made it a subordinate administrative entity to its colonial government in India.

In the nineteenth century, Britain viewed India as the “jewel in the crown” of its colonial possessions and took an aggressive stance toward any perceived threat toward the sub-continent. Fear of Russian imperial encroachment made the tribal areas between Afghanistan and India key territory in the eyes of the British. Although the so-called “Great Game” between Britain and Russian led to the First Anglo-Afghan war (1839-42), tensions subsequently eased to allow the British to manage Waziristan indirectly.

Yet the British government did not have the financial resources or forces needed to control the tribal areas located in the difficult terrain bordering Afghanistan. Therefore, after annexation of the Punjab, the British chose to follow a “Close Border” policy that decentralized control over these border areas. The principal goal of the British was to discourage tribal raiding into territory directly controlled by the provincial government in Lahore. As a consequence of this policy, the British launched punitive expeditions in Waziristan in 1852 and 1860 to punish Pashtun tribes for raiding into British territory.

Following Russian overtures to Kabul in the late 1870s, Britain launched another expedition into Afghanistan resulting in the Second Anglo-Afghan War (1878-80). The British installed a permanent political administration in Waziristan after punitive expeditions against recalcitrant tribes in 1894-5. The formal delineation of the Afghan/Indian border by the Durand

commission in 1895 led to further conflict in the border areas. This new boundary, viewed unacceptable by most Pashtuns due to the perceived infringement of their independent status and the separation from their ethnic brethren in Afghanistan, resulted in a significant revolt against the British along the entire Afghan/Indian border in 1897. As a result, the British did not completely restore order until 1901.

The British subsequently conducted several more punitive expeditions in Waziristan up until Indian independence in 1947. The formidable terrain and militant character of the Pashtun tribes gave the British colonial administration significant challenges throughout its experience from 1849-1947. One religious firebrand in particular, the *Faqir of Ipi*, menaced British forces in Waziristan for many years during the 1930s. The British never captured or killed him despite their numerical and technological advantages. Overall, the British experienced and met many of the challenges that the U.S. and its allies currently face in Waziristan and its experiences may be applicable to current operations. Therefore, the research question for this monograph is: What lessons, if any, can the U.S. draw from the British colonial experience in Waziristan?

To determine if the U.S. can use lessons from the British experience the author collected primary and secondary sources from the time period (1849-1947). Primary sources consist of various critiques of the British campaigns in Waziristan. Other primary sources include commentaries from Pakistani government officials who served as political officers in Waziristan. Current newspaper and journal reports cover ongoing U.S. and Pakistani governmental operations in Waziristan.

To ascertain whether this evidence is valid for contemporary application, the author compared the political, military, geographical, and ethnographical realities in Waziristan during the British colonial experience and present-day Pakistan. Despite the passage of time, the British colonial period is a legitimate basis of study because these important variables remain mostly unchanged today. Historical material from the British colonial experience in Waziristan and

current press on the tribal areas in general and Waziristan in particular provide enough evidence to answer the research question.

The first chapter of this monograph is the introduction. It provides the research question and the strategic setting of British colonial India. The first chapter also outlines the British experience in Waziristan from 1849-1947. The chapter provides the foundation that ensures the evidence presented in subsequent chapters is viewed in its proper context. The second chapter discusses the ethnic groups, population size, geography, and political boundaries of Waziristan. This chapter provides a description of the important characteristics which define Waziristan. Its ethnographic and geographical characteristics, in particular, make this tribal area a challenge for any central authority to manage.

The third chapter examines British policies in Waziristan from 1849-1947. It outlines the political and military actions the British took and the positive and negative inducements they used to influence tribal behavior. It also examines the effectiveness of various punitive expeditions. The fourth chapter discusses Waziristan in the post-9/11 world. It concentrates on Musharraf's policies and Pakistani military actions in the tribal area. In addition, it examines U.S. government actions in Waziristan since 9/11.

The concluding chapter summarizes the collected evidence and states the lessons the U.S. can draw from the British experience in Waziristan. Further, it also comments on U.S. policy and makes recommendations on future U.S. actions in Waziristan.

CHAPTER 2

General description of Waziristan and its peoples

Waziristan is a complex, little known part of the world. To truly appreciate the British colonial experience in Waziristan, it is critical to first understand the characteristics that make this area so unique. This chapter examines the geographic, administration, meteorological and sociological factors as well as the tribes, transportation network, and populace of this area.

Waziristan, located on Pakistan's northwestern border with Afghanistan, is part of the Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA), an area only nominally controlled by the Pakistani government. Waziristan is administratively divided into two agencies and encompasses 11,326 square kilometers. North Waziristan has a total of 4,707 square kilometers, while South Waziristan has a total area of 6,619 square kilometers.

Approximately ninety-six kilometers at its widest point, Waziristan is a rough parallelogram, which extends 144 kilometers from the Gumal and Sawa rivers in the south to the Kaitu (or Ketu) and Kurram rivers in the north. Bordered by Afghanistan to the west and the Bannu basin and the Derajat on the east, the terrain is mountainous in the south; the hills rise gradually from east to west, reaching heights of more than 3,000 meters. Preghal is the highest mountain peak at 3,513 meters. The northern part of Waziristan is more open and contains valleys separated by high hills. The rugged terrain not only made Waziristan difficult for outside armies to occupy but it also inhibited economic development by the indigenous population.

Waziristan did not, however, contain the critical passes the British used to transit to Afghanistan from India. The British primarily used the Bolan and Khojak Passes near Quetta and the Khyber Pass near Peshawar. Despite its lack of strategic passes, the British expended scarce resources on Waziristan for its trading, revenue collection, and missionary potential. As its presence along the border endured, the British remained in the area to protect its territory from raiding by predatory tribes based in Waziristan.

Miranshah is the administrative center of North Waziristan and Wana is the agency headquarters for South Waziristan in the summer. The city of Tank (in the Tank district located directly east of Waziristan) serves as the winter headquarters for South Waziristan. Each agency is further organized into sub-divisions and tehsils or sub-units. The Pakistani government oversees each agency through a political agent. An assistant political officer/assistant political agent governs each sub-division and political tehsildars oversee each tehsil. The *malik* system

provides another layer of traditional governance between the central administration and the individual tribe member. A *malik* is a hereditary intermediary between the tribe and the agency administration. The Lungi system or Sufaid Resh is a lower form of *malik*.¹

All criminal and civil cases in Waziristan are guided by customary law called *Rewaj*, which is outlined by the Frontier Criminal Rules in 1901. This code governs the procedures for both criminal and civil cases. Political disputes are resolved by decisions derived by *jirgas* or councils of local elders. Waziristan's current political administration is similar to the British system prior to 1947. The Pakistani government left the traditional structure in place to help ensure the loyalty of the tribes. Pakistan also adopted a "Close Border" policy and limited interference in tribal affairs. The nascent Pakistani government used a political agent to maintain relations with the tribes.

North Waziristan is divided into three sub-divisions and a total of nine tehsils. The Miranshah sub-division comprises the Miranshah, Ghulam Khan, and Datta Khel tehsils. The Mirali sub-division contains the Mirali, Spinwam, and Shewa tehsils. The Razmak sub-division consists of the Razmak, Dossali, and Garyum tehsils. South Waziristan has three sub-divisions (Sarwakai, Ladha, and Wana) and eight tehsils: Sararogha, Makin, Ladha, Sarwekai, Tiarza, Birmal, Wana, and Toi Khullah.

The political agent of each agency has a security force consisting of *Khassadara* (local police) and Scouts. Local tribes contribute men to the Khassadars who protect roads and bridges, escort government officials, and help *maliks* carry out government orders. Scouts provide general security for the entire agency. South Waziristan has 3,689 Khassadars and each tribe contributes

¹ Government of Pakistan. *1998 Census Report of North Waziristan Agency*. (Islamabad: Population Census Organization, Statistics Division, 2000), 8.

the following number of personnel: 2,495 (Mahsud), 1,014 (Wazir), and 180 (Miscellaneous tribes). The number of Scouts who serve in South Waziristan is unknown.

North Waziristan has 3,269 Khassadars organized into forty-seven companies. An unknown number of Scouts serve in North Waziristan in three formations: Tochi, Shawal, and Thall. The Tochi Scouts are headquartered in Miranshah. The Shawal Scouts are based in Razmak and the Thall Scouts are headquartered in Thall.

Waziristan's limited transportation network consists of 1699 kilometers of roads. It has approximately 812 kilometers of paved (metalled) roads and 897 kilometers of unpaved (shingled) roads. Large sections of North Waziristan are inaccessible and must be covered by foot. Most main roads in North Waziristan are well maintained, but the bridges (a number of which were constructed prior to 1947) are in poor condition.² The poor transportation network limited British military options during the colonial period. The lack of roads, however, did not impede the mobility or military effectiveness of the tribes. These realities forced the British to operate in a deliberate, set-piece manner to limit their vulnerability to the tribes.

Waziristan has hot summers and cold winters. The summer starts in May and ends by September. June is usually the warmest month with temperatures rising over thirty degrees centigrade. The winter starts in October and lasts until April. December, January, and February are the coldest months with temperatures sometimes falling below zero centigrade. Most areas in Waziristan average six inches of rainfall a year. Yet the temperature extremes did not hinder the ability of the tribes to resist British military operations. Inclement weather did not prevent the British from carrying out punitive expeditions either, but it usually limited the length of operations.

² Government of Pakistan. 1998 Census Report of North Waziristan Agency, 12.

According to the latest Census (1998) taken by the Pakistani government, Waziristan has a total population of 791,267. 361,246 individuals live in North Waziristan and 429,841 persons inhabit South Waziristan. The population in Waziristan has grown between 2 and 2.5 per cent since the last Census in 1981. Over 97 per cent of the population speaks Pashto and more than ninety-nine percent is Muslim. The remaining population is either Christian or Ahmadi and speaks Punjabi, Urdu, or some other language.³

Certainly, most of the population in Waziristan live in austere conditions. Approximately 83.8 per cent of households in North Waziristan are constructed from unbaked bricks or earth and only 59.8 per cent of all homes have electricity. Over 79 per cent of the homes in South Waziristan are made of unbaked bricks or earth and only 58.7 per cent of all households have electricity.⁴ Nearly 40 per cent of the population in Waziristan use kerosene to light their homes and cook their food. These austere conditions illustrate why South Waziristan is the most impoverished agency in the FATA.

The majority of the tribes in Waziristan are Pashtun. A small number of Hindus (known as Urmars or Barakis) live in Kaniguram in South Waziristan. The most populous tribe is the Darweh Khel Wazirs or Wazirs. The Mahsuds, Bhattanis, and Dawars constitute the last three most important tribes. Pashtun tribes can generally be classified into two categories: *nang* (honor) and *qalang* (rent, tax). *Nang* tribes "...live in remote areas supporting only subsistence agriculture, [and] do not have strong leaders," while *qalang* tribes "...are found in areas which support irrigated agriculture and produce substantial surpluses..."⁵ Qalang tribes generally have centralized leaders and are landlords of non-Pashtun tribes. These differences are so distinct that,

³ Government of Pakistan. 1998 Census Report of North Waziristan Agency, 17-8.

Government of Pakistan. 1998 Census Report of South Waziristan Agency, 17-8.

⁴ Government of Pakistan. 1998 Census Report of South Waziristan Agency, 24-5.

⁵ Hugh Beattie. *Imperial Frontier: Tribe and State in Waziristan*. (Richmond: Curzon Press, 2002), 4.

“When individuals from qalang society confront nang tribesmen, they show unease and uncertainty, which reflects the structural and fundamental differences in the two systems.”⁶ The Pashtun tribes in Waziristan can be classified in the *nang* category and are economically dependent on the outside world.

Before examining the specific characteristics of each tribe in Waziristan, it is important to understand *Pasthunwali*, the distinctive moral code of the Pasthun tribe. It governed the way tribes related to the British and it influences how these tribes still behave. This code determines ways of treating guests and weaker parties, decision-making, reacting to insults and injury (both real and imagined), and behaving toward first paternal cousins. Overall, this code requires all Pashtuns to “...maintain honour (*nang* or *izzat*) and avoid shame (*sharm*).”⁷

One of the main tenants of this code, for example, is the autonomy of the adult male. The adult male is supposed to be as independent as possible and not dominated by another person’s will. This is why matters of common concern are decided at *jirgas*, because it provides a forum where each individual elder’s voice can be heard and respected. The political independence of the tribe is important.⁸ *Tora* (courage) is a critical trait for a male in this tribal society as well.

The tenant of hospitable behavior (*melmastia*) is also an important concept. *Melmastia* requires the protection of any guest or suppliant from harm. This tenet is closely related to *nanawatai*, which is the act of an enemy suing for peace. This act demonstrates submission and was intended to prompt generosity in return.⁹ *Melmastia* helps enable members of Al-Qaeda, the Taliban, and other terrorist groups to find sanctuary in Waziristan.

⁶ Akbar Ahmed. *Religion and Politics in Muslim Society*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 27.

⁷ Beattie, 7.

⁸ Ibid., 6.

⁹ Beattie, 7.

Pahtunwali also requires a violent redress from insult or injury (including insults against the sanctity of a woman's sexual purity). *Badal* is the term for revenge and it is "...the only successful defence of honour...equal to or beyond the extent of the original insult, so as to re-establish parity or gain an advantage vis-à-vis one's rival..."¹⁰ The injury inflicted in revenge, therefore, should be greater than that suffered. *Badal* has caused generations of infighting and destruction in the Pashtun tribal areas, which has impeded economic development and social cohesion. *Badal* has also discouraged Pakistani Army operations in Waziristan due to fears that any operation would incite years of retaliatory attacks against Army personnel and installations.

Additionally, this code requires submission to Islam. There were two main types of religious leaders in Waziristan. The mullah operated local mosques, conducted rites of passage, but did not have a very high status. *Sayyids* and *Mians*, on the other hand, enjoyed a higher status because of their purported descent from the Prophet Muhammad. "In Waziristan both mullahs and Sayyids wrote charms, read incantation, and enjoyed 'alms, sacrifices, and pilgrimages to shrines for the cure of disease.'"¹¹ *Sayyids* and *Mians* also acted as mediators in disputes. Another important type of religious leader in Waziristan during the British colonial period was the *faqir*, "...supposedly God-inspired holy men who cared nothing for material possessions or power. Such men usually live off alms and often stayed with the precinct of a holy man's tomb."¹² During the 1930s and 40s, the *Faqir of Ipi*, an anti-British militant, challenged British rule in Waziristan and continually harassed British troops without ever being killed or captured.

Perhaps the most significant aspect of *Pashtunwali* was *tarburwali*. *Tarbur* is the term for one's first paternal cousin and "...had the connotation of rival or enemy. Thus *tarburwali* denoted enmity in Pashtun custom and tradition, and referred to the tension and rivalry between

¹⁰ Ibid., 8.

¹¹ Beattie, 8.

¹² Ibid., 9.

agnatic collaterals [paternal relatives] which appears to have characterized Pasthun life along the frontier.”¹³ *Tarburwali* particularly influences inter-tribal politics among the Mahsuds.

With a general understanding of *Pashtunwali* in mind, it is possible to examine the tribes in more detail. The Darweh Khel Wazirs (Wazirs) constituted the most populous tribe and perhaps the most important tribe the British encountered on the northwestern frontier after 1849.¹⁴ The two main branches of the Wazirs are the Ahmedzais and Utmanzais. They primarily live in northern Waziristan but a sub-section of the Ahmedzais live around Wana to the southwest of Mahsud territory. This sub-section has been the focus of Pakistani Army operations in 2004. Most Wazirs made their living by raising sheep and goats and normally grazed their herds in higher pastures in the summer and lower ones in the winter. Many Wazirs also served as traders in salt and as ironworkers.

The Mahsuds have a close genealogical link with the Wazirs and are made up of three branches: Alizais, Bahlozais, and Shaman. They live in the central and southern parts of Waziristan, west of the Bhattanis and generally south and east of the Wazirs. In the late 19th century, the primary occupations of the Mahsuds were “...agriculture, pastoralism, trade, forestry, mining, small-scale manufacturing, and raiding.”¹⁵ The Alizais were the principal traders during that time period and the Mahsuds as a whole exported the following: “...iron and iron manufactures, timber (for roofing and bedsteads), matting and other manufactured goods. Imports included cloth and other manufactured goods.”¹⁶

In contrast with other tribes along the frontier, the different branches and sections of the Mahsuds often lived together in the same areas. The main centers of the population were near

¹³ Ibid., 8.

¹⁴ Ibid., 13.

¹⁵ Beattie, 6.

¹⁶ Ibid., 6.

Kaniguram and Makin. An egalitarian ethos among the men and an absence of a centralized, hereditary leadership allowed the branches and sections of the Mahsuds to settle together. Other tribes along the frontier often designated chiefs and lower level leaders but individual leaders within the Mahsuds only obtained the status of *malik*, which “...gave men some influence but not much power. Authority was fluid and had to be continually created and recreated by negotiation and power-broking.”¹⁷ This fact ensured years of conflict between the British and the Mahsuds because the British found it difficult to negotiate and maintain an agreement with a tribe where *maliks* could not enforce a decision on the entire tribe, branch, or section.

The Mahsuds also experienced constant internal strife because blood feuds between close relatives were not as taboo as in other tribal groups along the frontier. *Tarburwali* among the Mahsuds was a cause of violent conflict and political association because land inheritance and the right to speak at *jirgas* were decided by patrilineal descent. In the nineteenth century, “...alliances were formed between Mahsud household on the basis of cognatic [paternal and maternal descent] as well as agnatic [paternal descent] ties, and other types of relationships, particularly common enmity towards members of other similar alliances”¹⁸

During the nineteenth century, the British believed the Mahsuds were incessant raiders. Poverty was the primary reason for some of this raiding. Attacking caravans in the Gumal Pass (which became British territory after 1849) seemed to be a long-standing Mahsud tradition. Raiding took place for political reasons as well. Despite their notorious reputation, “...probably only a few Mahsuds were full-time outlaws, it would appear, ...[they] divided their time between farming and robbery, while others rarely if ever took part in raids at all.”¹⁹

¹⁷ Ibid., 10.

¹⁸ Beattie, 11.

¹⁹ Ibid., 7.

The third most important tribe is the Bhattanis and this tribe consists of the Dannas, Tattas, and Warshpun (Uraspun) branches. The Bhattanis lived in eastern Waziristan from Marwat in the north to the Gumal Pass in the south. Generally speaking, the Dannas lived in the northern section of their territory, the Uraspun in the center, and the Tattas in the south. The Bhattanis lived principally by pastoralism (sheep and cattle) and agriculture (wheat and other grain). Some of them traded small, consumable goods (wood, goats' wool, ropes, mats, etc.) as well. The sections of the Bhattanis lived in homogeneous territories in contrast to the Mahsuds and their *maliks* also demonstrated more influence.²⁰

The Dawar is the last important Pashtun tribe in Waziristan and they live in the Dawar Valley, located west of Bannu. The tribe has two branches: the Tappizad and Malizad.²¹ It is also made up of two parties or blocs: *tor* (black) and *spin* (white). "By the 1870s, the valley supported many madrassahs or religious seminaries and a considerable population of religious students (*taliban*, literally 'seekers after knowledge')." ²²

One of the most important features of the relations between the tribes is the *nikkat* (from the word *nikka*, meaning grandfather or ancestor) system; this arrangement pervades every aspect of the modern governmental administration in Waziristan. "In Waziristan, these figures provide a traditional basis for the division of profits and sharing of loss, which is worked out with exact mathematical precision between and within the tribes."²³ In South Waziristan, the *nikkat* is a nonnegotiable law of tribal division, which is defined as three-fourths for the Mahsuds branch and one-fourth for the Wazir branch. The *nikkat*, for example, currently determines how many personnel each tribal branch is required to contribute to the *Khassadara*. From 1849-1947, the

²⁰ Beattie, 12.

²¹ Syed Mazhar Ali Shah. *Waziristan Tribes*. (Peshawar: Provincial Services Academy, 1991), 298-9.

²² Beattie, 16.

²³ Ahmed, 18.

nikkat decided the division of resources among the tribes but also determined the share that each part of the tribe had to pay if fined by the British.

Waziristan is a complex part of the world. Its tribal character, which is complicated by age-old traditions and nonnegotiable rules of behavior, makes it an enigmatic place to nearly all outsiders, including most Pakistanis. Similarly, its high population, complex terrain, poverty, and martial ethos of its inhabitants make it easy to understand why Islamic militants find safe haven in this part of the world and why many outside military forces find it so difficult to operate there. To appreciate the British colonial experience in Waziristan, it is critical to understand the realities that make it such a unique place in the world. With this basis in mind, it is possible to recognize why the British faced such considerable challenges in Waziristan from 1849-1947.

CHAPTER 3

British colonial experience in Waziristan

The British colonial experience in Waziristan must be viewed in the strategic context of the British Empire in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Britain had numerous territories under its hegemony during this time period and India represented the “jewel in the crown” of its colonial possessions. The British viewed the tribal areas between Afghanistan and India as critical territory and an important line of defense against possible Russian territorial expansion. These realities governed British policy toward these areas from 1849-1947.

After the annexation of the Punjab from the Sikhs in 1849, the British inherited responsibility for a frontier that consisted of large and fiercely independent groups accustomed to intertribal fighting and an adversarial relationship with any power that controlled the plains west of the Indus River. After 1849, Waziristan represented the greatest challenge to the British along the northwestern frontier and the Mahsuds caused them the most trouble. Despite the challenges of managing such a lawless frontier in forbidden terrain, the British government in India believed that maintaining peace and stability along the border with Afghanistan was a strategic necessity.

Despite the overall importance of the frontier, the British government in India had limited material, financial, and personnel resources available to achieve its policy goals. The British therefore adopted a “Close Border” policy that restricted interference with tribes along the border and extended its influence in these areas through intermediaries. Generally speaking, the line that separated British territory from the tribal territories near Waziristan was located east of the Zhob and Kurram rivers and west of the cities of Tank and Bannu.

The British executed a “Close Border” policy from 1849-1894. This policy of non-interference was punctuated by periodic punitive expeditions or “butcher and bolt” operations as some British officials described them. For reasons that will be addressed late in this chapter, the British also adopted a “Forward” policy from 1895-1901 and 1923-1947. This policy placed British Army in India soldiers in tribal areas on a permanent basis. In the interim period, Britain followed a “Modified Forward” policy from 1901-1923. This policy empowered locally raised troops officered by British soldiers to control the tribal areas. British Army in India forces were permanently based outside of the tribal areas during this time period.

Since the tribes were dispersed across difficult terrain, military control of them would have probably required greater resources than what the British government in India possessed. The tribes in Waziristan, therefore, “...had to be managed rather than repressed.”²⁴ There were four main influences on how the British tried to manage the tribes: strategic issues, resources, ideological/cultural viewpoints, and sociological perceptions.

Although the British did not foresee an immediate Russian threat to India following the First Anglo-Afghan War, the British viewed the tribes along the frontier as a potential menace. The tribes shared a religious and cultural identity with the Amir of Kabul, Dost Muhammad Khan, and the British feared the tribes might play the Kabul card to maintain their independence

²⁴ Beattie, 161.

and seek help from the Amir “...in return for recognition of his sovereignty over them.”²⁵ The British also feared the Amir might play the tribes card and incite the tribes to invade British controlled territory. The British were not well prepared to deal with either contingency shortly after annexation. These strategic realities, consequently, helped ensure that initial British policy limited interference with the tribes in Waziristan.

Although punitive expeditions, settlement schemes, and patronage were proven tools of subduing indigenous populations, the British did not have sufficient monetary and manpower resources to carry out these programs. Thus, the British had to deal with the tribes indirectly. More resources probably would not have solved the enormous challenges along the frontier; the Punjab government probably would not have significantly changed policy. “However, had there been more money available, the government might have been more willing to spend more on various forms of indirect tribal subsidy. For example the settlement schemes could have been on a larger scale, and more of the tribesmen could have been enlisted in the militia.”²⁶ All in all, the lack of resources limited British options.

In addition, prevailing imperial culture guided the overall British policy with the tribes. The British believed that they were obliged to: maintain law and order and defend their subjects; treat the tribes fairly but respond forcefully to any tribal challenge to British controlled territory; and abolish frontier duties to facilitate open trade. Overall, the British believed that “...the innocent should not suffer for the crimes of the guilty, cruel punishments should be avoided, and officials should deal consistently with the tribes.”²⁷

The British view of how the tribes were organized influenced its policies as well. The British believed the Mahsuds did not have effective chiefs but could be organized collectively

²⁵ Ibid., 162.

²⁶ Beattie, 165.

²⁷ Ibid., 25.

based on a genealogical basis. This organization would allow the British to pressure certain individuals within the tribe to influence the actions of others. Whenever this focus on the individual did not achieve the desired results, the British tried to work through *jirgas* or *maliks*.

From 1849-93, the British administrators for Waziristan were headquartered in Bannu and Tank. Both of these offices fell under the administration of the Dera Ismail Khan District, which was led by a deputy commissioner. The deputy commissioner reported to the commissioner of the Leia Division (later renamed the Derajat division in 1861) who answered directly to the Punjab government in Lahore. The administration in Lahore fell under the responsibility of the Foreign Department of the British government of India. The Governor General of India (the predecessor of the Viceroy) usually consulted with the Punjab administration and its local officers before making decisions concerning the frontier. Prior to the advent of the telegraph, communication between the frontier and Lahore (and Dehli) was slow thus leaving local administrators a degree of independence. It was not uncommon for senior Government of India officials to complain that their subordinates stationed along the frontier did not adequately inform them and sometimes acted without sanction.²⁸

The Punjab government had its own military force. The Punjab Irregular Force (renamed the Punjab Frontier Force in 1866) consisted of five cavalry regiments, five infantry regiments, three light artillery batteries, two garrison artillery batteries, two sapper companies, and a Corps of Guides. J.G. Hodgson commanded this 8,896 man force. Cantonments were located in Kohat, Bannu, Dera Ismail Khan, Asni, and Dera Ghazi Khan. Another four regiments of Sikh Local Infantry and the Sind Camel Corps were also incorporated into this force. The Punjab government had an unknown number of police regiments and levy forces as well.

²⁸ Beattie, 28.

Due to the policy of limited intervention with the tribes and the lessening of tensions with Russia after the First Anglo-Afghan war (1839-42), the primary goal of the British was to prevent tribes in Waziristan from raiding into their territory after 1849. The British installed an intermediary in the city of Tank, Shah Nawaz Khan (the *Nawab* of Tank after 1859), to act as their agent with any dealings with the tribes in Waziristan. He had connections with the Mahsud branch (through family lineage and his Mahsud wife) and acted on behalf of the British for more than twenty years. His overall performance was mixed, however, because he did not have the monetary or military resources to deal with one of the most turbulent areas on the frontier. His rivals in British territory (who also had links with the Mahsuds) harassed him, moreover, by inciting tribes to conduct raids for the purpose of discrediting him.²⁹

Although the overall imperial philosophy guided British actions in Waziristan, the British did not always practice this philosophy. Due to their view of the tribes as communal groups, the British believed tribe members were responsible for each other and thus applied collective punishment for the crimes or wrongdoing of individual tribe members.³⁰ The British used the following techniques to punish recalcitrant tribes: levying fines; taking hostages; seizing men, animals, and/or property (*barampta*); and conducting reverse blockades (*bandish*) and punitive expeditions. The British tried to treat hostages humanely and they usually did not suffer an adversarial experience. Even though the British did not torture or kill hostages, life could be made unpleasant for the tribesmen by "...removing any privileges they enjoyed, or moving them away from the frontier, say to Lahore, which the tribesmen very much disliked."³¹ Due to the economic dependence of the tribes on the world outside of the tribal areas, reverse blockades were another effective influence on tribal behavior in the long-term.

²⁹ Beattie, 41.

³⁰ Ibid., 26.

³¹ Beattie, 26.

The British also used positive inducements to co-opt the tribes. The British either paid tribesmen to resettle in British controlled territory or inducted them into paid militias. Although the resettlement strategy was costly, it increased the tribes' dependence and made them more vulnerable to British reprisals. These factors made them less likely to defy the British. The militias, moreover, were expensive and potentially trained and armed future adversaries of the British.

After the annexation of the Punjab in 1849, the British maintained a mostly hands-off policy with the tribes in Waziristan. The Mahsuds periodically raided into British territory in the 1850s and the British rarely retaliated due to the lack of personnel and material resources and the absence of political will (due to the losses incurred during the First Anglo-Afghan War) to undertake risky operations outside of their territorial boundaries. "In 1855, for example, [Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab] Lawrence commented to [Deputy Commissioner of the Dera Ismail Khan district] Nicholson that 'in the hearts of the [British] Government and the [British] Commander in Chief [of India] there is a mortal dread going into the hills, and should any misfortune occur, a fine howl they would open on us. We cannot ensure that [British] Government will act promptly and vigorously against the hill tribes.'"³² Nevertheless, the British mounted a three-day expedition against the Wazirs in December 1852 and met little resistance. The approximately 1,000 man British force destroyed an unknown number of villages and captured a large quantity of cattle and sheep.³³

Nonetheless, British policy changed after the Mahsuds attempted a 3,000-man raid against Tank in March 1860. Although the British broke up the Mahsud *lashkar* (tribal army) before it reached Tank, the British retaliated by launching a 5,000-man punitive expedition the

³² Ibid., 164.

³³ Nevill, H.L. *Campaigns of the North-West Frontier*. (Nashville: The Battery Press, 1912), 21.

following month, which destroyed many Mahsud settlements and crops.³⁴ The British also instituted a reverse blockade that prevented the Mahsuds from trading or grazing their herds in British controlled territory. Despite the destruction wrought by the punitive expedition and the economic difficulties caused by the reverse blockade, the Mahsuds did not sue for peace until 1861. In the mid-1860s, Major S.F. Graham, Deputy Commissioner of the Dera Ismail Khan district (1862-66), tried to pacify two troublesome sections of the Mahsuds (Shingi and Abdul-Rahman Khel Bahlozais) by “...settling some families in British territory, and giving some men service in the frontier militia.”³⁵ Despite this attempt to pacify the Mahsuds, they continued raiding. Relations deteriorated further when the British constructed more forward located frontier posts, which the Mahsuds interpreted as infringements on their sovereignty.

As relations with the tribes in Waziristan continued to sour in the early 1870s, the British replaced the *Nawab* of Tank and placed all of his responsibilities in the hands of Major Charles Macaulay (1871-82), the new Deputy Commissioner of the Dera Ismail Khan district. Macauley used Nabi Khan Shingi and Azem Khan Kundi, a local landowner, as intermediaries with the Mahsuds in place of the *Nawab* of Tank. In an attempt to discredit these new intermediaries, political associates of the *Nawab* of Tank committed a series of “...raids, murders, and kidnappings” in British territory.³⁶ Some of these associates of the *Nawab* of Tank who committed these criminal acts were closely related to Nabi Khan, demonstrating that factional alliances in the Mahsud society sometimes superseded family ties.

To better relations with the tribes in Waziristan the British enacted the Frontier Crimes Regulations 1872, which “...gave magistrates the power to withdraw certain types of case [sic]

³⁴ Ibid., 46-7.

³⁵ Beattie, 217.

³⁶ Beattie, 217.

from the ordinary courts and submit them for arbitration by a *jirga*."³⁷ To improve security of British controlled territory, Macauley also made arrangements with the Bhattani tribe to secure passes along the Dera Ismail Khan border. These arrangements helped reduce Mahsud raids over the next two years to nearly zero.³⁸ In addition, Macauley unsuccessfully tried to settle nearly 200 Mahsud families in British controlled territory in Tank and make them responsible for the security of the Gumal route in Ghazni. This attempt led associates of the *Nawab* of Tank to make contact with Afghan Amir Sher Ali Khan, who wanted to use the Pashtun tribes in Waziristan against British-controlled territory if Britain tried to invade Afghanistan again. These political maneuvers ensured that the political situation among the Mahsuds remained unsettled.³⁹

The Second Anglo-Afghan War (1878-80) prompted Amir Sher Ali Khan to persuade Umar Khan and other leading Mahsuds to attack Tank and burn its bazaar on New Year's Day 1879. This attack represented "...one of the most serious tribal incursions along the whole frontier during the British period, and led to a brief collapse of the government's authority around Tank."⁴⁰ The British restored order afterwards but did not have the resources to mount an immediate punitive expedition. Instead of an immediate punitive expedition, the British initially enacted a reverse blockade, demanded the payment of a fine, and the handover of Umar Khan and the other ringleaders. Macauley also attempted to renew the resettlement scheme but subsequently mounted a punitive expedition in 1881. The expedition did not achieve decisive results although it destroyed substantial property. The lack of decisive results forced the British to continue the reverse blockade that eventually caused the Mahsuds to submit and comply with British demands in September 1881.⁴¹

³⁷ Ibid., 170.

³⁸ Ibid., 218.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Beattie, 218.

⁴¹ Nevill, 90-2.

Although Waziristan remained generally quiet in the 1880s and the early 1890s, events in Afghanistan during this time period had profound effects on the future of the entire frontier. Following the end of the Second Anglo-Afghan War, the British and Afghan Amir Abdur Rahman signed a treaty that stipulated the following: Britain controlled Afghanistan's foreign policy; the British government in India controlled key passes between India and Afghanistan; and Britain agreed to protect Afghanistan from foreign aggressors (i.e., Russia). Russia and Britain nearly went to war in 1885 after Russian forces routed an Afghan garrison in Pandjeh, approximately thirty miles from the Afghan frontier. Diplomacy prevented any further armed conflict and the Afghanistan/Russian border was formally demarcated in 1887.

The crisis in 1885 prompted General Sir Fredrick Roberts, Commander-in-Chief of India, to improve the lines of communication between India and Afghanistan to better his ability to project forces from India to thwart any potential Russian aggression towards Afghanistan. These improvements ran through tribal controlled territory along the frontier, most notably the Khyber and Kurram valleys. Amir Rahman interpreted these improvements as a threat to his influence along the frontier and he subsequently incited the frontier tribes against the British.⁴² To lessen tensions and formalize the exact location of the border, the British and the Afghans decided to demarcate the Indo-Afghan border in 1893-5. The Durand Line (named after the British officer who surveyed the border) enclosed inside British controlled territory many formerly independent territories along the frontier, including Waziristan.

Not surprisingly, the Mahsuds viewed this new boundary line as an infringement of their sovereignty and attacked the Durand Delimitation Commission and its escort at Wana in November 1894. The British lost twenty-one killed and thirty-four wounded, plus forty-three casualties among the camp followers. The Mahsuds lost approximately 150 men. The attack was

⁴² Michael Barthorp. *The North-West Frontier*. (Poole: Blandford Books Ltd., 1982), 99.

followed by a three-column British punitive expedition the following month that destroyed Mahsud villages and fortifications. The British renewed the punitive expedition in January 1895, and more destruction of Mahsud owned property followed. Mahsud representatives sued for peace on 21 January and agreed to pay fines (consisting of over a thousand Indian Rupees and various weapons), surrender hostages, and allow the boundary demarcation to continue unmolested. In a reversal of policy in place since 1849, the British established a permanent military post at Wana and did away with local intermediaries.⁴³ The British installed government political agents to conduct direct liaison with the tribes.

In addition to the military post at Wana, the British also established permanent military bases in the Tochi and Kurram Valleys and other locations along the frontier. An attack against the British political agent in Northern Waziristan resulted in a punitive expedition against the Wazirs in July 1897. The two-brigade British force met scant opposition and destroyed Wazir villages. The Wazirs refused to submit until mid-November after the British initiated a full-time presence in the Tochi Valley.

A wide-scale Pashtun revolt against the British along most of the frontier shortly followed the conflict in Waziristan. The Swati, Bunerwal, Uthman Khel, Mamund, Mohmand, Orakzai, and Afridi tribes all rose up against the British. The forward presence of British troops following the demarcation of the Durand Line sparked the revolt and local mullahs fanned the fighting by calling for a *jihad*. The Pashtun tribes feared that the presence of British soldiers threatened their independence and recent British reverses in Sudan were enough to make the frontier tribes believe that they could defeat British forces. The British eventually quelled the revolt, but only after months of fighting, millions of pounds sterling expended, and at least one

⁴³ Nevill, 153-7.

thousand casualties.⁴⁴ Surprisingly, the Mahsuds, the most uncooperative tribe along the frontier during the nineteenth century, did not join the revolt.

Although the revolt suggested that the British should revise its forward policy immediately, change did not come until Lord George Curzon (1899-1905) became the Viceroy. He removed the frontier territories from the administration of the Punjab government in Lahore. Waziristan and the rest of the frontier territories became part of the newly created North-Western Frontier Province (NWFP). Sir Harlod Deane (1901-08) became the first Chief Commissioner of the NWFP and was directly responsible to the British Government in India.

Curzon changed the military structure as well. British Army in India forces based along the Durand Line were withdrawn and replaced by tribal forces led by British officers. In Waziristan, these tribal units were divided into the North and South Waziristan Militias. The militias manned garrisons and conducted security patrols in the tribal areas and were called upon to support regular British Army in India forces if a threat required their presence in the tribal areas. The political agent controlled these militia forces, augmented by a law enforcement body called the Frontier Constabulary that only operated east of the old administrative line. The British repositioned their forces east of the old administrative line to serve as a reserve force. Similarly, Lord Horatio Kitchener, Commander-in-Chief of British Army in India forces (1902-9), abolished the Punjab Frontier Force as a separate entity and integrated its units into the rest of the British Army in India.

Although the Mahsuds did not participate in the Pashtun revolt in 1897, they continued their recalcitrant ways in 1898. Led by a religious firebrand, the Mullah Powindah, the Mahsuds resumed raids "...across the administrative border, attacks on militias and police posts, ambushes

⁴⁴ Barthorp, 138.

of convoys, murders of political officers, incitement of fellow-Mahsud sepoy of the Militia...”⁴⁵

The Mahsuds ignored a 10,000 pounds sterling fine levied by the British (the largest fine ever imposed on a frontier tribe) and the Commissioner of Dera Ismail Khan instituted a reverse blockade. The blockade initially failed to force the Mahsuds to submit. The British then launched a punitive expedition that killed enough men and cattle to force the Mahsuds to come to terms in March 1902, fourteen months after the blockade was first imposed.⁴⁶ After a brief respite, a Mahsud sepoy in the South Waziristan Militia murdered the political agent in 1904. A British Army in India battalion deployed to Wana but Mahsud intransigence and British reprisals continued unabated. The Mullah Powindah died in 1913. Nevertheless, his legacy ensured the Mahsuds continually resisted British forces.

The strategic importance of the NWFP significantly lessened when the so-called Great Game ended with the Anglo-Russian convention of 1907. This bi-lateral agreement allowed Afghanistan to remain in Britain’s sphere of influence as long as the British did not interfere in its internal affairs. The importance of the lines of communication between India and Afghanistan consequently lessened after the signing of the convention. The NWFP now represented only the outer periphery of India’s borders rather than a potentially critical transitory area for the British Army in India.

Sir George Roos-Keppel subsequently replaced Deane in 1908 and served until 1919. During his tenure, the NWFP remained generally quiet. The Mahsuds revolted again, however, in 1915 and were not subdued until two years later. Despite the considerable challenges experienced on the Western Front during the First World War, the British mostly benefited in the

⁴⁵ Ibid., 147.

⁴⁶ Nevill, 329.

tribal areas from a neutral Afghan leader. Amir Habibulla refused German pleas to support the Central Powers and rejected Constantinople's call for a *jihad* against the British and Russians.

Following the First World War, assassins murdered Habibulla and his third son Amanulla took power. To help solidify his position with anti-British factions within Afghanistan, Amanulla rushed troops to the border in a show of support to Indians following anti-British riots in the Punjab. Although the movement of forces was ostensibly made to ensure the riots did not spread over the Durand Line, Afghan troops crossed the border on 3 May, 1919, and occupied an Indian village at the west end of the Khyber Pass. The British Army in India counterattacked on 9 May and the Third Anglo-Afghan War began in earnest.

Even though the British managed to quickly eject Afghan troops from Indian territory, fighting broke all along the tribal areas. The South Waziristan Militia mutinied and its British commander had to fight his way to safety. The Afridi and Wazir elements of the North Waziristan Militia mutinied as well, but the militia continued to function in fewer numbers. A revolt by the Tochi Wazirs accompanied these mutinies and the British subsequently lost control of Waziristan. Cooler heads eventually prevailed between Britain and Afghanistan and both parties signed an armistice in June shortly followed by a permanent treaty in August. The terms of the treaty allowed Afghanistan to take back control of its own foreign policy and reaffirmed the Durand Line as the political boundary. Amanulla consequently promised not to incite revolt against the British in the Pashtun tribal areas.

Although the Third Anglo-Afghan War between Afghanistan and Britain formally ended in August, but the conflict in Waziristan continued. Fighting raged until late 1920. Both the Mahsuds and Wazirs resisted British attempts to reassert control of the agency. The capability of the tribes to defy the British was strengthened by arms and trained personnel acquired from the dissolution of the militias. The British had to commit substantial forces and raze multiple villages to secure the submissions of both the Wazirs and the Mahsuds. The uprising prompted the British

to reverse policy again in 1923 and to place a permanent garrison in Razmak, located in central Waziristan.

The decision to permanently place troops in Waziristan took place without consultation with Sir John Maffey (1921-3), the NWFP Chief Commissioner. Maffey argued permanent garrisons were not only an affront to the independent minded tribes but were also highly vulnerable to attack and ambush due to their extended lines of communication. The exposed lines of communication would also inhibit the ability of the garrisons to dominate tribal territory. Maffey believed the seizure of hostages best discouraged tribal recalcitrance and garrisons located outside of tribal areas were most efficient in quelling disorder, especially with the aid of motor transport and aircraft. The decision to permanently base troops in Razmak was irreversible by the time Maffey made his dissent known.⁴⁷

The British placed six battalions in Razmak including a mountain artillery brigade. Another seven battalions were located outside the tribal areas in Bannu and an additional brigade was based between Tank and Jandola. The British also reconstituted the Waziristan militias broken up during the 1919-20 uprising. The Tochi Scouts formed in North Waziristan while the South Waziristan Scouts replaced the old militia in the south. Waziristan remained generally quiet for the next twelve years but the new security arrangement "...was all preventive, rather than curative, and as time went by, Maffey's forebodings would prove to be justified."⁴⁸

Following the submission of the tribes in 1920, nationalist sentiment resonated throughout most of India, including the NWFP. Abdul Ghaffar Khan led a Pashtun group called the 'Red Shirts' in Peshawar that openly challenged the British administration. Red Shirt-led demonstrations disrupted Peshawar during the summer of 1930. Afridi and Mohmand defiance

⁴⁷ Barthorp, 162.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

also required British punitive expeditions in the early 1930s. It did not take long for anti-government sentiment to boil over in Waziristan as well.

In 1936, a Tori Khel Wazir named Mira Ali Khan began an anti-government campaign in Waziristan that continually menaced the British until their departure from India in 1947. More commonly known as the *Faqir of Ipi*, he first gained British attention when he tried to disrupt a trial in Bannu. His anti-government rhetoric prompted a two column British show of force through northern Waziristan. In contrast to other punitive expeditions in the nineteenth century, the British operated under restrictive rules of engagement that forbade troops to shoot until shot at. “Every military rule for effective Frontier warfare was in conflict with political rules – all of which the tribesmen knew very well and took every advantage.”⁴⁹ The show of force, intended to demonstrate British strength, ended in disaster as tribesmen continually attacked the columns and inflicted heavy casualties.

The failure of the columns elevated the *Faqir of Ipi*’s prestige and incited the Wazirs, Mahsuds, Bhattanis, and even Afghans across the border to rally to his cause. The British responded by sending an additional four brigades to Razmak in 1937. Although the British hoped to catch the enemy in a fixed engagement, the *Faqir of Ipi* never made a stand and eluded capture. In April 1937, tribesmen ambushed a British convoy traveling to Wana and killed or wounded ninety-two officers and enlisted soldiers. The challenges of the elusive enemy and broken terrain in Waziristan forced the British to operate in a very deliberate and set piece manner that ultimately inhibited flexibility and initiative.

The British responded to their failure to subdue the *Faqir of Ipi* by destroying villages but achieved nothing conclusive. By late 1937, the heavy destruction eventually dampened support for the *Faqir*. The British consequently decided that a large presence inside Waziristan was

⁴⁹ Barthorp, 171-2.

counterproductive and reduced troop levels to pre-crisis levels. Fighting flared up again in 1938-9, albeit on a smaller scale. The *Faqir* managed to raid Bannu, at further expense to British prestige. The *Faqir* continued menacing the British until their departure in 1947, but violence did not reach the same levels it did during the 1930s. The British left India without ever capturing or killing the *Faqir of Ipi*. He later died of natural causes in 1960.

The British, therefore, had a mixed record of success in influencing the tribes in Waziristan. Although the Mahsuds proved to be the most challenging tribe to manage, the Wazirs were troublesome as well. The British used both positive and negative incentives to accomplish their goals in Waziristan, usually in some type of combination. Over time, there was no single course of action that determined success or failure in dealing with the tribes. Each individual conflict had to be dealt with uniquely because past methods did not always guarantee success in solving the contemporary problem.

The British, for example, not only used trade incentives but they also used resettlement programs and membership into paid militias to positively influence tribal behavior. Although the positive inducements matched British colonial philosophy nicely, they were usually more expensive than what the colonial government in Lahore or Dehli could afford. When positive incentives did not work, the British resorted to levying fines; taking hostages; seizing men, property, or animals; implementing reverse blockades; and/or launching punitive expeditions. Due to their manpower, material, and financial restraints, the British primarily used negotiation to resolve conflict. The British initially tried to use intermediaries to negotiate with the tribes but were dissatisfied either because the intermediaries did not have the manpower or financial resources to influence the tribes or their political rivals undermined their efforts.

After the perceived failure of intermediaries, the British assigned political officers to conduct direct negotiations with the tribes. Political officers often used *jirgas* to resolve disputes, which usually proved to be more successful than the intermediaries. Even when the British

successfully brokered agreements with the tribes, individual tribesmen could violate its terms due to the inability of tribal leaders to ensure enforcement of agreements on the entire tribe or its subordinate branches and/or sections. The Mahsuds were notorious for violating agreements due to the ambiguous authority of its chiefs and *mailks*.

The British also had mixed results when it resorted to punitive expeditions. Due to its fear of suffering heavy casualties, the difficulty of the terrain, the fierceness of the tribes, and overall lack of manpower, the British limited its initial expeditions to “butcher and bolt” type operations. Although tribal forces usually did not try to fully resist punitive expeditions in the last half of the 19th century, British military forces conducted highly destructive but brief excursions into tribal territory to limit their vulnerability. These operations typically did not achieve their intended effect without the addition of a long-term reverse blockade and the seizure of hostages.

Punitive expeditions by themselves typically did not achieve their intended results not only due to the martial ethos of the Mahsuds and Wazirs, but also because of their superior fighting skills as well. In the British Army in India official record of their operations in Waziristan in 1919-20, for example, the Mahsuds and Wazirs were described as “...among the finest fighters in the world while operating in their own territory...” and the “...best umpires in the world because they seldom allowed a tactical error to go unpunished.”⁵⁰ Similarly, the official record stated that offensive operations against the tribes were difficult because of their superior surveillance skills and effective warning system.

⁵⁰ General Staff, Army Headquarters India. Operations in Waziristan, 1919-20. (Dehli: Government Central Press, 1923), 5-6.

The British did not attempt, however, to maintain a long-term presence in Waziristan until the establishment of the Durand Line. Despite the extended deployment of maneuver forces supported by artillery and usually with air support, the British continued to find mixed results. Although the long-term stationing of troops in the tribal areas gave the appearance of control, British forces could not guarantee their desired influence on tribal behavior. The tribes considered the long-term presence of foreign troops an affront to their sense of honor, which required a violent reaction. Despite the long-term “Forward” policy from 1895-1901 and 1923-1947, the British never permanently subdued the tribes in Waziristan.

The British also had little success in capturing or killing important fugitives in Waziristan. The Mullah Powindah and the *Faqir of Ipi* eluded British pursuit for decades. The Pashtun tenant of *melmastia*, the complex terrain of Waziristan, and their religious status helped ensure Powindah and the *Faqir* never were killed or captured by the British. Little wonder someone like Osama bin Ladin and other notorious fugitives could find sanctuary in Waziristan.

CHAPTER 4

Current political realities in Pakistan

To understand how the British colonial experience relates to current realities in Waziristan, it is critical to understand the overall political system in Pakistan first. A complete examination of the complex political realities in Pakistan is outside the breadth of this monograph. It is possible, however, to gain an appreciation for the factors which shape the political landscape in Pakistan by briefly examining its structure and its primary actors. To best understand the current political realities in Pakistan, one must examine the overall structure of the government, the 1999 coup, the career and influences of the current President, the conflict in Kargil, and the other actors who shape politics in Pakistan.

Pakistan is the product of the division of India following independence from the British in 1947. Pakistan currently consists of four provinces, one territory, and one capital territory.

Baluchistan, Punjab, Sindh, and the North-Western Frontier Province are the four provinces while the Federally Administered Tribal Areas and Islamabad represent the territory and capital territory respectively. Pakistan has a population of approximately 157 million persons and a per capita income of \$460.

Pakistan has been governed poorly. Since its independence in 1947, the country has experienced internal strife, little rule of law, high crime, corrupt leadership, and poor governance at all levels. Pakistan is a semi-authoritarian state led by a powerful executive and has been governed by the military in thirty of its fifty-seven years of existence. It also has a bi-cameral Parliament and a constitution.

The current President, Pervez Musharraf, took power via a military take over in October 1999. He removed the Nawaz Sharif government in a bloodless coup. Musharraf assumed the role of Chief Executive and continued to serve as the Chief of Army Staff and Chairman of the Joint Staff Committee. He also suspended Parliament and the constitution. He ousted Nawaz because the Prime Minister planned to arrest and eventually exile him. The coup followed eleven years of chaotic rule by Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz, both put in power by democratically elected political parties. The Supreme Court in Pakistan validated the coup in May 2000 but ordered Musharraf to hold general elections within three years.

Musharraf formally became President in June 2001 and dissolved the suspended Parliament. In a suspect referendum in April 2002, Musharraf's Presidency was extended until 2007. Parliamentary elections took place in October 2002 and a month later convened for the first time since the coup. In January 2004, Musharraf won a vote of confidence in the Parliament and four provincial assemblies.

To best understand the political realities in Pakistan, it is critical to understand Musharraf and his rise to power. His professional associations and religious orientation have significantly influenced his career progression. These factors have not only shaped his career but have an

influence on the decisions he makes today. Those decisions directly affect U.S. policy in Pakistan in general and Waziristan specifically.

Musharraf is a Mohajir, a Muslim refugee from India. He was born on August 11, 1943 in New Dehli, India. After partition, Musharraf and his family moved to Pakistan. He spent his early years in Ankara, Turkey where his father served as a Pakistani diplomat. He is a devout Muslim and reputedly a follower of Deobandism, an intellectual school of Islam founded in India and heavily subsidized by Saudi Arabia. Despite his personal faith, he rules as a secular leader.

Musharraf's assumption of power followed a steady rise in the ranks of the Pakistani Army. He was commissioned in the artillery in 1964 and was decorated for bravery during the 1965 war against India. Musharraf served in the Special Services Group from 1967-73, during which he fought against India again in 1971. From 1973-79, he commanded multiple artillery regiments after attending the Army Command and Staff College in Quetta and the National Defence College.

Musharraf's career ascension continued after General Mohammad Zia ul-Haq overthrew the democratically elected government of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in July 1977 and eventually imposed martial law. Zia accused Bhutto of murdering a political opponent and hanged him in 1979. Zia, also a devout Muslim, imposed a strict Islamic program throughout Pakistan to make its laws conform with the Koran. He helped the U.S. aid the *mujahideen* fighting the Soviet occupation in Afghanistan. Zia helped turn the nationalistic resistance in Afghanistan into a religious *jihad*. "From 1981 until Zia ul-Haq died, Washington committed more than \$7 billion

in military and economic aid to Pakistan, and at least \$2 billion in covert assistance to the Afghan *mujahideen*, all of it channeled through Pakistan's powerful ISI."⁵¹

Of the many *mujahideen* groups fighting in Afghanistan, Zia and the ISI strongly supported Gulbadin Hekmatyar and his party the *Hizb-i-Islami*. Zia supported Hekmatyar and his radical Islamic ideology to secure a policy of "strategic depth" which, "...meant to secure a friendly northern and western border as a bulwark against India – in effect, to create a client state, which, if war broke out between Pakistan and India again, the generals in Islamabad could use as a military hinterland."⁵² Hekmatyar has evolved into one of the biggest threats to the U.S. supported Hamid Karzai administration in post-9/11 Afghanistan. Zia's dual-program to Islamicise Pakistan and co-opt Afghanistan permanently embedded conservative militant Islamic elements in the political fabric of the country.

During the 1980s, Musharraf served as a staff officer in one of Zia's district martial law administration headquarters. He purportedly gained the attention of Zia due to his devout Islamic faith and a recommendation by *Jamaat-e-Islami*, a conservative Islamic party. Most of his career in the 1980s is unconfirmed, but Musharraf allegedly helped train foreign Islamic militants who came to Pakistan to fight the Soviets in Afghanistan. He also allegedly commanded an infantry unit that attacked Indian positions at Bilafond Pass and led a SSG unit that helped suppress a Shiite revolt in Gilgit, Pakistan.

In the 1990s, Musharraf rose through the ranks. He attended the British Royal College of Defence Studies in 1990-1. He later commanded an infantry division and served as the Director of General Military Operations (DMO) from 1993-5. He assumed command of the prestigious Strike Corps in 1995 and became the Chief of Army Staff in 1998 two days after his predecessor

⁵¹ Mary Anne Weaver. *Pakistan: In the Shadow of Jihad and Afghanistan*. (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Grioux, 2002), 59.

⁵² Weaver, 79.

called for the military to take a key role in the country's decision making process. Musharraf continued in this role even after he removed Nawaz.

The clash between Musharraf and Nawaz became inevitable after the Kargil affair in May 1999. The incident occurred after Islamic militants and Army forces, under orders from Musharraf, infiltrated the Indian side of the line of control in Kashmir. Musharraf hoped this infiltration would force India to negotiate a diplomatic resolution to the conflict in Kashmir. Indian forces counterattacked after they discovered Pakistani forces in the Kargil sector. As fighting raged along the line of control, both countries hastily built up forces along their shared 1,800-mile border. The rapid escalation of hostilities prompted worldwide fears of another full-scale war between Pakistan and India, both armed with nuclear weapons.

Fearing that the conflict could go nuclear, U.S. President Clinton personally intervened and pressured Nawaz to withdraw militants behind the line of control. Nawaz relented and ordered the Army to remove all regular and irregular forces without consulting his Chief of Army Staff. The order humiliated Musharraf who reportedly had considerable difficulty in ensuring that the Islamic militants pulled back as ordered. Not surprisingly, this withdrawal caused Musharraf to lose significant credibility with the militant Islamic elements in Pakistan. This incident ensured that either Musharraf would be removed or the Army would launch a coup – it was only a matter of which would come first.

It came as little surprise when Musharraf used Islamic militants to force the issue in Kashmir. He fled to Pakistan among the blood and chaos of the partition in 1947 and fought two unsuccessful wars against India in 1965 and 1971. Considering the fact India had hundreds of thousands of troops posted in Kashmir, the militants served as a convenient proxy force to harass an Indian military Musharraf had been at odds with all his life. The *jihad* against the Soviets attracted over twenty-five thousand Islamic militants to Pakistan and thousands remained in 1996, seven years after the Soviets had withdrawn from Afghanistan. Many of these foreign militants

permanently settled in the tribal areas and intermarried in the Pashtun tribes. The *jihad* in Kashmir further served the dual purpose of ensuring that the otherwise unoccupied Islamic militants posed less of a threat to the Pakistani government.

Like Zia in Afghanistan, Musharraf turned a nationalistic-inspired campaign inside Kashmir into a full-scale *jihad*. The ISI led the *jihad* in Kashmir in the same way it had in Afghanistan. It set up 128 camps in Pakistani controlled Kashmir and the North-West Frontier Province, primarily to train fighters in Kashmir. It controlled the supplies and sanctuaries for these fighters as well. The ISI also funded and operated camps alongside Osama Bin Ladin in Afghanistan prior to 2001.

A dozen or so private armies and militant groups in Pakistan supply the Kashmir *jihad* with fighters. The three main groups providing these fighters are the following: *Harakat ul-Mujahideen* (HUM), *Jaish-e-Mohammed*; and *Lashkar-e-Taiba* or the Army of the Pure. All these groups have direct or indirect links to Osama Bin Ladin and are on the U.S. State Department's 2003 list of foreign terrorist organizations. The HUM is also active in Bosnia, Tajikistan, and India. It was linked to the hijacking of a commercial airliner in India in December 1999 and is also suspected of kidnapping or murdering Westerners in Pakistan during the mid-to-late 1990s.⁵³ These groups were outlawed after September 2001, but have reemerged under different names.

Musharraf maintained close links with the ISI throughout his career in both the SSG and as the DMO. An ISI general, Lieutenant General Mahmud Ahmed helped Musharraf secure his coup against Nawaz. Despite these links to the ISI, the military remains Musharraf's most solid supporter. The Army and its generals backed Musharraf's removal of Nawaz and remain his most reliable power base. To ensure the continued support of the Army, Musharraf proposed the

⁵³ Weaver, 271-2.

creation of a National Security Council in 2002. This entity would supersede any popularly elected civilian government and ensure that the Army remained Pakistan's ultimate political authority.⁵⁴

Despite Musharraf's overall support by the military, there is sympathy for the Islamic militants throughout the Pakistani armed forces. The Army supported the creation of the Taliban in Afghanistan and its active development by the ISI. The existence of the Taliban helped realize the Army's goal of "strategic depth" in Afghanistan. The Army also facilitated the infiltration of Islamic militants across the line of control in 1999 in Kashmir. In May 2004, Musharraf even claimed several junior Army and Air Force officers (either motivated by religious extremism or money) had been arrested in connection with the attempts on his life in December 2003.⁵⁵

In addition to the various elements within the military that have sympathies for Islamic extremism, Musharraf must contend with various separatist movements inside Pakistan. The most significant separatist movement is in Baluchistan. This province lies in western Pakistan, bordering Afghanistan and Iran. The Pakistanis have put down two major uprisings in this province, once immediately after partition and the other between 1973-7. Nearly six thousand Balochs died in the last conflict and anti-government violence persists today. In early December 2004, suspected separatist elements exploded a bomb in Quetta, the provincial capitol. The attack killed eleven, including one soldier.⁵⁶ Musharraf also has to deal with separatist elements in both the Sindh province and the Pashtun tribal areas along the Afghanistan border.

Musharraf faces challenges from various political parties as well. There are many political parties in Pakistan but the Pakistan Muslim League – PML (with various factions),

⁵⁴ Ibid., 215.

⁵⁵ "Military Officers Were Involved in Assassination Attempt: Muaharraf." *Paktribune.com*, 27 May 2004, <http://www.paktribune.com/news/index.php?id=66129> (accessed 21 February 2005).

⁵⁶ "Quetta bomb blast the handiwork of anti-state elements: Musharraf." *Paktribune.com*, 10 December 2004, <http://www.paktribune.com/news/index.php?id=86427> (accessed 21 February 2005).

Pakistan People's Party (PPP), Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), and the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal Pakistan (MMA) are the most influential parties. Although a faction of the PML supports Musharraf, another faction backs Nawaz, who is currently in exile in Saudi Arabia. Benazir Bhutto leads the PPP, although she lives in the UAE in a self-imposed exile to avoid corruption charges. The MQM is the third largest political party in Pakistan and the largest in the Sindh province while the MMA represents a coalition of Islamic religious parties. The *Jamaat-e-Islami* is part of the MMA.

Although the infiltration at Kargil and the assumption of power in 1999 represented significant events in Musharraf's career, his decision to abandon the Taliban and back the U.S. in its global war on terror after September 11, 2001 is the seminal event of his life. Musharraf severed ties with the Mullah Omar-led Taliban regime, allowed the U.S. to use four Pakistani air bases to support its operation in Afghanistan, and authorized multiple U.S. governmental agencies to collect information against extremist elements inside Pakistan. Not only did this decision alienate the two major supporters of his regime (the ISI and Army) but it also put him at further odds with militant Islamic elements in Pakistan and the Middle East.

The decision to back the U.S. put Musharraf in conflict with various elements in the Army because they are resentful of U.S. policies toward Pakistan in the 1990s. The U.S. had alienated the Army because of its imposition of sanctions in 1990 due to Pakistan's suspected development of nuclear weapons. "This meant not only the loss of \$564 million of economic and military aid, but prevented the delivery of 71 F-16 fighters and spare parts for the Pakistani Air Force."⁵⁷ These sanctions especially embittered the Army after Pakistan took the great risk of

⁵⁷ Ian Talbot. "Does the Army Shape Pakistan's Foreign Policy" Jafferlot, ed. Pakistan: Nationalism without a Nation. (New Dehli: Manohar Publishers, 2002), 326.

supporting the U.S. backed *mujahideen* in Afghanistan during the 1980s. Many Army officers felt the U.S. had abandoned Pakistan once it had served its purpose in Afghanistan.

In addition, he angered the Army and the ISI in August 1998 when it gave only a last minute notification of its Tomahawk cruise missile attacks against training camps run by Osama bin Ladin in Afghanistan. Not only were the Pakistanis insulted that they were not taken into Washington's confidence about the attack but the missiles flew across Pakistani airspace and ended up killing five ISI officers assigned to the targeted camps.⁵⁸ The Army also resented U.S. sanctions placed after its nuclear weapons testing in 1998 and following Musharraf's seizure of power in 1999. Although the U.S. lifted the 1998 sanctions shortly after September 11, 2001 and the remaining sanctions in 2003, distrust of the U.S. resonates among Army and ISI personnel.⁵⁹ Many Army and ISI officers also resent the U.S.-led campaign, which removed the Taliban from power, consequently eliminating Pakistan's hard earned "strategic depth" option.

Musharraf's decision to abandon the Taliban, therefore, caused a predictable reaction by Islamic militants. Pro-Pakistani militants assaulted the Indian parliament in December 2001, prompting a New Delhi ultimatum to Musharraf to turn over militants and stop militant infiltration into Kashmir. Musharraf initially did not comply and both sides mobilized a combined million troops along their shared border in early 2002. Islamic militants also attacked an Indian Army base in Kashmir in May 2002, resulting in the deaths of thirty-four people – mostly women and children. Al-Qaeda affiliated militants unleashed attacks inside Pakistan during 2002 as well: extremists murdered journalist Daniel Pearl in January and killed five Westerners in a Islamabad church in March; and in May, a suicide car bomb killed sixteen workers, nearly all French, at a submarine construction area in Karachi. Musharraf further

⁵⁸ Weaver, 33.

⁵⁹ Weaver, 35.

enraged Islamic militants by pledging to India in May 2002 to cease infiltration across the line of control in Kashmir. This militant rage - aggrieved by the abandonment of the Taliban, the active support of the U.S. after September 11, 2001, and the pull back from Kashmir - culminated in two attempted assassination attempts against Musharraf in December 2003.

Musharraf and the Army developed the militant Islamic movement in Pakistan to serve their purposes in Afghanistan and Kashmir. Musharraf, consequently, did not easily turn his back on the movement he spent a career developing and exploiting. At great risk to his hold on power and his life, Musharraf has supported the U.S. and its war on terror. Not only has his assistance to the U.S. cost him the support of Islamic militants, but it has also alienated members of the ISI and Army, his most critical supporters.

The militant Islamic threat highlights the danger Musharraf faces. He leads a country with a disparate polity; a corrupt political system; a military and intelligence service deeply involved in politics, numerous; well-armed Islamic militants with their own agenda; multiple separatist movements; and an unfriendly nuclear-armed neighbor. All of these factors have the potential to unleash events that could remove Musharraf. Considering the fragile stability in Pakistan, the removal of Musharraf could possibly place nuclear weapons in the hands of Islamic militants or military hardliners. These two possibilities pose considerable danger to the U.S. and its allies in the South Asia.

Accordingly, with the important political foundation of Pakistan established, it is possible to put current events in Waziristan in its proper context. Following partition in 1947, the nascent Pakistani government agreed not to base troops in the tribal areas along the border with Afghanistan. This agreement was critical to secure the loyalty of these tribes to the new Pakistan government and to discourage the creation of *Pashtunistan*, a movement to establish a Pashtun homeland independent of Pakistan and Afghanistan. This arrangement was tantamount to a “Modified Close Border” policy carried out by the British from 1901-23. The tribes maintained

militias to guard Pakistan's western border but regular government troops stayed out of the tribal areas. In contrast to the British version of this policy, however, Pakistani officers did not lead tribal forces.

This policy endured until late 2001. Musharraf's decision to abandon the Taliban and support U.S. efforts in Afghanistan after September 11, 2001, also translated into a change of policy toward the tribal areas. The Pakistan Army entered the Khyber, Kurram and North Waziristan agencies in December 2001 and May 2002. This deployment in the tribal areas represented the first time the Pakistani government had ever conducted a "Forward" policy since partition in 1947. According to press reports, the Army moved into these areas at the request of the U.S. government to check the flow of Taliban and Al-Qaeda elements fleeing from Afghanistan.⁶⁰

Still, the Pakistani government did not move troops in Waziristan without first negotiating with tribal elders. In early May 2002, the Army Corps Commander in Peshawar, Lieutenant General Ali Mohammad Jan Orakzai, met with tribal leaders from North and South Waziristan. The tribal elders, "...assured the government that they would allow access to Pakistan Army and local scouts to the hitherto administratively inaccessible tribal areas and seize and hand over any suspects."⁶¹ In exchange for their cooperation, Orakzai promised to carry out infrastructure and other development programs worth at least twenty million USD.⁶² Thus, to achieve its goals in Waziristan, the Pakistani Army conducted a dual program of counter-terrorism operations and civil affairs.

⁶⁰ Yusufzai, Rahimullah. "Analysis: Pakistan's army in the tribal areas." *BBC News*, 25 June 2003, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/3020552.stm (accessed 18 December 2004).

⁶¹ Khan, M. Ismail. "Army commandos deployed in Fata." *DAWN.com*. 11 May 2002. <http://www.dawn.com/2002/05/11/top7.htm> (accessed 19 December 2004).

⁶² Amir, Intikhab. "Army to start patrolling in Waziristan shortly." *DAWN.com*, 14 May 2002, <http://www.dawn.com/2002/05/14/nat2.htm> (accessed 19 December 2004).

The Pakistani Army, therefore, deployed approximately eight-thousand troops consisting of the following forces: three-thousand Regular Army soldiers, three-thousand Frontier Corps (paramilitary) personnel, two-thousand Army Engineers, and one hundred SSG commandos. Along with the entry of Pakistani forces, small numbers of U.S. Special Forces also conducted operations out of Miranshah, North Waziristan. The presence of U.S. forces inside tribal areas enraged Islamic militants, who controlled the provincial assembly in the North-Western Frontier Province. Protests against the presence of U.S. troops culminated after a mid-May 2002 raid against a mosque in Miranshah run by Mullah Jalaluddin Haqqani, an ISI protégé and ally of Osama bin Ladin and the Taliban. Hundreds of Pakistani Army troops assisted by dozen or so U.S. Special Forces personnel conducted the raid. After the troops withdrew, students, mullahs, and tribal chiefs congregated in Miranshah's main square and the mullahs "...announced to everyone assembled that, from that day, they should kill Americans on sight."⁶³

Subsequently, reports of U.S. uniformed personnel operating in Waziristan ended after summer 2002. U.S. efforts in the tribal areas, meanwhile, transitioned primarily to interagency operations. U.S. civilian government agencies assisted the Pakistani government efforts in intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, communications, and law enforcement operations.⁶⁴ The interagency not only provided the Pakistan government critical capabilities but also added

⁶³ Weaver, 265.

⁶⁴ Few specifics of U.S. government activities in Waziristan are publicly available. The author culled details of U.S. government support of the Pakistani government from open news sources. The following articles have discussed the subject:
Khan, Mohammed. "Stalled Pursuit: A Manhunt with an Escort; A Hostile Land Foils the Quest for bin Laden." *NYTimes.com*. 13 December 2004, <http://query.nytimes.com/search/restricted/article?res=F70911F834550C708DDDAB0994DC404482> (accessed 17 April 05);
"Musharraf thrives on US support." *BBC News*. 8 December 2004, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/4079559.stm (accessed 17 April 05);
"US renews commitment to Pakistan." *BBC News*. 9 November 2004, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/3996479.stm (accessed 17 April 05);
"Musharraf's Bin Laden headache." *BBC News*, 17 March 2004, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/3545985.stm (accessed 17 April 05).

the advantage of receiving U.S. government assistance in more discrete means than overt military operations. This subtlety provides Musharraf with some political cover from his many internal critics who claim he is forfeiting Pakistan's sovereignty by allowing the U.S. to operate inside the tribal areas.

The Pakistani Army, along with paramilitary forces, remained in Waziristan to patrol the western border with Afghanistan. Little substantive information was reported about operations from summer 2002 to summer 2003. In October 2003, the Pakistani Army fought a fourteen-hour firefight with extremist elements in the vicinity of Angoor Adda, a small town located near the Afghanistan border in South Waziristan. Army Cobra attack helicopters bombarded enemy compounds and killed eight militants. The Army captured another eighteen militants.⁶⁵ Although the Pakistani Army maintained a steady tempo of operations in Waziristan from spring 2002 to late 2003, it did not launch a major offensive until militants unsuccessfully tried to kill Musharraf twice in December 2003.

The Pakistani Army launched Operation Kaloosha II in South Waziristan in mid-March 2004 after the assassination attempts were traced back to the tribal areas.⁶⁶ Over 10,000 Pakistani Army troops, accompanied by over 3,500 paramilitary personnel and supported by fighter aircraft and Cobras, swept through the western border of South Waziristan. This operation represented the largest military operation in the tribal area since partition in 1947. The major objectives of the operations were to destroy pockets of foreign militants and their tribal protectors in Azam Warsak, Kaloosha, and Shin Warsak. The targeted tribal elements were sub-sections of the Ahmedzai group of the Wazir tribe. The operation officially ended in late March and the Army stated that they had killed sixty militants, captured 163, and destroyed eighty-three militant

⁶⁵ Abbas, Zaffar. "Pakistan gets tough with al-Qaeda." *BBC News*, 3 October 2003, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/3020552.stm (accessed 18 December 04).

⁶⁶ Khan, Mohammad.

homes. Uzbeks, Chinese Uighur Muslims, Tajiks, Chechens, and Arab nationals were part of the foreign militants involved in the fighting.

Despite the declared success of the operation, the conflict demonstrated the limitations of the Army in the difficult terrain of the border area and the tenacity of the foreign militants and their tribal counterparts. Militants captured two political tehsildars and twelve paramilitary personnel in a convoy ambush on March 16, 2004. They released the paramilitary personnel after a tribal *jirga* intervened but murdered the civilian tehsildars. The Army also lost thirteen trucks, three armored personnel carriers, and four light artillery pieces in the ambush. Militants, furthermore, captured and killed eight Army soldiers after an ambush on an army convoy in Serwakai on March 22, 2004.⁶⁷ Additionally, despite substantial personnel and firepower advantages, the Pakistan government lost thirty soldiers and fifteen paramilitary personnel during the operation. Nevertheless, the Army maintains its presence in Waziristan and continues to periodically clash with militants, sometimes resulting in heavy casualties.

In summary, Musharraf changed Pakistan's long-standing policy of non-interference in tribal areas after September 11, 2001. He made this decision after U.S. officials requested his assistance to cut off the escape of militants from Afghanistan. From late 2001-fall 2004, the Pakistani government used the same carrots and sticks that the British government used in the tribal areas from 1849-1947. The Pakistanis offered incentives to cooperate by promising to develop infrastructure and offering other economic benefits. They used negative inducements as well. The Pakistani government threatened to fine, detain, dismiss from government jobs, close businesses, and destroy the homes of those individual tribesmen who sheltered foreign militants. In addition, they threatened to fine and impose reverse blockades against tribes or their sub-

⁶⁷ Ali, Zulfiqar. "Operation ends in Kaloosha: Militants release 11 hostages." *DAWN.com*, 29 May 2004, <http://www.dawn.com/2004/03/29/top4.htm> (accessed 19 December 2004).

groups as a collective punishment if they could not control the actions of their individual tribesmen. When these positive and negative measures did not produce the desired the result, the Pakistani government resorted to punitive expeditions in the form of joint paramilitary/Army operations.

CHAPTER 5

Analysis, Lessons Learned, and Recommendations

Waziristan is one of the most enigmatic areas of the world. It is located in desolate, broken terrain and is inhabited by fiercely independent tribes governed by a martial ethos. The U.S. showed little interest in Waziristan until Al-Qaeda and Taliban elements fleeing Afghanistan found refuge in this tribal area in late 2001. Of particular interest to the U.S., Osama bin Ladin and his key lieutenants are rumored to have sought sanctuary there as well. Due to the threat that Islamic extremists pose to U.S. national security and coalition efforts in Afghanistan, the U.S. has dedicated military and interagency resources against these extremist elements in Waziristan.

Due to the fact that Waziristan is part of a sovereign country which has forbidden the permanent presence of U.S. troops, the U.S. cannot directly influence this area with overt, uniformed military forces. Recognizing this challenge, the U.S can look to the British colonial experience to help guide its strategy when developing the best course of action to accomplish its goals in Waziristan. The British dealt extensively with Waziristan from 1849-1947. Despite the passage of time, the most important factors (i.e., political, military, geographical, and ethnographical, etc.) that influenced the British colonial experience have not changed significantly and are still relevant today.

With this background in mind, it is possible to examine the British experience and determine what lessons, if any, the U.S. can apply to its current operations in Waziristan. The British, for instance, utilized positive and negative incentives to influence tribal behavior. The British, additionally, used positive inducements by removing trade barriers to the tribes, resettling

tribesmen in British controlled territory, and inducting tribesmen into paid militias. Yet, if positive influences did not achieve their intended results, the British levied fines; took hostages; seized men, property, and animals; instituted reverse blockades; and launched punitive expeditions.

The British, moreover, also used multiple basing strategies to best deal with the tribes. Due to resource limitations and political constraints, the British carried out a “Close Border” policy from 1849-95. British Army in India cantonments were located outside the tribal areas and the British dealt with the tribes through intermediaries. After the establishment of a formal border between Afghanistan and India, on the other hand, the British briefly executed a “Forward” policy from 1895-1901, where the British Army in India permanently based troops inside tribal territory. The British then transitioned to a “Modified Forward” policy from 1901-23 where British-officered tribal militias maintained security without the permanent presence of British Army in India troops. After the Third Anglo-Afghan War, the British reverted to the “Forward” policy where the British Army in India again maintained permanent garrisons (supported by air power) in tribal territory until 1947.

Still, when non-lethal incentives did not alter tribal behavior, the British resorted to punitive expeditions. These armed incursions in tribal territory, however, netted mixed results overall. Although most punitive expeditions wreaked great material destruction, they usually did not force the tribes to submit. To illustrate, the British launched a brief punitive expedition in 1852 to retaliate against the Wazirs for raiding into British controlled territory. The punitive expedition, unaccompanied by any other incentive, did not force the Wazirs to submit. The British subsequently carried out punitive expeditions against the Mahsuds in 1860, 1881, 1895, and 1901-2. These did not subdue the tribe, but also required the British to levy additional fines, seize hostages, and/or the implement reverse blockades. Two religious firebrands, the Mullah Powindah (1898-1913) and the *Faqir of Ipi* (1936-47), furthermore, menaced the British for

decades without ever getting captured or killed despite multiple British punitive expeditions and a long-term presence of British troops in the tribal areas. Overall, British punitive expeditions in Waziristan did not influence tribal behavior without the combination of other incentives and did not result in the capture or elimination of highly sought after fugitives.

Ultimately, the British experience offers the following lessons:

(1) Politics govern tribal behavior in Waziristan. Due to the complexity and evolving nature of tribal politics in Waziristan, the British could not use canned solutions to solve each conflict it faced. The British had to constantly negotiate and use varying combinations of positive and negative incentives to accomplish its goals. No course of action they successfully used in the past necessarily solved future problems.

(2) The tribesmen in Waziristan are capable fighters and difficult to defeat on their own territory. The complex terrain coupled with the martial ethos of the Pashtun tribes make the tribesmen in Waziristan formidable foes. The tribes generally did not stand and fight British columns directly. Instead, the tribes fought the British on their own terms by focusing on isolated or lost columns, attacking at night, and/or ambushing convoys.

(3) Although generally sympathetic to Islamic extremists, tribesmen are more influenced by *Pasthunwali* than religious fervor. Even the Mullah Powindah and the *Faqir of Ipi* opposed the British more for political reasons than religious ones. The Mahsuds (the most troublesome tribe on the Frontier), for example, did not respond to the frontier-wide call to *jihad* in 1897.

(4) Male tribesmen are highly sensitive to the presence of foreign troops on their territory. They believe it is a personal affront to their autonomy. Tribesmen will oppose the deployment of foreign troops on their soil regardless of its legitimacy. The tribesmen even consider the Pakistani Army a foreign entity. The only exception to this policy is a *jihad*, when the tribesmen

tolerated the presence of Pakistani government and other foreign personnel during the struggle against the Soviets in Afghanistan during the 1980s.

(5) The tribesmen's sympathy toward foreign Islamic militants, some of whom have permanently settled and intermarried among the tribes, will impede intelligence collection efforts and assist militant evasion of U.S. and Pakistani operations.

(6) If someone wants to avoid capture, the complex terrain and the *Pashtunwali* code of conduct followed by the tribes make Waziristan an ideal place to hide. The Mullah Powindah and the *Faqir of Ipi* demonstrated that fugitives will find long-term sanctuary in Waziristan regardless of how capable, numerous, and aggressive their pursuers.

(7) When force was required, the British had to resort to a draconian level of violence, long-term reverse blockades, and hostage taking to force the tribes' submission. Limited or short-term incentives did not achieve their intended results.

(8) The broken terrain and the dispersion of the population mitigated the firepower and technological advantages of the British.

(9) The British found it difficult to secure agreements with the Mahsud tribe due to the ambiguous authority of its chiefs and *maliks*.

To put these lessons in their proper context, it is important to review the contemporary Pakistani experience as well. The Pakistani government inherited responsibility for the tribal areas in 1947 and adopted a "Modified Forward" policy. Yet, after September 11, 2001, the Pakistani Army moved into Waziristan in late 2001 to deny sanctuary to Al-Qaeda and Taliban elements fleeing Afghanistan. When Pakistani forces entered the tribal areas, they used many of the same strategies and incentives the British used during the colonial period.

Due to the internal political realities in Pakistan and the influence of the U.S., however, there are important differences between the post-9/11 Pakistani military operations and the British

colonial experience. On the other hand, there are many similarities between contemporary Pakistani Army operations and the British experience during the colonial era. Prior to entering Waziristan, the Pakistani Army negotiated with tribal leaders to secure their cooperation. In addition, the Pakistanis used positive and negative incentives to influence tribal behavior. To gain the cooperation of the tribes, the Pakistanis carried out infrastructure development projects. To influence tribal behavior, the Pakistanis similarly used negative incentives. The Pakistanis fined, detained, dismissed from government jobs, closed businesses, and destroyed the homes of individual tribesmen who sheltered militants. The Pakistanis imposed collective punishment on uncooperative tribes or their sub-groups or sections by implementing reverse blockades or levying fines as well. Plus, the Pakistani Army used a forward presence, multiple expeditions, and combined arms operations supported by aircraft in the tribal areas.

Despite the many parallels between the Pakistani and British experiences in Waziristan, there are significant differences. First of all, since Waziristan has always been part of Pakistan, the Pakistani government directly negotiated with the tribes. With the exception of low-level *maliks*, the Pakistani government negotiated with the tribes either through political agents or senior military officers. The Pakistanis did not use high-level intermediaries like the British during the colonial era (i.e., *Nawab* of Tank, Nabi, Azem, etc.). Second, in contrast to the British, the Pakistani government primarily conducted operations in the tribal areas at the behest of a foreign power (i.e., the U.S.). Third, the Pakistanis conducted a long-term punitive expedition along the border with Afghanistan, especially in the Angoor Adda area. Even during the period of the “Forward” policy, the British rarely operated out of their cantonments for an extended period of time. In Operations Kaloosha II, the Pakistani Army operated along the border from mid-March to early December 2004. The most important difference from the British colonial period is that the Pakistani Army has operated with foreign forces in the tribal areas and has also accepted foreign material assistance to support their operations. Specifically, U.S. Special Forces

accompanied Pakistani forces during their raid in Miranshah in May 2002 and U.S. government civilian agencies, moreover, assisted Pakistani counter-terrorism operations in Waziristan with intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, communications, and law enforcement support.

Considering the many similarities and differences between the British colonial period and the Pakistani government after September 2001, both governments have a mixed record of success in Waziristan. Although both governments achieved tactical successes, neither government completely subdued the tribes. Consequently, although the Mahsuds and Wazirs made short-term submissions, both tribes have successfully avoided long-term foreign domination. This mixed record of success by colonial Britain and contemporary Pakistan suggests even the most well equipped and modern armies will unlikely secure long-term submission of the tribes regardless of whatever short-term tactical successes they may achieve.

Considering the lessons from the British colonial experience and the contemporary Pakistani experience, the following recommendations can be applied to current U.S. operations in Waziristan:

- (1) The presence of foreign Islamic extremists in Waziristan is a complex problem and must not be addressed in isolation but as a part of Pakistan as a whole. Any overt, unilateral actions by the U.S. in Waziristan will have potentially devastating short and long-term consequences for the U.S. in Pakistan and South Asia.
- (2) The tribes in Waziristan have a martial ethos and are fiercely independent. Any outside military presence in Waziristan will incite the tribes. U.S. and Pakistani counter-terrorism efforts in Waziristan must be limited and precise.
- (3) The U.S. and Pakistani cannot employ a cookie cutter solution to the current situation in Waziristan. Due to the complex and evolving nature of tribal politics, no single course of action will work every time or even more than once. The U.S. and Pakistani government must carefully

analyze the current situation in Waziristan and apply multiple courses of action in some type of combination (i.e., negotiation and force; force, fines, and reverse blockades, etc.) to achieve their goals.

(4) Pakistan has the manpower, area familiarization, military skills, and the benefit of the British colonial experience to handle most threats in Waziristan. Pakistan only lacks technical assets and international law enforcement expertise to help deny sanctuary to Al-Qaeda and former Taliban members in Waziristan. The U.S. should provide the Pakistani government all the assistance its technology, military, and civilian government agencies can provide (i.e., intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, communications, and law enforcement expertise, etc.) to help Pakistan accomplish its goals in Waziristan.

(5) The overt return of U.S. troops to Waziristan should not be a course of action. The Mullah Powindah and the *Faqir of Ipi* demonstrated that a forward presence and thousands of troops cannot guarantee the capture or elimination of fugitives. It is highly unlikely that even the modern, comparatively plentiful resources of the U.S. will achieve a different result.

(6) Overall, the U.S. must accomplish its goals in Waziristan through interagency operations. The U.S. should shape the environment (set the conditions for the success of the Pakistani government) as discreetly as possible and let the Pakistani government deny and disrupt Al-Qaeda and Taliban activities in Waziristan. The British colonial experience demonstrates overt military operations do not guarantee any success in Waziristan and will likely increase the chance of unleashing events that could remove Musharraf and possibly place nuclear weapons into the hands of Islamic extremists or military hardliners. Musharraf is not a model democratic leader, but he is better than the alternatives in Pakistan and the U.S. should not do anything to imperil his hold on power. The possible consequences of his removal outweigh any benefit unilateral or overt military operations might achieve, perhaps even the capture or killing of Osama bin Ladin.

These recommendations validate current U.S. policy in Waziristan. Although some pundits or other critics believe Musharraf is not doing enough in the tribal areas, it is difficult to determine what more he could do considering the numerous challenges he faces in the other parts of his country. General Anthony C. Zinni, retired commander of the U.S. Central Command in June 2002, best summed up Musharraf's position in Pakistan: "'He's now engaged in an immensely delicate balancing act. He's trying to clean up the government; he's trying not to antagonize the extremists; and the economic problems he faces continue to be huge. He really wants to cooperate with United States in the war against terror, but he's worried about his western front with Afghanistan; he's worried about India; he's worried about Central Asia.'"⁶⁸ Before passing judgment on Musharraf, these are important facts to consider.

⁶⁸ Weaver, 20.



Figure 1-Waziristan

Source: "Bin Ladin's Hideout in Wilds of Pakistan." *CSMonitor.com*, 15 September 2003, <http://csmonitor.com/2003/0915/p01s04-wosc.html> (Accessed 22 February 2005).

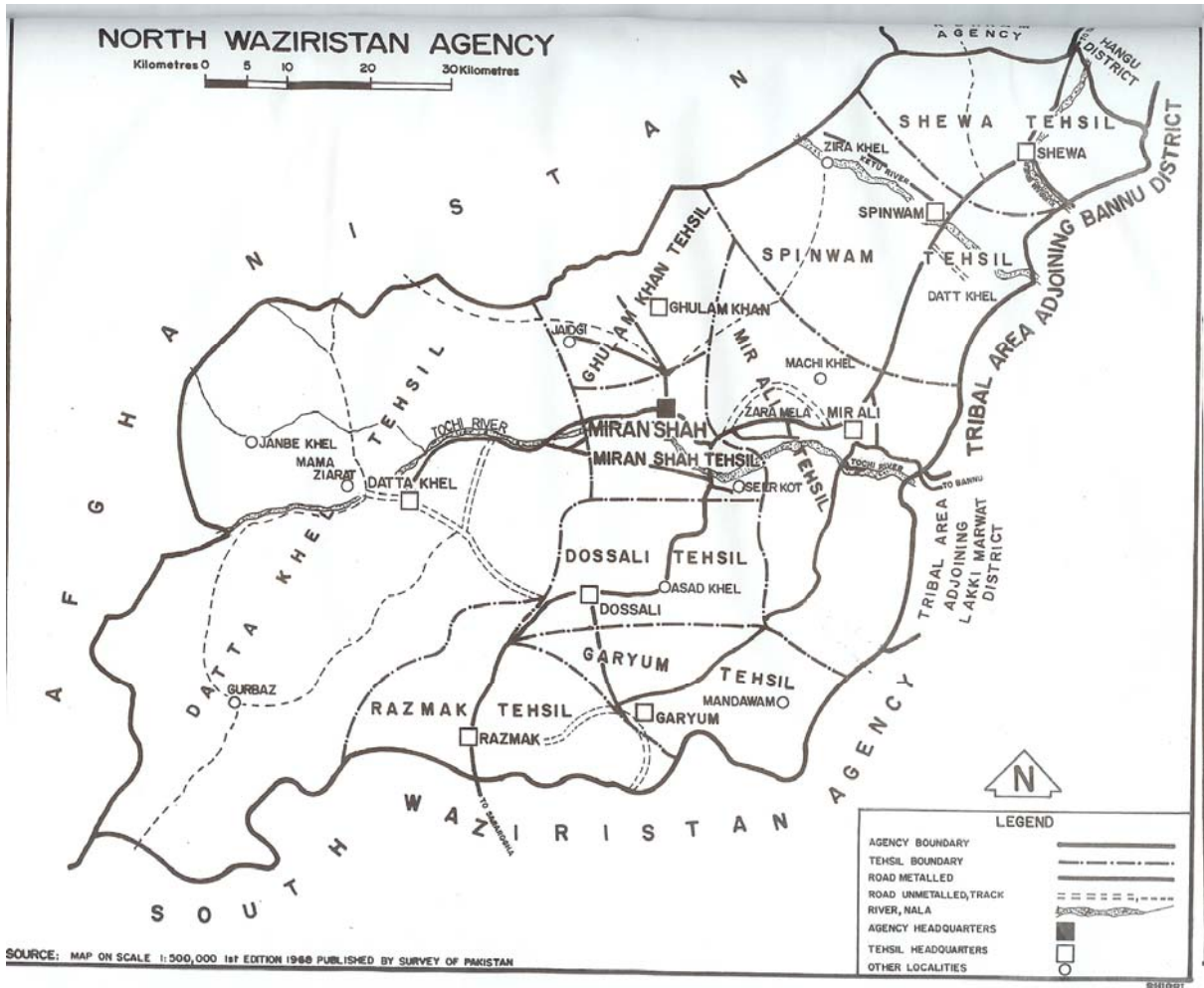


Figure 2-North Waziristan

Source: Government of Pakistan. 1998 Census Report of North Waziristan Agency. Islamabad: Population Census Organization, Statistics Division, 2000.

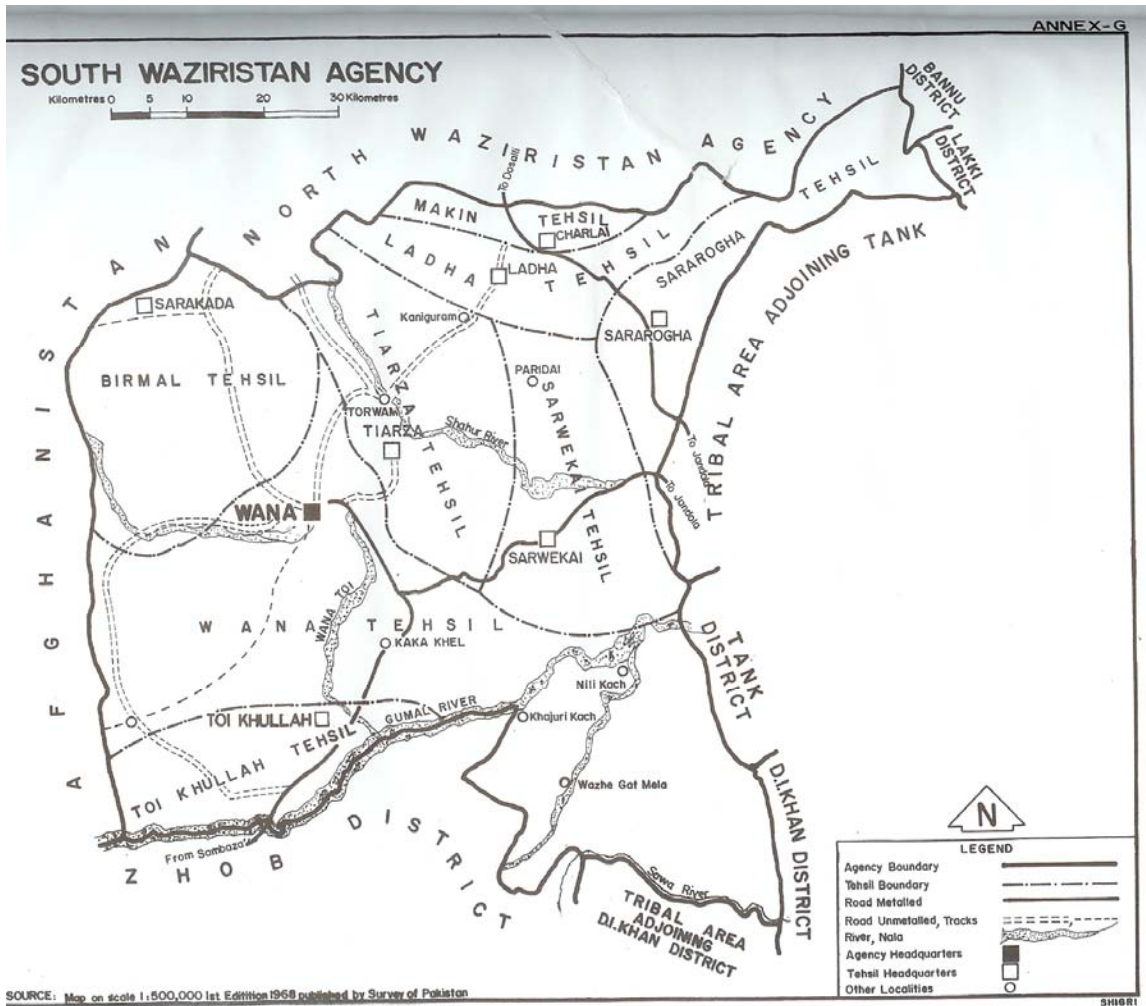


Figure 3-South Waziristan

Source: Government of Pakistan. 1998 Census Report of South Waziristan Agency. Islamabad: Population Census Organization, Statistics Division, 2000.

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